



Grateful to the captain for giving me confidence after I leaked 22 runs in the first two overs.

TANVIR ISLAM
Bangladesh spinner

The Daily Star

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

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Inside the 3-year plan to fix banks

Govt agrees to raft of new laws, deep-dive asset reviews and a crisis management framework

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh has committed to a sweeping overhaul of its troubled financial sector, outlining a detailed three-year roadmap as part of its latest agreement with the International Monetary Fund.

The reform plan, also backed by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, is built on a package of legislative, supervisory, and institutional changes designed to restore stability, aggressively pursue bad loans, and protect taxpayers from future bank failures.

Under the plan, Bangladesh will establish a government-wide strategy for the banking sector. This will clarify the roles of Bangladesh Bank and the finance ministry in managing crises and define the conditions for any potential state support for ailing lenders.

REFORMS

- ➔ Crisis Management Council to coordinate reforms
- ➔ Bankruptcy Act to be amended in early 2026
- ➔ Money Loan Court Act to be amended in 2026
- ➔ Deposit Protection Ordinance in July
- ➔ Bank Company Act to be amended by Dec
- ➔ A platform for trading NPLs by 2025

A new Banking Sector Crisis Management Council (BCCM) will be constituted to oversee the process and coordinate responses. The government said the goal is to ensure banks are financially sound and to end the long-standing practice of granting "regulatory forbearance" to weaker institutions.

At the heart of Bangladesh's financial sector reform is a legal overhaul to strengthen recovery mechanisms, modernise insolvency procedures and give regulators the tools needed to intervene decisively in troubled banks.

With non-performing loans and governance lapses weighing on the sector, the reform package represents the strongest policy signal in years. The IMF has linked future disbursements under its \$5.5 billion programme to the implementation of these reforms.

LEGAL BLITZ

The government has committed to enacting or amending a series of laws by the first quarter of FY2026, laying the legal foundation for a more resilient financial system:

Bankruptcy Act: A new corporate insolvency framework will be introduced to allow for the early restructuring of viable but distressed companies, aiming to keep them out of lengthy liquidation proceedings and align Bangladesh with international standards.

Money Loan Court Act: The law governing loan recovery will be amended by the first quarter of fiscal 2026 to clear bottlenecks. In the interim, Dhaka has pledged to boost staffing and resources for the courts to tackle case backlogs and enforce verdicts more quickly. The system has long been plagued by understaffing and delays.

Distressed Asset Management Act: This law will create a framework for licensing private asset management companies. This is intended to

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Lying on a hospital bed with a saline drip in her hand, seven-year-old Raisa watches cartoons on a mobile screen -- a small comfort amid her battle with dengue fever. She has been undergoing treatment at Mugda Medical College Hospital for the past three days. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

50% of bank directors to be independent

BB Governor Ahsan Mansur tells *Star*

MD MEHEDI HASAN

The interim government is set to amend the Bank Company Act by reducing the board members from a single family, while at least 50 percent of the directors will be independent, said Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur.

Three from the same family can serve as bank directors, as per the Bank Company (Amendment) Act, 2023. Previously, the number was higher.

The number of independent directors could exceed 50 percent, Mansur told The Daily Star in an interview recently.

"We will form a panel from which the independent directors must be selected. If someone outside the panel is to be appointed, it must be a highly distinguished and qualified individual,

MORE ON BI



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Political parties with phantom addresses queue for EC nod

AHMED DEEPTO

In its application for registration with the Election Commission, Janatar Bangladesh Party has said its central office is located on the 12th floor of Darus Salam Arcade near the capital's Paltan intersection.

However, a visit to the 14-storey building on June 25 found no sign of its office there. The 12th floor houses five travel agencies and eight law chambers.

Staff from two of the travel agencies said no political party by that name had any office in the building.

Contacted, Safiqul Islam Sabuj Khan, the chairman of the party, claimed that they no longer use the building.

"We have rented a new office on Box Culvert Road. We will have it ready for use within a few days."

He, however, didn't give the address of the new office.

Janatar Bangladesh Party is among 147 political parties that applied to the EC between March 10 and June 22 to get registered with it ahead of the upcoming national election. The EC on June 24 published a list of the parties.

Many of these parties exist on paper only. In the last week of June, The Daily Star visited the addresses of 13 parties in Paltan area that they mentioned in their applications to the EC. It found that nine had no central offices or even signboards at those locations, while four parties had offices on the same rooftop of a 15-storey building.

To get registered with the EC, a political party must meet at least one of three criteria that include having a functional central office,

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To get registered with the EC, a party must meet at least one of three criteria that include having a functional central office.



THE JULY THAT ROCKED BANGLADESH

JULY 6, 2024

'Bangla Blockade' announced

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

The streets of Dhaka and cities across Bangladesh fill with chants, placards, and determination as the student movement enters its sixth consecutive day. Today marks a turning point -- protesters declare a countrywide "Bangla Blockade", vowing to bring life to a standstill until their demands are met.

At the heart of the capital, Shahbagh intersection -- the symbolic ground zero of student uprisings -- is once again blocked. By mid-afternoon, several thousand students pour into the streets, weaving through Dhaka University, BUET, and Eden College campuses before converging on Shahbagh. They raise slogans: "Dofa ek, dabi ek: quota not come back!", "Quota na medha -- medha, medha!"

Nahid Islam, a Dhaka University student and key organiser, announces that the "Bangla Blockade" will now take place daily from 3:00pm at key intersections in the capital as well as highways across the country.

"We will not return to classrooms until our demands are met," he declares to a cheering crowd, urging parents to join the movement and accusing the ruling party's student activists of attempting to disrupt the protests. As the hours stretch on, police presence looms nearby, while the

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HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Daily Star offices will remain closed today on the occasion of Holy Ashura. There will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow. However, we will be available online during the holiday.

Dhaka seeks identities of 36 arrested in KL

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has formally requested the identities of the 36 Bangladeshis arrested by Malaysian authorities for their alleged involvement in a radical militant movement, said the foreign ministry yesterday.

Last week, the Malaysian authorities announced the arrest of 36 Bangladeshi men aged between 25 and 35 years in security operations carried out in three phases between April 24 and June 21, according to the Malaysian daily The Star.

Of the arrested/detained individuals, formal charges have been filed against five in Malaysian courts.

Of those arrested, 15 have been handed over to the Immigration Department and 16 remain under investigation under the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012.

"The government of Bangladesh is closely monitoring the developments and the Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur is in close communication with the relevant Malaysian authorities," the foreign ministry said in a statement yesterday.

The High Commission will extend necessary support to the expatriate Bangladeshis wherever needed, it said.

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Bangladesh players celebrate one of their goals during a 7-0 victory against Turkmenistan in their last Group C fixture of the Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon yesterday. The big win saw Peter Butler's charges, who had already clinched a historic Asian Cup berth, end the qualifiers as group winners with a hundred percent record.

PHOTO: AFC

Mother raped while child held at knifepoint Four arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A 28-year-old woman was raped while her one-and-a-half-year-old son was held at knifepoint in Panchagarh Sadar upazila on Friday night, according to a case filed yesterday.

The survivor was found unconscious with her child beside her near a roadside bush yesterday, said Abdullah Hil Zaman, officer-in-charge of Panchagarh Sadar Police Station.

She later filed the case, accusing four named and two to three unnamed individuals.

Police have so far arrested four: Jony Islam, 27; Biplob Hossain, 25; Moksedul Islam, 32; and Sadekul Islam, 32.

Speaking to reporters at a hospital, the survivor said, "As my husband left me some months ago, I moved to a place a few kilometers away from my parents' house to search for a job. As my son fell ill that night, I was taking him to my parents. We were travelling on a three-wheeler. On the way, I noticed another easy bike following us."

When they reached Tinmle area on the Panchagarh-Jagdal Road around 11:00pm, the vehicle following them caught up and stopped them.

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When there is more to Dhaka malls than shopping

LABIBA TASNIM

Leaving the humid weather under the sweltering sun and entering the atrium full of chatter, noises of elevators and escalators, soft ambient music, and most importantly, the cool air with hints of perfume – welcome to the Dhaka mall.

More or less every Dhakaite can recall moments of trying out test-perfumes in some extravagant perfume shop or trying expensive jewellery they had no intention of buying. You cannot deny that these moments, alongside sweet gestures from shopkeepers who made you feel like a princess, could brighten up your mood after a quarrel or a bad day at the office.

Even though shopping malls were originally intended solely for business, they now buzz with a whirlwind of activities, ranging from TikToks to dates.

Going to shopping malls has just become an excuse for chattering, sneaking into cinemas, or spilling some tea. I think most people can relate to going to a mall, not for shopping, but rather for a movie hangout or chit-chat at the food court. Visiting shops would come much later, often as a way of saying goodbye over some unfinished conversations or simply as an excuse to gossip a bit longer.

Nowadays, shopping malls have become a social hub, and that is the reason I think online shopping can never take over these malls. It is like stepping into a wonderland full of exciting activities for everyone, starting from claw machines and photobooth to cinema hall, kids’ play area, and VR arcade!

On occasions like Eid, Pahela Baishakh, and Christmas, these malls light up in different glows. Chand Raat feels incomplete without a visit to malls



like Tokyo Square with your friends, perhaps to buy henna or some trinkets. These days, mall experiences are even more thrilling for Gen-Z, with festivals featuring Harry Potter, K-pop idols, or even Sanrio. Such events are great, after

all, you might bump into that friend of yours whom you have not talked to in a while, or end up making friends who have similar interests as you.

Not only do these malls accelerate in offline shopping, but also in online,

through TikTok, reels, and of course, live videos. One can easily spot an influencer with her cameraman walking in these malls for shooting what we call a promo video.

I remember roaming from shop to shop with my friend group of four, and in just a few minutes, all of us had caught up with whatever was going on in our lives. Not to mention that the talk over which face wash company is better flowed into discussions about our skincare routines and so on, down the stream of conversations.



Somewhere in these shops, in these food courts, we have shared stories with people whom we do not know when we will meet next or even if we will.

When I was a kid, going to Bashundhara with my family was a grand occasion, especially on the eve of a relative's wedding. Back then, going to Bashundhara was more like a day trip to us from Agargaon, and our excitement knew no bounds when we would hear of scratch cards and gift coupons. I still root for these to this date. Certainly, Dhaka malls gave us more than just clothes and accessories; they gifted us warm smiles from shopkeepers, they gifted us memories that probably have not even been framed in pictures.

Dhaka malls are not just a bustling hub for shopping; it is rather a theatre where you see urban stories unfolding over a sip of coffee or a random stroll down the gleaming alleys.

21 pushed in thru Thakurgaon and Panchagarh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) detained 21 individuals after they were allegedly pushed into Bangladesh by India’s Border Security Force (BSF) through borders in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh between late Friday night and early yesterday.

In Thakurgaon, six people, including women and children, were detained near pillar 336/6 Salong the Boirchuna border in Pirganj upazila early yesterday, said Lt Col Abdullah Al Moin Hasan, commanding officer (CO) of Dinajpur Battalion (42 BGB).

In Panchagarh, 15 individuals, also including women and children, were detained near pillars 743/3-S and 746/19-S along the Amarkhana and Shingroad borders in Panchagarh Sadar upazila in different phases between late Friday night and early yesterday, said local BGB sources.

During initial interrogation, the returnees said they had previously entered India illegally in search of work. They were first detained by Indian police from different parts of Mumbai. Later, they were handed over to the BSF, who, in turn, pushed them across the border into Bangladesh.

The detainees are believed to be from Khulna, Bagherhat, Jashore, and Narail districts. They have been handed over to police in Pirganj and Panchagarh Sadar.

The returnees will be handed over to their families after their identities are verified, said police.

Bangladeshi man dies in Malaysia crane accident

UNB, Benapole

A Bangladeshi man died in a crane accident in Malaysia’s Seremban city yesterday, according to his family.

The deceased was identified as Md Roni, 35, son of Mahmud Sardar from Baguri Beltala village in Kayba union under Sharsha upazila of Jashore district.

According to family sources, Roni had been working in Malaysia for the last two and a half years to support his family. He had been employed in the construction sector since his arrival.

The fatal accident occurred around 10:30am (Bangladesh time) while Roni was working at a construction site. A crane’s chain reportedly snapped, and he was crushed under the heavy equipment, dying on the spot.

His co-workers later informed his family in Bangladesh over the phone.

Political parties with phantom addresses queue

FROM PAGE 1

a central committee, and offices in at least one-third of the districts or 100 upazilas.

A total of 50 parties are now registered with the EC. Since 2008, five parties have been registered with it. Of them, two were registered ahead of the 2024 national polls, and three before the 2014 election. The commission didn’t register any party ahead of the 2018 polls.

On March 10 this year, the EC issued a circular inviting applications from political parties for registration. The deadline for submission was April 20, but the EC extended it to June 22 upon requests from several parties.

FAKE ADDRESSES

Bangladesh Janojote Party applied for registration with the EC, citing its address as 85/1, Paltan Line, Culvert Road. But this correspondent didn’t find any office of the party there.

Muzammel Miazi, the chairman of the party, said, “We launched the party on March 14 last year. We are forming central, district, and upazila committees. However, we have not been able to fulfil all the Election Commission’s requirements.”

Bangladesh Nagorik Party mentioned 85/1A in the same building as its address. But there was no sign of the party there either.

Asked, the building’s caretaker, Alamgir Hossain, said that no political party had any office there.

Bangladesh Tisari Insaaf Party mentioned House No-54 in Purana Paltan as its central office, which couldn’t be found at that address.

The staff of a restaurant on the building’s ground floor said that there was no party office at the location.

In its application, Bangladesh Shangkarsabadi Party mentioned 42/1 Segunbagicha as its address. But no office of the party was found in the eight-storey building.

Asked, Mobarak Hossain, joint secretary general of the party, said, “Our party was founded on July 19 last year. The office is on the third floor of that building in Segunbagicha. We operate till 4:00pm.”

However, the third floor housed a studio of an online media outlet. Two individuals working there said that no political party had any office in that building.

In the EC’s registration form,

Bangladesh Jonomot Party used 27/8/A Topkhana Road as its address. This correspondent found a locked room with a notice hanging on its wall on the building’s third floor. The notice said party Convener Sultan Zisan Uddin is available at 4 Purana Paltan (Level-5) and party members could meet him there.

Opposite the room was “Bijoynagar Kazi office” where the marriage registrar, Maulana Md Abdul Hasan, said no political party by that name had any office in the building.

OFFICES OF 4 PARTIES ON ROOFTOP

Offices of four political parties – National Labour Party, Jonotar Odhikar Party, Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (JAGPA), and Desh Bachao Manush Bachao Andolon – were found on the rooftop of 15-storey Pritom Zaman Tower on Box Culvert Road in Purana Paltan.

National Labour Party rented out one of its two rooftop rooms to Jonotar Odhikar Party. Interestingly, Desh Bachao Manush Bachao Andolon cited the same room as its address in the EC’s application form.

Shariful Islam, spokesperson for

National Labour Party, said, “We rented out this room to Jonotar Odhikar Party six months ago. Desh Bachao Manush Bachao Andolon also uses the room as its central party office.”

KM Rakibul Islam, chairman of Desh Bachao Manush Bachao Andolon, acknowledged that they share the room with Jonotar Odhikar Party.

“My party’s sticker was on the door. It might have fallen off. We’ll hang a banner there soon,” he said.

Dhaka seeks identities of 36 arrested in KL

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The cell was found to be collecting funds for Islamic State (IS) operations in Syria and Bangladesh, said Datuk Seri Mohd Khalid Ismail, Malaysia’s Inspector-General of Police.

“We are still determining the total amount collected. We believe the funds were gathered through membership fees and donations,” he told the media on Friday.

Inside the 3-year plan

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launch a platform for trading non-performing loans (NPLs), allowing banks to offload bad debts. However, officials have ruled out a state-funded “bad bank”, saying they will not use public funds to buy NPLs from private banks.

Bank Resolution Ordinance:

Adopted in May 2025, this ordinance grants the central bank powerful tools to resolve failing banks, including special wind-up procedures. It provides a legal shield for regulators, limiting judicial challenges to compensation claims under the principle that no creditor should be worse off than in a liquidation. A resolution handbook has been drafted to make the law operational.

Deposit Protection Ordinance:

This law will double the deposit insurance coverage limit to Tk 200,000. It will also allow the new Deposit Protection Fund to provide funding to support bank resolutions, a model known as “Pay Box Plus”, backed by an emergency government funding line.

The government is tightening the rules on how banks are run and reversing previous changes that weakened oversight.

As part of the crackdown, Bangladesh Bank has already taken action against 15 poorly-managed private banks since the recent liquidity pressures began. It has replaced the board of directors at 14 banks and completely dissolved the board of another, appointing an administrator to run it. These banks are now under close supervision with new, independent boards.

To increase transparency, the central bank has issued a new rule requiring banks to identify and report who their true owners are. Looking ahead, the government will propose changes to the Bank Company Act by the end of 2025. These changes will ensure that both the real owners and board members of banks are properly qualified and suitable for their roles.

These improvements are not just for private banks. The finance ministry is also strengthening the qualification and selection process for board members at state-owned banks.

Parallel to the legal changes, Bangladesh Bank is directing commercial banks to beef up their own legal departments and adopt new NPL settlement roadmaps. These roadmaps will be updated in FY2026 to reflect revised NPL levels following asset quality reviews.

The government says this legal revamp is essential to maintaining credit discipline and reducing

reliance on forbearance or political intervention in loan recovery.

“Strong legal and institutional frameworks for maximising recoveries on distressed loans are essential to maintaining resilient and efficient credit markets,” the government said.

ASSET RECOVERY

The government has reconstituted an asset recovery task force led by the central bank, working with the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit, Anti-Corruption Commission and international agencies. The goal is to “freeze, confiscate and recover stolen assets” from banking fraud and corruption, both domestically and globally.

Officials admit the vulnerabilities have “reached macro-relevant proportions, including embezzlement and fraud at banks”, and see asset recovery as “a critical part of our broader efforts to promote accountability”.

Bangladesh Bank is also establishing an emergency liquidity assistance framework by December 2025. It will include a Shariah-compliant window and protections to ensure any liquidity support is “collateralised and, as appropriate, covered by government indemnities”. The authorities pledged to “immediately sterilise any liquidity assistance... to mitigate inflationary pressures.”

ASSET QUALITY REVIEWS

The government is undertaking donor-backed asset quality reviews (AQRs) of 18 private banks, representing 35 percent of system assets. The first phase, covering six banks, was completed in May. The remaining 12 are scheduled for review by December 2025. According to the official communication, “the terms of reference have been agreed with the IMF, WB and ADB”, and an oversight committee will be in place.

AQRs for state-owned banks are also on the table. The authorities are “considering advising state-owned banks to conduct AQRs by independent consultants by March 2026.”

Bangladesh Bank has adopted a risk-based supervision model and completed pilot inspections for 20 banks, covering nearly half of the system assets. It has also instructed banks to revise asset classifications based on a tighter definition of “overdue loans”.

A new structure will consolidate the central bank’s supervision into single teams per bank by January 2026. Meanwhile, the government has committed to implementing IFRS 9, the global standard for loan loss provisioning, by 2027, with interim prudential buffers in place.

‘Bangla Blockade’ announced

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demonstrators remain non-violent.

Elsewhere in Dhaka, Jagannath University students block the Tanti Bazar intersection, joined by students from Kabi Nazrul Government College and Shaheed Suhrawardy College. Their march parades through the streets before settling into an hours-long blockade that brings traffic to a halt.

The students’ demands remain unchanged: abolish the reinstated quotas in government jobs; form a commission to revise the quota system, ensuring fairness and meritocracy; and introduce limits on the number of times an individual may use quota privileges. Their frustration runs deep, intensified by the Appellate Division’s decision to uphold the High Court verdict reinstating the quotas.

Beyond Dhaka, protesters hold the streets with equal resolve.

In Chattogram, students of Chittagong University stage roadblocks for a second consecutive day, gathering at the bustling Muradpur-GEC intersection. In Rajshahi, university students bring the Dhaka-Rajshahi highway to a halt



On July 6, 2024, as part of the ongoing movement against the reinstatement of the quota system in government jobs, thousands of students blocked the Shahbagh intersection for an hour.

FILE PHOTO

for an hour. In Rangpur, students of Begum Rokeya University paralyse the Dhaka-Rangpur highway, while in Tangail, students of Maulana Bhashani Science and Technology University block the main highway

for 90 minutes. Even torrential rain cannot dampen the spirit of protest – as seen in Kushtia, where students of Islamic University, drenched but determined, bring traffic to a standstill outside their campus.

Jamaat's criticism aimed at delaying polls: Rizvi

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday alleged that Jamaat-e-Islami is trying to fish in troubled waters.

"Some people are... saying there is no proper environment for the election," he said while inaugurating a football tournament at the Dhanmondi Sports Club ground.

He also alleged that Jamaat, which had taken part in the 1986 election under an autocratic regime, is now questioning the electoral atmosphere under the interim government.

BNP's Dhaka North City unit organised the event as part of the party's month-long programme to mark



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'2009 -- looking back at the fascist regime...' Slogans denouncing the Awami League's 15-year rule being painted on Metro Rail pillars in the capital's Karwan Bazar area yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

HOLY ASHURA

Yunus calls for 'equality, justice, peace'

UNB, Dhaka

Highlighting the significance of the holy Ashura, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has laid emphasis on establishing "equality, justice and peace" in society and wished for the "unity, solidarity and continuous progress" of the Muslim Ummah.

In his message on the occasion of the holy Ashura, Yunus said this sacrifice of the brave soldiers of Islam, standing against the injustice and injustice of the oppressor, will remain forever in the history of the world.

He said it will continue to inspire humanity with the strength and courage to uphold truth and justice in the face of oppression and injustice.

The holy Ashura, commemorating the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), is being observed in the country today with due religious fervour and solemnity. The day is a public holiday.

Ashura, the 10th of Muharram in the Islamic calendar, commemorates the date in the Hijri year of 61, when Hazrat Imam, the grandson of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), along with his family members and 72 followers embraced the martyrdom in the hands of Yazid's soldiers at the desert of Karbala to uphold the teachings of the Prophet (SM).

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ROHINGYA CRISIS

Bangladesh renews call for global action

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has reiterated its call for urgent international action to resolve the prolonged Rohingya crisis, as the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution addressing the situation in Myanmar's Rakhine State.

The resolution, adopted by consensus at the 59th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva on Friday, called for an end to the culture of impunity in Rakhine and stressed the need for inclusive governance there and meaningful representation of Rohingya Muslims in decision-making.

Arakan Army, the rebel group seeking autonomy in Rakhine, now controls around 90 percent of the state following nearly two years of fighting against the Myanmar junta.

Around 750,000 Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh during the 2017 military crackdown, placing a heavy burden on the host country. The situation has worsened with declining humanitarian aid.

Since November 2023, another 180,000 Rohingyas have crossed into Bangladesh to escape violence in Rakhine.

The OIC-led resolution expressed deep concern over the shrinking aid and stressed the need for equitable burden-sharing by the international community to support the over one million Rohingyas currently sheltering in Bangladesh.

Titled "The Situation of Human Rights of the Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar", the resolution also called for unhindered humanitarian access in Rakhine by the UN and relevant humanitarian actors.

Ambassador Tareq Md Ariful Islam, permanent representative of Bangladesh in Geneva, voiced concern over continued violence by Myanmar's military and armed groups like the Arakan Army, which he said are blocking aid and worsening the Rohingya crisis.

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Weight chart for prison staffers

New initiative aims to improve discipline, fitness

RAFIUL ISLAM

The Prisons Directorate has introduced a standard weight chart for all officers and employees.

Launched for the first time, the initiative aims to foster a more disciplined, smart, and health-conscious prison force through exercise and dietary regulation, prisons officials said.

On April 24, Brig Gen Syed Mohammad Motaheer Hossain, inspector general of prisons, issued a directive to all prison units and relevant offices instructing them to follow the newly adopted guidelines for staffer's weight. "A staffer maintaining weight according to the chart will gain an advantage in departmental promotions or promotion exams, with at least 5 marks potentially allocated for meeting the criteria."

"The weight chart has now been introduced for the first time to make the prison force smarter and fitter," said Jannat-ul-Farhad, assistant inspector general (development) at Prisons Headquarters.

"This has already been implemented, and the officials concerned have been instructed to assess and record measurements twice a year, in June and December," added Farhad, who also serves as spokesperson for the Prisons Directorate.

The move came months after around 2,200 prisoners escaped from jails across the country during the mass uprising in July-August last year. Around 700 of them are still at large.

Several prison officials said many guards were unable to play an effective role in preventing jailbreaks. Apart from other issues, their lack of physical fitness hindered timely action then.

Prisons officials said this also influenced the implementation of the standard weight chart for its staffers. The weight chart categorises personnel according to age and height, setting clear minimum and maximum weight limits.

The weight chart has now been introduced for the first time to make the prison force smarter and fitter. Officials have been instructed to assess and record measurements twice a year, in June and December.

JANNAT-UL-FARHAD
Assistant inspector general (dev)
at Prisons Headquarters

According to the chart, the minimum weight for a male employee, with a minimum height of approximately 5 feet, is set at 47 kilograms. The maximum allowable weight is 95kg for males who are 6 feet 1 inch tall and aged 51 or above.

Similarly, for female staff, the minimum weight for those standing 5 feet tall is set at 44kg, while the maximum is 76kg.

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UN SUPERVISION Journalism during AL regime to be investigated

Says CA's press secy

STAR REPORT

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam yesterday said the journalism practised over the 15 years of Awami League regime will be investigated under the supervision of the United Nations (UN).

He made the remarks while speaking as the chief guest at a review event on the Media Reform Commission's report, organised by the Broadcast Journalist Center (BJC) at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Shafiqul stressed the need for ensuring a minimum salary of Tk 30,000 for journalists working in electronic media.

He also said that during the 15 years of AL rule, three controversial elections were held and numerous people became victims of enforced disappearances and killings.

"We are writing to the United Nations, asking for an investigation into journalism over the past 15 years. We're requesting them to send external

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Mob justice goes against spirit of July uprising

Says attorney general

UNB, Dhaka

Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman yesterday said mob justice, in any form, is unacceptable and goes against the spirit of the July uprising.

He warned that continuous acts of mob violence, like the recent assault on former CEC Nurul Huda, could jeopardise the country's democratic achievements, even if accountability for wrongdoing is necessary.

Speaking at the "Shadow Parliament" organised by Debate for Democracy at the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC) in the capital, he said all political forces must also unite against fascism, as the public outrage witnessed over the past 17 years was born from injustices.

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MURADNAGAR IN CUMILLA 8 held over triple murder, case filed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Law enforcers yesterday arrested eight persons in a case filed over the brutal murder of three members of a family in Cumilla's Muradnagar.

According to a press release issued by Rab-11, the elite force conducted drives in different locations and arrested four accused from Dhaka's Banasree area, and two others from Cumilla.

The arrestees are: Bachchu Mia, 55; Robiul Awal, 55; Atiqur Rahman, 42; Md Bayez Master, 43; Dulal, 45; and Akash, 24. All of them are residents of Karoi Bari village in Muradnagar upazila.

During the drives, four mobile phones and a

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ROAD 103 IN GULSHAN

Commercial establishment in a residential zone

Experts slam Rajuk for approving high-rise mall without traffic assessment

HELEMUL ALAM

While Road 103 in the capital's Gulshan -- a designated residential area -- already struggles under tremendous traffic pressure, the establishment of a new shopping mall has further strained the situation.

Experts and commuters warn that the construction of commercial buildings in residential zones will only exacerbate congestion problems, eventually impacting the already-busy Gulshan Avenue.

Despite urban planning rules prohibiting such development, the Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) has approved a multi-storey commercial building beside Pink City Shopping Mall, altering the area's residential character.

Another building on nearby Road 102 was granted commercial status about 10 years ago, which experts say has contributed to worsening traffic congestion.

A recent visit to Road 103 revealed that a 13-storey building, Ventura Mall (Plot 14/A, Block CEN



(C), Road 103/95, Gulshan-2), has been constructed beside Pink City. A signboard outside reads, "Rajuk Approved - Shopping Mall - Ready Shops for Rent." One shop is already in operation.

Commuters and experts have raised concerns about the conversion of residential buildings to commercial use. Pink City, located at the beginning of Road 103, has long contributed to traffic pressure on the avenue and surrounding streets due to insufficient parking.

Contacted, Atiquzzaman, a sales official of Ventura Mall, confirmed that they received Rajuk's approval in 2019 after paying Tk 50 lakh per katha for land reclassification. The mall, built on 8.5 kathas of land, has three basements with space for 38 cars and 24 designated parking spots for 22 shops.

"The first three floors are designated for the mall, while the upper floors will be used for office spaces," he said.

Atiquzzaman also claimed they had made adequate parking arrangements and planned to deploy additional staff to manage traffic.

Md Abul Kayum, director of Chaya Developer Limited which constructed the Pink City, said the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Dr. ATM Shamsul Huda

(10 July 1942 – 5 July 2025)

We are deeply saddened to inform the passing of Dr. ATM Shamsul Huda, Independent Director of Apex Tannery Limited and Former Chief Election Commissioner of Bangladesh.

Dr. Huda was a distinguished public servant and a respected leader whose contributions to the democratic process of Bangladesh and corporate governance will always be remembered with admiration and gratitude. His wisdom, integrity and dedication served as a guiding light to many.

From Apex family, we extend our heartfelt prayers and sympathy. May the Almighty grant him eternal peace and give strength to his loved ones during this difficult time.

Case filed over storming of AK Azad's Faridpur house

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Faridpur

A case was filed with Kotwali Police Station early yesterday, accusing 16 BNP activists and 25-30 unidentified persons of storming Ha-Meem Group Managing Director AK Azad's residence in Faridpur town's Jheeluli on Thursday.

A written complaint filed early by Ha-Meem Group land officer Md Rafizul Khan, 40, was recorded as the case, confirmed Md Asaduzzaman, officer-in-charge of the police station.

Faridpur Metropolitan BNP member secretary Golam Mostafa was made the prime accused in the complaint.

According to the case, the accused entered AK Azad's house and threatened to kill the security guard. At that time, they threatened to set fire to Azad's house.

The OC said police launched drives to arrest the accused.

Elephant found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Mymensingh

A female elephant, aged approximately 20 years, was found dead in Katabari area under Sherpur's Nalitabari upazila yesterday.

The elephant likely died from electrocution early yesterday after coming in contact with electric wires set up by farmers to protect their crops from elephants, said Md Dewan Ali, range officer of Madhutula Range in Nalitabari.

Forest officials are investigating the incident for legal action, the range officer added.



Located in Rangrapara village in Mymensingh, the academy aims to promote and preserve the culture and heritage of ethnic communities in the country's plain land, contributing to the enrichment of the mainstream national culture. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

ETHNIC CULTURAL ACADEMY

Tk 10.81cr facility lies unused since inauguration

MD AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

The Ethnic Cultural Academy in Haluaghat upazila of Mymensingh has remained non-operational for the past six years since its inauguration.

Constructed at a cost of Tk 10.81 crore under an initiative of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and implemented by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and the Public Works Department from July 2013 until its inauguration in 2019, the academy now lies in a state of neglect and disrepair.

The academy, located in Rangrapara village in Sadar union under the upazila, aimed to promote and preserve the culture and heritage of the ethnic communities in the country's plain land and enrich the mainstream national culture.

The centre includes a 300-seat

auditorium, a 500-seat open-air stage, and a training centre.

Despite the advanced facilities, the academy has not seen any active operations. The building has had no electricity connection for the past two years. Due to prolonged lack of use and maintenance, much of the equipment has deteriorated.

"Shortly after the inauguration, the ministry handed over the facility to Shilpakala Academy. Since then, no activities have taken place. The site is now overgrown with weeds, and many parts of the structure have been damaged due to years of neglect. Without electricity for the last two years, all electrical installations have already become unusable," said Bhodro Mrong, a freedom fighter and president of the Tribal Welfare Association's Haluaghat upazila unit.

"The academy was meant to be a platform for future generations to learn about the culture and traditions of ethnic communities. However, it is now uncertain when it will become functional," he added.

Contacted, Haluaghat UNO Alinur Khan said no manpower structure had been prepared for the academy yet. Once it was approved, necessary staff would be appointed to run the centre, he added.

He said the ministry concerned was informed about the situation and urged to take necessary steps last year, but no response had been received yet.

Abdullah-Al-Mamun, district cultural officer in Mymensingh, said he had recently joined the post and would gather detailed information about the academy to look into the matter.

One dies of Covid, six more infected

STAR REPORT

At least one person died and six others were infected with Covid-19 in the 24 hours until 8:00am yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

During this period, 239 patients were tested for Covid. With the new infections, the total number of cases has risen to 2,052,174, while the total number of deaths stands at 29,523 since 2020.

With the latest death, a total of 24 people have died from the disease so far this year.

Covid-19 first hit Bangladesh on March 8, 2020, with the first death reported on March 18 the same year.

294 fresh dengue cases reported

UNB, Dhaka

A total of 294 new dengue cases were reported across the country in 24 hours till yesterday morning, raising the number of confirmed cases to 11,954 since the beginning of this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The number of deaths remained at 45, with no new fatalities reported during this period.

Barishal Division (out of city corporation) again reported the highest number of new infections, with 126 fresh cases.

Last year, dengue claimed the lives of 575 people. According to the DGHS, there were 11,954 dengue cases and 10,673 recoveries in current year.

Submerged road puts locals in peril

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

A section of the Bashirpur-Bazarchali road in Paschim Juri Union under Juri upazila of Moulvibazar has remained submerged for years, severely disrupting the daily movement of locals, particularly school- and college-going students.

Although the 2-kilometre road was upgraded in two phases -- one kilometre about six to seven years ago and the remaining stretch around four years ago -- poor soil conditions and lack of proper groundwork have led to significant portions of the road sinking shortly after construction.

On July 2, at least 200 metres of the road in the Krishnanagar area were found under knee-deep water, with surrounding low-lying lands also inundated. Around 10-15 school and college students were seen wading through the submerged stretch to reach their institutions.

"This place goes underwater every year around this time," said Bidya Rabidas, a ninth-grade student of Bashirpur-Krishnanagar High School



and a resident of the Dhamai Tea Garden area. "When it rains heavily, we have to cross by boat, paying Tk 10 each time."

Locals also depend on the road for everyday commute and access to the upazila headquarters.

Shadhon Paul, a local, said although the initial work brought some relief, the road's condition deteriorated again within a few months of the second phase being completed. The affected portion has since remained vulnerable to waterlogging during the monsoon.

Ashok Ranjan Paul, headteacher of Durgapur Government Primary School, echoed him.

Contacted, LGED upazila engineer Jonay Alam said, "I have visited the site recently. The soil beneath the road is not suitable for construction. Ideally, the clay layer -- 20 to 25 feet deep -- should have been removed and replaced with sand before construction. But such work is costly and couldn't be done with the available allocation."

"There are no plans for repair at the moment. If we receive further funding, we'll carry out the necessary work," he added.

Commercial establishment in a residential

FROM PAGE 3 shopping mall was constructed around 2001 or 2002.

He said they received approval from Rajuk for an eight-storey building along with a basement and semi-basement, claiming that the basement can accommodate about 50 cars.

Additionally, the newly built 19-storey Finance Square Building (House 22/A, Road 102) -- located in the same alley -- offers parking for just 24 cars, which experts deem insufficient.

Mine Uddin, manager of Finance Square, said they obtained approval from

Rajuk in 2016 for a 19-storey commercial building with four basement levels, completing construction in 2022.

A Rajuk official said the fee for converting residential plots to commercial use was Tk 50 lakh per katha in areas like Gulshan, Banani, and Baridhara, and Tk 25 lakh in Uttara.

However, the new guidelines enacted in 2023 have doubled the fee, while prohibiting commercial conversion in these areas unless the adjacent road is at least 100 feet wide.

During another visit, around 50 cars were seen parked along the southern

part of Road 103, worsening the congestion. The Dhaka North City Corporation had previously designated this area for on-street parking, but the service has been absent since the mass uprising of August 5, 2024. **GULSHAN SOCIETY VOICES CONCERN**

Barrister Omar Sadat, president of the Gulshan Society, said Pink City has converted part of its parking area into shops, worsening the parking crisis and traffic congestion in Gulshan.

"We've filed complaints with Rajuk about unauthorised commercial buildings in residential areas. We believe these establishments should be removed," he said.

Sadat further pointed out the growing trend of commercial buildings mushrooming across Gulshan's lanes and by-lanes, often allegedly with Rajuk's approvals.

"You'll even find a 20-storey building surrounded by six-storey residential structures here. Traffic congestion will undoubtedly worsen due to these new commercial developments," he said. Md Sumon, a private car driver, said, "There is a huge shortage of parking facilities. Customers of Pink City, visitors to nearby schools, and people going to the Youth Club playground all park their vehicles here."

He added that the DNCC earlier charged Tk 30 for unlimited parking but stopped after August 2024. **EXPERTS SLAM RAJUK'S ROLE** Urban planning expert Mohammad Fazle Reza Sumon criticised Rajuk's role, saying, "As far as I know, Road 103 is not a commercially declared road, yet Rajuk approved at least two commercial buildings here."

He alleged that approvals were often granted in exchange for money, without necessary planning assessments or

public consultations.

"The media have been reporting on these issues for years, but nothing changes. Rajuk's actions are deepening the traffic crisis and affecting residents' rights, such as access to sunlight," he said.

"Without institutional governance, citizens' suffering will have no end," he warned, adding, "Before granting conversion, Rajuk should conduct environmental clearances, traffic impact assessments, and public hearings -- none of which are being followed."

Adil Mohammed Khan, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners, shared similar views. He said Rajuk approves conversions based on landowners' requests, with no planning or analysis.

"Gulshan plots were meant for six-storey buildings, but after conversion, 12- to 14-storey structures are common now," Adil said. Allowing such commercial constructions is harming efforts to decentralise the city, he added.

"Such an approach economically benefits a handful of plot owners, but causes immense suffering for the general public," Khan said.

He said while auxiliary services like small shops or schools could have been tolerable, large shopping malls and banks -- which attract heavy footfall -- significantly worsen traffic congestion.

"In developed countries, traffic impact assessments are mandatory before such approvals. Here, no such procedure is followed," he said.

RAJUK'S RESPONSE

Contacted, Rajuk Chairman Md Reazul Islam said, "We're taking action against illegal buildings. Operations are underway, and complaints -- including establishments behind Gulshan Pink City -- are under investigation. Action will follow."



Shaheed Monsur Ali Medical College

26 & 26A, Road No-10/B, Sector-11, Uttara, Dhaka-1230.

Recruitment Notice

Ref: No: SMAMC/07/2025/532

Designation	Department	No.	Criteria
Professor	01. Forensic Medicine	1	(a) M.B.B.S from a recognized institution or an equivalent academic qualification as recognised by the B.M.D.C. AND (b) Registration with the B.M.D.C. AND 05 years teaching experience in the relevant subject as Associate Professor or in any other equivalent post as recognized by BMDC with any of the following Post- graduate Degree or Diploma in the relevant subject from a recognized Institution or with such other equivalent academic qualification as recognized by BMDC:- i. MD, MS, FCPS, M.Sc, FRCS, PhD ii. Diploma in relevant subjects (07 years' experience in case of Diploma). 05 publications in medical journals recognized by BMDC. - Not exceeding 55 years by direct recruitment / relaxed in case of departmental candidates.
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	03. Microbiology	1	
	04. Medicine	2	
	05. General Surgery	2	
	06. Pediatrics	1	
	07. Psychiatry	1	
	08. Orthopedics	1	
	09. Cardiology	1	
Associate Professor	01. Surgery	2	(a) M.B.B.S from a recognized institution or an equivalent academic qualification as recognized by the B.M.D.C. AND (b) Registration with the B.M.D.C. AND 03 years teaching experience in the relevant subject as Assistant Professor or as Senior Consultant or in any other equivalent post as recognized by BMDC with any of the following Postgraduate Degree or Diploma in the relevant subject from a recognized Institution or with such other equivalent academic qualification as recognized by BMDC. i. MD, MS, FCPS, FRCS, M.Sc, M.Phil, PhD ii. Diploma in relevant subjects (04 years' experience in case of Diploma). 03 publications in medical journals recognized by BMDC. - Not exceeding 45 years by direct recruitment / relaxed in case of departmental candidates.
	02. Paediatrics	1	
	03. Cardiology	1	
	04. Urology	1	
	05. E.N.T	1	
	06. Ophthalmology	1	
	07. Gastroenterology	1	
Assistant Professor	01. Pharmacology	1	(a) M.B.B.S. or equivalent degree as recognized by the B.M.D.C.; (b) Registration from the B.M.D.C. AND - Any of the following Post Graduate Degree or Diploma in the relevant subject from a recognized Institution or such other equivalent Academic qualification as recognized by BMDC. i. MD, MS, FCPS, FRCS, M.Sc, M.Phil, DFM, DLO, MPH, PhD. ii. Diploma in relevant subjects. - Candidates having teaching experience or evidence in research work and also publication will get preference. - Not exceeding 40 years by direct recruitment / relaxed in case of departmental candidates.
	02. Physiology	1	
	03. Forensic Medicine	1	
	04. Medicine	3	
	05. Surgery	1	
	06. Paediatrics	1	
	07. Psychiatry	1	
	08. Cardiology	1	
	09. Orthopedics	1	
	10. Urology	1	
	11. E.N.T	1	
	12. Nephrology	1	
	13. Gastroenterology	1	
	14. Endocrinology	1	
Residence Physician/ Residence Surgeon	01. Medicine	1	(a) M.B.B.S. or equivalent degree as recognized by the B.M.D.C. AND (b)Registration from the B.M.D.C. AND - Any of the following Postgraduate Degree or Diploma in the relevant subject from a recognized Institution or such other equivalent Academic qualification as recognized by BMDC. i. MD, MS, FCPS, ii. Diploma in relevant subject. (FCPS P-1/MD/MS Course/Diploma Course) 'OR' 4 years' service as Assistant Surgeon/MO including 1 year experience in the relevant subject. - Candidates having a Post- graduate Degree or Diploma in the relevant subject from a recognized institution or such other equivalent academic qualification as recognized by the B.M.D.C. will get preference. Not exceeding 40 years by direct recruitment / relaxed in case of departmental candidates.
	02. Surgery	1	
Registrar	01. Medicine	1	(a) M.B.B.S. or equivalent degree as recognized by the B.M.D.C.; (b)Registration from the B.M.D.C. AND - Any of the following Postgraduate Degree or Diploma in the relevant subject from a recognized Institution or such other equivalent Academic qualification as recognized by BMDC. i. MD, MS, FCPS, ii. Diploma in relevant subject. (FCPS P-1/MD/MS Course/Diploma Course) 'OR' 4 years' service as Assistant Surgeon/MO including 1 year experience in the relevant subject. - Candidates having a Post- graduate Degree or Diploma in the relevant subject from a recognized institution or such other equivalent academic qualification as recognized by the B.M.D.C. will get preference. Not exceeding 40 years by direct recruitment / relaxed in case of departmental candidates.
	02. Surgery	2	
	03. Paediatrics	2	
	04. Psychiatry	1	
	05. Cardiology	1	
	06. Orthopedics	1	
	07. Urology	1	
	08. E.N.T	1	
	09. Ophthalmology	1	
	10. Nephrology	1	
	11. Gastroenterology	1	

Read before to apply:

- Applicant must attach a pay order (Non-refundable) of BDT 500/- (Five hundred taka) in favor of "Shaheed Monsur Ali Medical College".
- A cover letter (Attention to Principal) with a passport-size photo, a complete CV, a copy of National ID, updated BMDC registration and copies of all educational & experience certificates to the application.
- The application must be sent by courier or hand to the Principal's Office, Shaheed Monsur Ali Medical College, Uttara, and Dhaka-1230.
- Age limit may be relaxed for Govt. Candidates.
- For viva T/A or D/A will not be provided.
- Deadline of application: Within 10 working days of publication in newspaper.**

Principal (Acting)
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STATUTORY NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 1095 OF 2025

An application under Section-81(2), 85(3) & 396 of the Companies Act, 1994.
Mohammed Hanif Miah. Petitioner.
-versus-
AHANA HOLDINGS LTD. and another. Respondents.

Take Notice that an application U/S- 81(2), 85(3) and 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh for condonation of delay in holding the AGM for the year 2022 of AHANA HOLDINGS LTD. Upon hearing of the application on **01.07.2025** Hon'ble Judge Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel has been pleased to admit said application. In the said order, the Honorable Justice directed to publish advertisements in the newspaper, and submit affidavits-in-compliance. If you are interested to oppose the said application you may appear behalf the Hon'ble Court either in person or through an Advocate. Copy of the said application may be obtained from the under mentioned advocate on payment.

Asikur Rahman Sourav
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
SS Bhaban (Ground Floor), 70/D Green Road, Dhaka-1205, Phone: 01917399260

STATUTORY NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 1078 OF 2025

An application under Section-81(2), 85(3) & 396 of the Companies Act, 1994.
Saad-Bin-Zamir. Petitioner.
-versus-
Uddog BD Ltd. and another. Respondents.

Take Notice that an application U/S- 81(2), 85(3) and 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh for condonation of delay in holding the AGM for the year 2021, 2022, 2023 & 2024 of Uddog BD Ltd. Upon hearing of the application on 30.06.2025 Hon'ble Judge Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel has been pleased to admit said application. In the said order, the Honorable Justice directed to publish advertisements in the newspaper, and submit affidavits-in-compliance. If you are interested to oppose the said application you may appear behalf the Hon'ble Court either in person or through an Advocate. Copy of the said application may be obtained from the under mentioned advocate on payment.

Asikur Rahman Sourav
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
SS Bhaban (Ground Floor), 70/D Green Road, Dhaka-1205, Phone: 01917399260



A member of the public stands next to overturned vehicles and broken trees after flooding caused by a flash flood at the Guadalupe River in Kerrville, Texas, yesterday. Rescuers were desperately searching for at least 27 girls missing from a riverside summer camp, officials said on July 5, after torrential rains caused a "catastrophic" flash flood that killed at least 27 people as it swept through south-central Texas.

PHOTO: AFP

Pak building collapse toll hits 16

AFP, Karachi

Rescue teams in Pakistan worked in searing heat and humidity yesterday to recover residents trapped under the rubble of a building that collapsed, killing 16 people.

Authorities said the building had been declared unsafe and eviction notices were sent to occupants over three years, but landlords and some residents told AFP they had not received them.

Residents reported hearing cracking sounds shortly before the apartment block crumbled around 10:00am on Friday in Karachi's impoverished Lyari neighbourhood, which is considered one of the most dangerous areas in Pakistan.

The death toll stood at 16 yesterday, with 13 injured, according to Summiaya Syed, a police surgeon for the provincial health department.

Rescue teams worked throughout the night, and families said that at least eight people were still believed to be trapped.

A senior district government official, Javed Nabi Khoso, said that notices had been served in 2022, 2023 and 2024 to occupants. But Imran Khaskheli, a resident, denied receiving notices.

Many of the victims are believed to be women.

MASSIVE DRONE ATTACK ON KYIV

Trump mulls Patriot missiles for Ukraine

Says Putin wants to 'just keep killing people'

REUTERS, Washington/Kyiv

US President Donald Trump said Ukraine would need Patriot missiles for its defences, after speaking with President Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday, and voiced frustration over Russian President Vladimir Putin's failure to end the fighting.

Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One that he had a good call with Zelensky, repeating that he was "very unhappy" about his call with Putin a day earlier, given what he called the Russian leader's refusal to work on a ceasefire.

Asked whether the United States would agree to supply more Patriot missiles to Ukraine, as requested by Zelensky, Trump said: "They're going to need them for defence... They're going to need something because they're being hit pretty hard."

Trump touted the efficacy of the Patriot missiles, calling the weapon "pretty amazing."

Asked about the prospects for a ceasefire, Trump said, "It's a very tough situation... I was very unhappy with my call with President Putin. He wants to go all the way, just keep killing people - it's no good."

Zelensky said he had agreed to work on increasing Kyiv's capability to "defend the sky" as Russian attacks escalate, adding in a message on Telegram that he discussed joint defence production, as well as joint purchases and investments with the US leader.



Ukraine has been asking Washington to sell it more Patriot missiles and systems that it sees as key to defending its cities from intensifying Russian air strikes.

Germany said it is in talks on buying Patriot air defence systems to bridge the gap.

A source briefed on the Trump-Zelensky call told Reuters they were optimistic that supplies of Patriot missiles could resume after what they called a "very good" conversation between the presidents.

Trump said he also spoke with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz about Ukraine's request for Patriot missiles, but that no decision had been made to supply the advanced missiles.

US news outlet Axios reported, citing unnamed sources, that the call lasted around 40 minutes and

that Trump told Zelensky he would check what US weapons due to be sent to Ukraine, if any, had been put on hold.

The conversation came a day after Trump said he had a disappointing call with Putin.

Russia pummeled Kyiv with the largest drone attack of the war across the capital hours after Trump's conversation with Putin on Thursday.

Zelenskiy called the attack "deliberately massive and cynical."

Kyiv in the past received Patriot batteries and ammunition from the US in the form of aid under then-President Joe Biden.

Trump criticised him for sending weapons to Ukraine without getting anything in return, and since taking office has overseen a dramatic shake-up of relations with Kyiv.

Myanmar armed groups rebuff junta 'cooperation' plea

AFP, Bangkok

Myanmar's ruling junta yesterday made a rare call for the armed groups it is fighting to cooperate with it ahead of a slated election, an invitation anti-coup forces swiftly rejected.

The unexpected appeal comes as the junta continues to suffer major battlefield reverses to ethnic minority armed groups and pro-democracy "People's Defence Forces" (PDF) that rose up to oppose its seizure of power in 2021.

"If the armed groups... choose to legally establish themselves within the framework of the law and cooperate hand in hand with the government... the government will welcome and accept this," the military said in a statement published by junta media The Global New Light of Myanmar.

The National Unity Government, a body dominated by ousted lawmakers working to reverse the coup, said the junta announcement was "a strategy filled with deception aimed at legitimising their power-consolidating sham election and attempting to divide and weaken" its opponents.

The military ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's elected civilian government in February 2021, triggering mass protests that were met with a brutal crackdown.

Civilians set up PDFs to fight back and ethnic minority armed groups -- many of which have fought the military for decades -- were reinvigorated, plunging the country into civil war.

'I hope to live another 30 or 40 years'

Says Dalai Lama on the eve of his 90th birthday

AFP, McLeod Ganj

The Dalai Lama yesterday said he dreamed of living for decades more, as the Buddhist spiritual leader prayed with thousands of exiled Tibetans on the eve of his 90th birthday.

Thumping drums and deep horns reverberated from the Indian hilltop temple, as a chanting chorus of red-robed monks and nuns offered long life prayers for Tenzin Gyatso, who followers believe is the 14th reincarnation of the Dalai Lama.

Looking in good health, dressed in traditional maroon monk robes and a flowing yellow wrap, he led prayers, days after confirming that the 600-year-old Tibetan Buddhist institution will continue after his death.

"So far, I have done my best and with the continued blessings of Avalokiteshvara (a Buddhist spiritual protector), I hope to live another 30 or 40 years, continuing to serve sentient beings and the Buddha Dharma", he said, referring to the teachings of the



Buddha.

Followers of the Dalai Lama laud his tireless campaign for greater autonomy for Tibet, a vast high-altitude plateau about the size of South Africa.

But speaking at the main temple in the Indian Himalayan town where he has lived for decades -- after Chinese troops crushed an uprising in the Tibetan capital Lhasa in 1959 -- he offered teachings to a far wider audience.

"In my life, I have encountered people from all walks of life, those with faith in religion and others with no interest in it at all. This is only natural, as individuals have different mental dispositions", he said, speaking in Tibetan.

"Yet, the common desire shared by all, including the Tibetan people, is the wish to avoid suffering and to experience happiness."

He said responsibility for identifying the 15th Dalai Lama "will rest exclusively" with his office, the India-based Gaden Phodrang Trust.



An actor carries a baby, painted red, as they depict the killing the son of Imam Hussein during a morning ritual at the shrine of Imam Hussein in the holy city of Karbala yesterday, which coincides with the ninth day of the Muslim month of Muharram in the lead-up to Ashura, a 10-day period commemorating the seventh century killing of Prophet Mohammad's (pbuh) grandson Imam Hussein.

PHOTO: AFP



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Restart the ICUs of 25 public hospitals

Why abandon a project that saves lives?

We are shocked to learn from a report in this paper that intensive care units (ICUs) in 25 public hospitals across the country have not been functional, or only partly functional, for the last few months, mainly because of a shortage of trained staff. This has created a crisis, with critically ill patients being turned away. Most cannot afford private ICU costs and have to turn to the already overburdened, understaffed government hospitals.

According to the report, these ICUs, comprising a total of 240 beds and around 1,000 medical and technical staff, were set up in 22 districts between 2020 and 2024 under a project mainly funded by the World Bank. The contract, however, expired in December 2024, and the government did not reappoint or replace the staff, leaving these ICUs non-functional. At present, 22 districts still lack any ICU facilities, while the majority of ICU beds remain concentrated in hospitals in Dhaka. As a result, many patients must be referred to Dhaka hospitals, with the lengthy travel time posing additional risks to their health. Some hospitals have managed to keep ICUs partially operational by redeploying staff from their existing workforce and relying on dismissed staff from the project, some of whom continue to work unofficially despite their dismissal.

Originally launched to treat Covid patients during the pandemic, these ICUs are essential components of regular hospital care. We are also dismayed to learn that several other vital initiatives under this project have been abandoned after the World Bank declined to extend the contract. These include 10-bed ICUs planned for 33 other districts, paediatric ICUs in 16 medical college hospitals, obstetric ICUs for critically ill pregnant women in 15 medical colleges, 10-bed ICUs at two specialised hospitals, and one-stop emergency centres at 21 medical colleges.

Other crucial facilities that would have been established under this project include microbiology laboratories, the installation or expansion of liquid medical oxygen at 30 hospitals, and medical waste treatment plants at 20 hospitals. These are crucial services for a hospital, especially amid the rising cases of Covid and dengue infections.

It is unfortunate that the World Bank chose not to renew the contract and that the health ministry has been unable to restart these ICUs. Although the government plans to introduce a cluster system, whereby one hospital's ICU will serve patients from two to three neighbouring districts, this hardly meets the growing demand for critical care.

There has always been a glaring gap in ICU and other essential services across public hospitals nationwide. Discontinuing a project aimed at reducing this gap is unwise and shows a lack of foresight. We urge the government to raise funds through alternative donors to restart this project, which would benefit many critically ill patients and save lives.

Dengue surge demands urgent action

Govt must listen to expert advice to combat its spread

The rapidly rising dengue cases in the country raise a pressing concern: are we heading towards another deadly outbreak this year? The hospitalisation of 1,160 dengue patients in just the first three days of July paints an alarming picture. According to DGHS data, as of July 4, dengue has claimed 45 lives, with the total number of reported cases reaching 11,660. Given the rapid spread of dengue during the monsoon season, the numbers are expected to rise further in the coming weeks. Experts have warned that all 64 districts could face more severe outbreaks than in previous years, as Aedes mosquitoes are now widespread across the country. Unless the government takes urgent and comprehensive action to curb the spread, we may suffer another devastating dengue crisis this year.

Since the beginning of the year, we have repeatedly urged the authorities through this column to take effective measures to curb dengue before it spirals out of control. Unfortunately, the government's response has been largely inadequate. Instead of implementing a comprehensive and well-structured dengue management plan, efforts have been mostly limited to routine fogging and occasional cleaning drives. Moreover, dengue control efforts outside Dhaka have been particularly weak. The recent surge in cases in Barguna is a stark example of this weakness.

This year, DGHS data reveal another troubling trend: women have a higher fatality rate relative to their infection numbers. Men account for 59.3 percent of infections and 53.3 percent of deaths, while women represent 40.7 percent of infections but 46.7 percent of deaths. While several factors may have contributed to this, experts point out that gender-based neglect plays a significant role here. Patriarchal norms often delay women's access to timely medical care, with families often seeking help only when it is already too late. This societal attitude must change if we are to reduce preventable deaths from dengue.

The government must urgently listen to expert advice and develop a comprehensive dengue management plan with clearly defined priorities. Entomologists emphasise that larviciding and the elimination of mosquito breeding grounds should be prioritised over general fogging, which has become largely ineffective. They recommend the use of Insect Growth Regulators (IGRs)—which remain effective for up to three months—alongside targeted larvicide application. Equally crucial is community involvement. Without active public participation in destroying breeding grounds, dengue cannot be effectively controlled. In parallel, the government must ensure that hospitals outside Dhaka are equipped with adequate treatment facilities. Experts have also called for a dedicated vector control department for cluster identification, surveillance, and targeted interventions. Timely implementation of these measures is critical to averting yet another deadly outbreak this year.

One year after July: A nation waits in uncertainty



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BOBBY HAJJAJ

As the calendar wheels into July once more, we approach the first anniversary of the great civic insurrection that unseated what was, by any measure, one of the most enduring authoritarian regimes in South Asia's history. The events of that month, its tremors, its torch-lit vigils, its bloodied pavements, constituted more than just an upheaval. They were the birth pangs of a people's longing to breathe freely, to be governed not by fear, but by consent. Yet, as we mark this sacred milestone, the grand celebrations, what really grips us is a creeping unease, a quiet admission that much remains undone.

There was, for a brief interval last month, the hope of reaching consensus, of returning to democratic nation-building in earnest. Following the meeting in London between Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and BNP's Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman—a dialogue heralded as a cornerstone for national reconciliation—the nation dared to believe again. We heard whispers of reason, signs of structured transition, the first contours of institutional sanity. But before the month could pass, and like the monsoon clouds that hover before evaporating into nothingness, the promise of direction has already started to dissipate. We now find ourselves ensnared once more in the ominous choreography of brinkmanship—where actors, seen and unseen, gamble not merely with policy, but with the fate of the republic.

It is the economy—always the economy—that feels the tremors first and most profoundly. Bill Clinton's infamous admonition in 1992—"It's the economy, stupid!"—remains the only compass in times of political confusion. Yet here, the compass spins wildly. Inflation has surged beyond 10 percent, eroding real wages and eviscerating what little remains of the middle class's purchasing power. The proposed budget for FY2025-26 projects a deficit of Tk 2.26 trillion, or roughly 3.6 percent of GDP—an official optimism purchased with heroic revenue assumptions. The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) warns that the National Board of Revenue may miss its target by Tk 1.05 trillion, perhaps more if present trends persist. This is not a gap, it is a chasm.

Private investment, both domestic and foreign, has frozen. Investors are rational creatures; they demand

not only profit but predictability. No one writes cheques to a state whose stewardship is in limbo. A caretaker administration, however principled, cannot catalyse long-term capital formation. The chambers of commerce know it. So do the garment factory owners, the agribusinessmen, and the fintech pioneers. And so, tragically, do



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

the retrenched workers now seeking overseas contracts to survive.

Current businesses are suffocating. Their margins are under siege from inflationary pressures, disrupted supply chains, and a merciless tax regime scrambling for revenue. Bankruptcy looms large for many, not due to mismanagement, but because the very atmosphere in which they operate is toxified by uncertainty. And when the private sector falters, the consequences spill far beyond commerce; they seep into livelihoods, into families, into the very moral fabric of society.

Into this void of economic and political ambiguity have crept actors whose motivations are far more malign. Certain parties, many of them historically allergic to liberal democracy and obsessed with theocratic absolutism, have seized upon the vacuum. With rhetorical sleight and strategic opportunism,

evidence of PR's tendency to empower fringe groups and paralyse governance to recognise the threat. This is not an academic squabble. It is a naked power play by those who could not secure popular mandates and now wish to engineer institutional loopholes for influence. Worse still, their ideological lodestar is not democratic pluralism, but an ideological orthodoxy that has historically regarded secular governance as an aberration to be corrected.

The fragility of law and order adds another sinister layer to this already precarious situation. Violent crimes—extortion, land grabs, even assassinations—have not abated. In fact, in some regions they have increased. The police, under-resourced and demoralised, struggle to enforce the writ of the state. The moral authority of the interim advisers has waned, not because their intentions were suspect, but because

For every month that passes without electoral resolution, the economy haemorrhages, the polity polarises, and those with extreme views gain ground. Time, which once seemed to be on our side, now conspires against us. There is no "ideal" moment to vote. The revolution did not ask for perfection. It asked for legitimacy, for representation, for the return of the republic to its rightful stewards: the people.

If we betray that promise now—through delay, through deception, or through distraction—we do not merely postpone democracy. We imperil it.

The July uprising was a moment of rupture, yes—but also of rare unity. That unity is fraying. Let us not allow the silence of inaction to become louder than the chants of the people who made history only a year ago. Let us not forget what we rose against—and more importantly, what we rose for.

The future of indigenous recognition in Bangladesh



Mong Sing Hai Marma is a journalist at The Daily Star.

MONG SING HAI MARMA

On June 23, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs convened an inter-ministerial meeting to discuss a proposed amendment to the Small Ethnic Group Cultural Institute Act, 2010. The new draft is titled Cultural Institution for Ethnic Diversity Act 2025, replacing the term "small ethnic group" with "ethnic diversity", and "institute" with "institution".

While this might appear to be a mere change in wording, it raises a pressing and deeper concern: is this semantic shift a precursor to a larger policy move aimed at removing the constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh?

More than semantics: A constitutional question

The relationship between the Bangladesh state and indigenous communities—particularly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and the plains—has been shaped through unique legislative and constitutional

arrangements. These include: i) The Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation, 1900; ii) Regional and District Council Acts; iii) The CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission Act; and iv) Small Ethnic Group Cultural Institute Act, 2010.

These legal frameworks not only acknowledge the distinct identity of indigenous groups but also ensure a respectful and historically rooted relationship with the state. Any change to these foundations, especially involving terminology, therefore demands careful scrutiny and inclusive dialogue.

From 'indigenous' to 'ethnic diversity': A shift in philosophy

Replacing "small ethnic group" with "ethnic diversity" might seem innocuous, but it signifies a deeper philosophical shift. While "indigenous" or "small ethnic groups" refer to specific, constitutionally recognised peoples with historical, cultural, and

territorial rights, "ethnic diversity" is an abstract concept. It lacks legal clarity and dilutes the specificity of indigenous identity.

Who exactly does "ethnic diversity" refer to? How is it defined? Does it include constitutionally recognised indigenous peoples, or does it submerge their identity into a generic framework, stripping them of special protections?

No indigenous representation in policy revision?

Despite calling secretaries from 21 ministries and four director generals to the June 23 meeting, the government excluded direct participation of indigenous institute leaders. They were only allowed to attend online, without voting or speaking rights.

How can a law meant to represent indigenous cultural rights be amended without their physical presence or input? This exclusion raises fundamental questions about representation and legitimacy in the legislative process.

Undermining multiculturalism

If a state weakens the constitutional foundation of its most marginalised communities, it risks not only alienating them but also damaging the broader ideals of pluralism, inclusivity, and democratic governance.

Following the success of the people's

uprising on August 5, 2025, one piece of graffiti captured the national mood: "This country doesn't belong to any one group. It belongs to all of us."

This sentiment must be reflected in state policy, especially towards indigenous peoples.

A constructive proposal

We urge the government not to erase identity through abstraction. Instead of shifting from "tribal", "small ethnic group", or "ethnic diversity", we propose enacting a new, modern, and inclusive law titled: Indigenous Cultural Institute Act.

Such legislation must be developed with indigenous representation and built on the principles of constitutional recognition, cultural protection, and administrative participation. This would strengthen—not sever—the bridge between the majority and the minorities in our country.

A call from the new generation

Today's indigenous youth no longer want to live on the margins of the republic. They seek meaningful participation in every aspect of national development, from policymaking to education, culture, and beyond.

The state must realise that acknowledging and empowering its indigenous peoples is not a concession; it is a constitutional and moral obligation.

Was the Bonn climate talk promising for the upcoming COP30?



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MIZAN R KHAN

This year's June Climate Meetings (SB62), also known as the Bonn Climate Change Conference, under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), concluded on June 26 in Bonn, Germany. The mission of these annual mid-year meetings is to draft decision texts on the agenda items for final approval at the upcoming Conference of the Parties 30 (COP30), to be held in November in Belém, Brazil. Overall, the agenda comprised approximately 50 items and 30 mandatory events.

However, actual negotiations were delayed due to disagreements over the addition of two new agenda items proposed by the powerful Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDCs) and the Arab Group, consisting of China, India, South Africa, Bolivia, and Saudi Arabia. The first proposal focused on Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement (PA), which addresses the obligation of developed countries to provide public climate finance to developing nations. This was a point of contention, as developing countries argue it is a legal obligation that has not been adequately met. The second agenda item proposed was on trade measures, such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), that the EU is considering imposing on developing country exports. Finally, a compromise was struck whereby those items were not agreed upon but were reflected in discussions.

This time, the agendas of the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) and Just Transition were prominent. The earlier debate over indicators of the GGA, particularly of "Means of Implementation", such as climate finance, capacity-building, and technology, continued because developed countries reject indicators that can measure their support levels. Finally, a compromised text was adopted: "indicators for means of implementation and other



PHOTO: UN CLIMATE CHANGE

Relying on the private sector to fund climate adaptation, a strategy promoted by developed nations, is not working.

factors that enable the implementation of adaptation action are to be included..."

As always, finance negotiations across agendas continued to be the most intractable, this time under new geopolitical scenarios—new wars, the US withdrawal from the PA, and climate and other aid cuts by the US and major European countries. Relying on the private sector to fund climate adaptation, a

strategy promoted by developed nations, is not working. The evidence is stark: private investment has accounted for just two percent of adaptation funding, making this approach especially unsuited to an era of declining global cooperation. Against this poor record, LDCs continued demanding a tripling of adaptation finance by 2030.

Among mandated workshops, the most important was the discussion on Article 2.1(c)

some tangible outcomes. I regard the four letters shared so far by the presidency as masterpieces of advocacy for global norms and values, which urged the parties to be guided by three interconnected priorities for SB62 and COP30: (1) to reinforce multilateralism and the climate change regime under the UNFCCC; (2) to connect the climate regime to people's lives; and (3) to accelerate the implementation of the PA by stimulating

for maintaining or restoring forests.

Now that all rules of the PA are operational, implementation is the focus. The COP30 presidency elaborated on this in its fourth letter, shared on June 20, with a detailed "action agenda". It consists of six themes and 30 key suggested activities, which will be deliberated in Belém. To realise this priority, there is a need for reform of multilateral institutions, including the COP, as recognised by the presidency. But this is likely to be a tall order, at least for the foreseeable future.

Despite all these odds, as an organising principle, the presidency letters explicate the Brazilian indigenous culture-based concept of "mutirão", which means a community coming together to work on a shared task. So the COP30 presidency invites the climate community to a global mutirão against the polycrisis. Some of the excellent ideas contained in those letters are: systemic, non-linear thinking for structural adjustments; forward-looking approaches to solve collective action problems like climate change; and aligning ancestral wisdom with the latest science and social technology.

In fact, in doing rigorous homework, Brazil has taken elaborate organisational initiatives, such as the nomination of 30 prominent international and national envoys, who will work with the leadership. The selected envoys and champions, including former national leaders, veteran lead negotiators and youth celebrities, were chosen for their influence, experience, and credibility among their peers. Besides, the host established four very high-level leadership circles: the Circle of Finance Ministers, the Circle of Peoples, the Circle of Ethics and Stocktake, and the Circle of COP Presidents. The latter two are led by the UN secretary-general and the COP21 president, who led the crafting of the PA.

With all this due diligence, the Brazilian presidency wants to avoid what it calls the continued "brutality of inaction" in the COP process. As an academic negotiator for over 20 years, I have dubbed climate negotiations a process of "active inaction" in my first book on adaptation politics in 2014. Let us hope that COP30, under the able leadership of Brazil, with its stated lofty norms and values guided by the global mutirão, can change the course of negotiations—at least a little.

How Mamdani toppled a titan and redefined American politics

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HUSSAIN A SAMAD

In a political landscape engineered to favour dynasties, deep pockets, and establishment darlings, Zohran Mamdani's 2025 New York City Democratic mayoral primary victory was a seismic upset. The 33-year-old state assemblyman from Queens—a democratic socialist, practising Muslim, and vocal critic of Israel's policies—defeated Andrew Cuomo, a former governor with millions in donations and a once-dominant name. Mamdani's win wasn't just an upset; it was a masterclass in defying a system designed to sideline outsiders like him. Analysts called it the biggest electoral shock since David Dinkins' 1989 victory, a triumph of trust over cash, authenticity over clout. Without an Ivy League degree, political legacy, or billionaire backers, Mamdani's rise offers a blueprint for challenging the status quo.

Mamdani's path to victory began long before his mayoral run, rooted in relentless grassroots activism. As a foreclosure prevention counsellor in 2016, he helped Queens and Brooklyn families fight predatory landlords during the post-recession housing crisis. Elected to the New York State Assembly in 2020 for District 36, he championed the rent stabilisation system, protecting 2.5 million tenants, and co-sponsored the Good Cause Eviction law to shield renters from soaring costs. His 2022 push to cancel rent during Covid, backed by 10,000 petition signatures, made him a hero in places like Jackson Heights, where 60 percent of

loyal following of 500,000 across Instagram and TikTok by 2024. "Zohran was fighting for us when no one else was," a Bangladeshi organiser told *The Juggernaut*. This trust, forged through years of unglamorous work, made Mamdani a household name among NYC's working class, setting the stage for his 2025 upset.

Mamdani's path was fraught with obstacles. As a Muslim of Indian-Ugandan descent, his identity invited scrutiny. His support for Palestinian rights, calling Israel's actions in Gaza a "genocide" and endorsing the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, drew accusations of antisemitism, which he refuted. His refusal to condemn "globalise the intifada," decried by some Jewish leaders as a call to violence, also fueled controversy, drawing rebukes from institutions like the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. Mamdani faced Islamophobic attacks, including from a pro-Cuomo mailer that darkened his skin and beard, which he condemned as "blatant Islamophobia" at a June 10 press conference. He proposed a \$50 million fund for interfaith community centres, earning endorsements from progressive Jewish groups like "Jews for Racial & Economic Justice". On *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, he called out the smear as a "desperate tactic by a fading dynasty," earning applause and two million TikTok views. His stance on Palestinian rights, rooted in non-violence, resonated with young voters, progressive Jews, and Muslims.

Mamdani's critique of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, labelling him a "war criminal" over the 2002 Gujarat riots, sparked backlash among some Indian Americans. Groups like Indian Americans for Cuomo called him a "Hindu-hating bigot," and a *New India Abroad* op-ed urged

Viswanath of Hindus for Human Rights, an American non-profit, tweeted support, calling him a "unifier."

His democratic socialist label drew scepticism from moderates wary of his policies—free buses, rent freezes, city-owned grocery stores—which were deemed too radical for NYC's \$115 billion budget. Critics, including Cuomo, attacked his lack of

heritage, releasing Urdu campaign videos and speaking to diverse communities. His refusal to back down on Palestine signalled fearlessness, resonating with voters tired of scripted politicians. A Bangladeshi Uber driver told one outlet, "Zohran is for peace, not war. He's for ordinary people."

Critics, including *The New York Times*, called his ideas "pie-in-the-sky." Yet, his focus

campaign," admitting the old rules no longer applied.

Mamdani's win positions him as New York's potential first Muslim, South Asian, and millennial mayor, but the November 2025 general election against incumbent Eric Adams and possibly Cuomo as an independent will test his coalition. Governing a city with a \$115 billion budget and 300,000



PHOTO: REUTERS

Mamdani's path to victory began long before his mayoral run, rooted in relentless grassroots activism.

administrative experience, with the former governor warning that "inexperience is dangerous." The Democratic machine posed another hurdle: Cuomo backed with a \$24 million war chest, countered by billionaires like Mike Bloomberg and airwaves flooded with anti-Mamdani ads. His endorsements included Bill Clinton and labour unions, leveraging his dynastic name and Covid-era nostalgia. Mamdani, with USD eight million from 20,000 small donors and 50,000 volunteers, started with just one percent name recognition, facing a system built to crush outsiders.

Mamdani turned barriers into strengths through authenticity and agility. He embraced his Muslim and South Asian

on affordability connected with working-class New Yorkers. Rejecting corporate cash, he promised to "Trump proof" the city, positioning himself as a genuine alternative to Cuomo's establishment playbook.

On June 24, 2025, Mamdani stunned the political world, defeating Andrew Cuomo by a strong margin in the final count, winning 56 percent to Cuomo's 44 percent. He won progressive strongholds like Brooklyn and flipped swing districts like Oakland Gardens. His coalition—young voters, Muslims, progressive Jews, and working-class communities—showed New Yorkers craved fresh leadership over Cuomo's "arrogant power grab." Cuomo's concession speech praised Mamdani's "smart and impactful

employees will be tougher, as seen in the struggles of progressive mayors like Chicago's Brandon Johnson. Yet, Mamdani's consultations with experienced municipal officials and pragmatic approach, inspired by Bernie Sanders' Burlington tenure, suggest he's preparing for the challenge.

Finally, Mamdani's victory signals that the Democratic Party's future may lie with those it once dismissed. In a city of eight million, where billionaires and dynasties once ruled, a young organiser with a bold vision proved the system isn't invincible. For aspiring politicians, his message is clear: authenticity, savviness, and a focus on the people can topple even the mightiest giants.

Mamdani turned barriers into strengths through authenticity and agility. He embraced his Muslim and South Asian heritage, releasing Urdu campaign videos and speaking to diverse communities. His refusal to back down on Palestine signalled fearlessness, resonating with voters tired of scripted politicians. A Bangladeshi Uber driver told one outlet, "Zohran is for peace, not war. He's for ordinary people."

residents are rent-burdened.

Beyond housing, Mamdani helped secure \$1.3 billion in relief for undocumented workers excluded from federal aid. His weekly "Office Hours" at bodegas (small grocery shops, especially in Spanish-speaking neighbourhoods) and subway stops, listening to cabbies and nurses, became legendary. His efforts, amplified on social media, built a

Hindus to reject him. Mamdani countered with a Hindi campaign video featuring clips from the movie *Deewaar* to frame his fight as one for justice, not division. He attended interfaith events, like a May 20 Brooklyn rally with Sikh and Jain leaders, and secured an endorsement from Indian American Impact Fund, a political organisation and lobbying group, for his "inclusive vision." Sunita

‘THE CAGE’ refreshes music scene as RockSalt crowned inaugural winners



RockSalt, however, had momentum even before stepping on stage. The crowd was chanting their name, and when they launched into *Nishpotti* — one of their original tracks — the venue erupted. Their tight coordination and natural ability to engage the crowd made them stand out.

NAVEEN ISLAM TOREE

As the stage lights blazed and distortion pedals roared, the grand finale of *The Cage* unfolded in Dhaka last Friday night, drawing the curtain on Bangladesh’s boldest rock music reality show yet. With The Daily Star as co-sponsor, the event brought together raw talent and a passionate audience from across the city, all eager to witness the conclusion of a show that has helped revive interest in the country’s emerging rock scene.

The day’s afternoon kicked off with high energy, and the crowd maintained that momentum throughout the night. The audience was a diverse mix — university students, long-time fans of the judges and the show, young professionals, and even older rock legends — showcasing the genre’s wide appeal and cultural reach in Bangladesh.

The atmosphere was nothing short of electric. Each band left their soul on stage, chasing not just the title, but a lasting place in the hearts of the country’s rock faithful.



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

The show opened with Nine and Eden’s Garden, who set the tone with lively performances featuring both originals and covers. Karnation was one of the standout acts of the night. Their performance of *Ditio Shotta* and *Joyer Nishan* (Original tracks) received a strong response, with the audience lighting up their flashlights and joining in.

Dopamine brought a different flavour, opening with humour and turning past criticisms into part of their act. Their song *Jodi Harai* was already popular, but it was the English track *Good Job* that made a bigger impact since it was a direct response to the online bullying they had faced. The song earned a standing

ovation from the crowd.

Dusk N Dawn had gone through a lineup change before the finale, with two new members joining, including one from Serious Joker. Despite the departure of Anamika, they delivered a solid set featuring *Neel Manush*, *Mukti Khoja* (a new original), and a cover of *Watch Over You*. They maintained the introspective, emotional tone that had defined their performances throughout the season.

RockSalt, however, had momentum even before stepping on stage. The crowd was chanting their name, and when they launched into *Nishpotti* — one of their original tracks — the venue erupted. Their tight coordination and natural ability to engage the crowd made them stand out. For a moment, it felt like vocalist Nahian was controlling the audience like a pried piper.

The judging panel featured four icons of the Bangladeshi music industry: Palash Noor (Warfaze), Tasfia Fatima Tashfee (Bangu Bibi), Asif Asgar Ranjan (Arbovirus), and Raef Al Hasan Rafa (AvoidRafa). Throughout the season, they guided and mentored the bands with insight and encouragement.

Aside from the finalists, the evening featured special performances that thrilled the crowd, including a tribute to Chester Bennington by AK Rahul, solo sets by AvoidRafa, and impromptu jam sessions by Rafa and Ranjan. There was also a powerful performance by Warfaze, reminding everyone of the legacy that current bands are building upon.

When it was finally time to announce the winner, anticipation filled the air. And then came the verdict: RockSalt emerged victorious, securing the title and proving themselves as the ultimate breakout act of the season.

With this win, RockSalt carries the torch forward, and *The Cage* has once again shown that Bangladesh’s rock music future is loud, passionate, and uncompromising.

‘Fantastic Four’ actor Julian McMahon passes away at 56



Australian actor Julian McMahon, best known for his portrayal of Dr Doom in Marvel’s *Fantastic Four* franchise, has passed away at 56 after battling cancer. His wife, Kelly McMahon, confirmed the news, stating he died peacefully and always sought to bring joy to others.

Son of former Australian Prime Minister Billy McMahon, Julian began his career as a model before moving into acting with the 1989 soap *The Power, the Passion*. He gained fame through roles in *Profiler*, *Charmed*, and *Nip/Tuck*, and appeared in films including *Premeditation*, *RED*, and *You’re Not You*.

His final role was in *The Surfer*, which premiered at Cannes 2024. McMahon was last seen in Netflix’s *The Residence*, portraying the Australian Prime Minister.

July uprising documentary ‘Shrabon Bidroho’ to premiere tomorrow



The documentary *Shrabon Bidroho*, based on the July-August mass uprising, is scheduled to premiere tomorrow (July 7) at 6:30pm at the Bangladesh National Museum’s main auditorium in Shahbagh.

Hosted by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the screening is open to the public, according to a press release signed by the ministry’s public relations officer, Md Mamun-or-Rashid.

Md Mahfuj Alam, adviser to the ministry, will deliver the welcome speech. Distinguished guests include Asif Nazrul, Adilur Rahman Khan, Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, Asif Mahmud Sajib Bhuiyan, and Shamsi Ara Zaman, mother of martyred journalist Tahir Zaman Priyo.

NEWS

Over 45 lakh cases pending

FROM PAGE 12

trader in the capital’s Mirpur, was tortured to death in law enforcers’ custody.

A team of two dozen police personnel, led by the then sub-inspector of Pallabi Police Station Zahidur Rahman, raided a Pallabi house during a wedding ceremony and picked up Jonny and his brother Imtiaz Hossain Rocky on February 8, 2014.

Police informants Sumon and Russell called the law enforcers after Jonny slapped Sumon for stalking and harassing women at the function. Police tortured the two brothers at the station, according to the case statement.

Jonny was admitted to a local clinic the following day. As his condition worsened, he was transferred to Suhrawardy Hospital where he died.

On September 9, 2020, a Dhaka court sentenced Zahidur and ex-assistant SIs Qamruzzaman Mintu and Rashedul Islam to life imprisonment, and Sumon and Russell to seven years in jail.

Contacted, Jonny’s brother Imtiaz said the case has been pending with an HC bench, which is yet to hold a hearing.

“Zahid and Rashidul are in jail, while Mintu is absconding,” he said.

“Both Sumon and Russel remain at large. I fear that they could harm me or my family.”

EFFORTS TO EXPEDITE DISPOSAL OF CASES

The government has been implementing the e-judiciary project over the last few years to improve case management by bringing the lower courts under a digital network. Under the initiative, courts, police stations, and jails as well as investigators, witnesses, lawyers and defendants will be connected to the network.

The Supreme Court Judge Appointment Ordinance, 2024, was issued recently to ease pressure on courts and ensure faster delivery of justice.

Under the new ordinance, two HC judges were elevated to Appellate Division judges on March 24, raising the number of SC judges to seven.

More HC judges are likely to be appointed soon, say SC sources.

The number of HC judges now stands at 95, down from 100 in June 2012, said the sources.

Moreover, five judges have been excluded from judicial duties since October 20, 2024, following protests demanding their removal over alleged links with Awami League.

Talking to this newspaper, SC lawyer Barrister Saqeb Mahbub said, “Judges should be given more administrative support and resources. Lower courts are given very little technological support and judges don’t have sufficient resources at their disposal.”

They need to adopt effective case management practices penalising those who abuse the process by filing false cases or seeking adjournments frequently, he noted.

“Both our civil and criminal procedure codes need an overhaul. These colonial era procedural laws don’t adequately facilitate alternative dispute resolutions, such as arbitration and mediation,” he added.



Nahid addressing a rally in Joypurhat.

PHOTO: STAR

Texas floods kill at least 27

FROM PAGE 12

The National Weather Service warned of more extremely heavy rain and “locally catastrophic” flash flooding to come in the region, located northwest of San Antonio.

A massive rescue operation began Friday, with around 500 personnel and 14 helicopters helping in the search for survivors.

Yesterday, city official Rice said 27 children from the Camp Mystic Christian summer camp in the flooded Kerr County were still missing.

US media reported that two of the missing girls were dead, citing their families.

The missing were among the roughly 750 children at Camp Mystic, a girls’ summer camp along the banks of the Guadalupe River.

The Heart O’ The Hills summer camp, located about a mile away from Camp Mystic, confirmed on Saturday that its director, Jane Ragsdale, was among the dead.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott has signed a disaster declaration to boost resources for counties in the region, and President Donald Trump has promised federal support.

Trump said his Homeland Security secretary, Kristi Noem, would visit the affected area on Saturday.

Rice said that rescuers were facing

“very difficult” conditions.

Videos on social media showed houses and trees swept away by the flash flood caused by heavy overnight rain of up to 12 inches — one-third of Kerr County’s average annual rainfall.

Governor Abbott shared a video on X of a victim being plucked from the top of a tree by a rescuer dangling from a helicopter, as floodwaters raged below.

With rescuers fanning out across the region, Joe Herring, the Kerrville mayor, asked for the community to come together.

“People need to know today will be a hard day. It will be a hard day,” he said, his voice breaking.

‘Same old mafia system still exists’

FROM PAGE 12

throughout the month. Rallies were also held in Bogura and Naogaon yesterday.

In Bogura, Nahid met with the families of the district’s July martyrs at the Bogura Parjatan Corporation in the morning.

Addressing the rally at the Satmatha Mukto Moncho in the town, the NCP leader said the next national election should take place after ensuring justice for the atrocities during the mass uprising and implementing reforms, reported our correspondent in Bogura.

“Justice must be visible. It must begin now. Those who fired the bullets and committed mass killings must be held accountable. Justice must be ensured on the soil of Bangla, for Sheikh Hasina and the police officers who opened fire,” he said.

He also said the NCP will unveil a July manifesto on August 3 at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka.

“We are gathering at the Shaheed Minar on August 3 with the July manifesto, a declaration for the people, land, and map of Bangladesh ... Just as we declared the fall of the fascist system with a one-point demand last year, we will declare the beginning of

a new Bangladesh,” he said.

Nahid said the July Declaration will “certainly be included in the constitution”.

“July is not a matter of emotion. July will be our political manifesto. Our political destination. The future of Bangladesh will be guided by this July. Those who don’t want to include July, the martyrs, or those injured in the constitution are the new guardians of Mujibism.

“After the mass uprising, Bangladesh will not be run at the behest of India, Pakistan, America, or China,” the NCP leader said, adding that the people of Bangladesh will take decisions about elections, politics, and everything about the country.

“We need a new Bangladesh, a new system, new laws and regulations. We will not participate in your old games. We will not participate in your politics of extortion, your politics of terror.”

Nahid said the leaders of the uprising demanded to ensure a neutral administration, neutral police, and a neutral judiciary. “If anyone acts like a partisan administration in the old ways, their fate will be like that of the fascists and collaborators of Mujibism,” he warned.

“What was the fate of those

who stole votes, who were election commissioners in the 2018 polls? If you forget the power of students and the public within one year of this mass uprising, then you are mistaken,” Nahid added.

The NCP leader said the people of Bogura were victims of political discrimination over the past 16-17 years.

“No one was given a job if they heard the name Bogura; they were not given a place anywhere. Bogura residents were indiscriminately given false and fabricated cases,” Nahid said.

“After the mass uprising, we do not want any special privileges. We do not want any discrimination. We want everyone to have equal opportunities according to their merit and qualifications. We want backward areas to receive development commensurate with their needs,” he added.

In Naogaon, Nahid said that the country must be rebuilt through several principles such as justice, reform and a fresh constitution, reports BSS.

“Justice, reform and the constitution are our main demands. The country must be rebuilt through these principles,” he said during a brief rally.

Survivor ‘facing death threats’

FROM PAGE 12

“Even after the last hearing on June 24, Munshi told me he has money, so the court verdict will go in his favour. We are living in constant fear. Last week, we sold our house and our 20 decimal land. We are moving elsewhere, or they will kill us,” she added.

So far, four witnesses have testified

in court. “The accused and their relatives are also threatening the witnesses,” she claimed.

Her lawyer, Habibur Rasul Mamun, confirmed that the accused have been trying to intimidate the family.

On February 6 last year, the survivor and her 12-year-old daughter were gang-raped at their home. She filed a case with Char Jabbar Police

Station the same day, and three days later, Munshi and two others — Md Harun and Mehrab Uddin — were arrested.

Prime accused Munshi was released on bail on November 6, while the two others remain in jail.

Despite repeated attempts, Munshi could not be reached for comments.

Since October 7, 2023, Israeli military campaign has killed at least 57,268 people in Gaza, mostly civilians, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry. The United Nations considers the figures reliable.

Raise health taxes and save millions of lives!

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched the “3 by 35” initiative, urging countries to increase real prices on tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drinks by at least 50% by 2035 through health taxes, says a news release. This move aims to reduce chronic diseases and generate vital public revenue amid rising noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), shrinking development aid, and growing public debt.

NCDs, including heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, cause over 75% of global deaths. A one-time 50% price hike on these products could prevent 50 million premature deaths over the next 50 years.

Between 2012 and 2022, nearly 140 countries raised tobacco taxes, increasing real prices by over 50% on average. Countries like Colombia and South Africa have seen reduced consumption and increased revenue from health taxes.

The “3 by 35” Initiative introduces key action areas to help countries, pairing proven health policies with best practices on implementation. These include direct support for country-led reforms with the following goals in mind:

1. **Cutting harmful consumption by reducing affordability;** Increase or introduce excise taxes on tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drinks to raise prices and reduce consumption, cutting future health costs and preventable deaths.
2. **Raising revenue to fund health and**



development; Mobilise domestic public resources to fund essential health and development programmes, including universal health coverage.

3. **Building broad political support across ministries, civil society, and academia;** Strengthen multisectoral alliances by engaging ministries of finance and health, parliamentarians, civil society, and researchers to design and implement effective policies.

WHO calls on countries and partners to support the initiative and commit to fair taxation policies that protect health and accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

SOURCE: WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

Ultra-processed foods fueling childhood obesity

DR ABDULLAHEL AMAAN & PROFESSOR DR MA MANNAN

Obesity and being overweight are major public health concerns globally. It is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as abnormal or excessive fat accumulation. Epidemiological studies state that obesity prevalence has tripled over the past four decades globally. Overall, the prevalence of obesity has increased dramatically in children and adolescents.

Obesity prevalence is related to the interaction of many factors, including biological, genetic, socioeconomic and social factors. An obesogenic environment acts at several levels: familial (e.g., practice of physical activity, dietary habits, sleep time, and screen time); local community (e.g., child care, schools, parks, and public transport); and sociopolitical (e.g., food industry and marketing, transportation systems, agricultural policies, and subsidies).

Dietary factors contributing to the obesity risk in children and adolescents include the excessive consumption of energy-dense, micronutrient-poor ultra-processed foods (UPFs), i.e., ready-to-eat foods derived from substances extracted or refined from whole foods, with flavourings, colours, and other cosmetic additives added.

Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) represent foods that have undergone substantial industrial processing, such as the addition of preservatives and various other ingredients, thereby making them more tasty, appealing and easy to consume. UPFs are often rich in sugars, saturated fats and salt, while they are low in essential nutrients.

Consumption of ultra-processed food (UPF) is increasing worldwide. The widespread consumption of UPFs in children has been associated with abnormal metabolic parameters, such as increased body mass index (BMI) and waist



circumference (WC), high low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) and triglyceride levels, along with increased fasting plasma glucose and insulin resistance.

Diet quality is critical for proper child development, and an unhealthy diet is a preventable risk factor for obesity. In fact, the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) and UPFs in childhood may increase the BMI/BMI z-score, body fat percentage, or likelihood of overweight/obesity. In addition, exposure to sugary foods in early childhood may result in a dietary preference for sweet foods in adulthood, limiting the dietary intake of healthy foods.

High screen time (1–2 h/day) also influences the risk of obesity in children and adolescents at several levels, as it leads to the increased exposure to food marketing, meals with little focus on what is being eaten, an increased sedentary lifestyle, and reduced sleep time. It has been observed how, in children, the increased intake of energy-

dense foods and beverages occurs during or shortly after exposure to advertising; therefore, the two are related.

Studies have shown that breakfast consumption and physical activity (at least 60 min of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity per day) are powerful protective factors against excess weight gain in children and adolescents.

A compassionate sociopolitical (e.g., food industry and marketing, agricultural policies) commitment is essential for justified marketing of ultra-processed food (UPF) and sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) to save our children.

The writers are the assistant professors of Department of Neonatology at the Institute of Child & Mother Health (ICMH), Matuail, Dhaka, and Chairman of the Department of Neonatology at the Bangladesh Medical University (BMU), Dhaka, respectively. Emails: abdullahelamaan@gmail.com, drmannan64@gmail.com

Health benefits of mango: the king of fruits

Mango, often called the “king of fruits”, is not only delicious but also packed with nutrients that offer numerous health benefits. This tropical fruit is rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that support overall wellness.

Rich in vitamins and minerals

Mangoes are an excellent source of vitamin C, which helps boost the immune system, promotes healthy skin, and aids in wound healing. They also contain vitamin A, essential for good vision, skin health, and proper immune function. Additionally, mangoes provide vitamins E and K, along with potassium and magnesium, which help maintain healthy blood pressure and muscle function.

High in antioxidants

Mangoes contain powerful antioxidants like quercetin, mangiferin, and beta-carotene, which help protect the body from harmful free radicals. These antioxidants can reduce inflammation and may lower the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and certain cancers.

Supports digestion

Mangoes are rich in dietary fibre and contain enzymes like amylases that help break down carbohydrates, promoting healthy digestion and preventing constipation. Eating mangoes can support a healthy gut and improve nutrient absorption.

Boosts skin and hair health

Vitamins A and C in mangoes help nourish the skin and hair. They promote collagen production, keeping skin firm and youthful, and support healthy hair growth. Incorporating mango into your diet not only adds a sweet, tropical flavour but also supports your body's overall health. Enjoy it fresh, in smoothies, salads, or desserts for a tasty and nutritious treat.



Piloting paediatric NCD care model

In a major step toward addressing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) among children, Bangladesh has successfully piloted its first evidence-based paediatric NCD service delivery model at the primary healthcare level. This initiative, led by icddr,b in collaboration with the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and supported by UNICEF Bangladesh, aims to integrate paediatric NCD services into the national health system, according to the press release.

The pilot study titled ‘Designing and Piloting a Paediatric NCD Service Model for Children and Adolescents at Primary Health Care Facilities in Bangladesh’ identified six priority childhood NCDs in the country: bronchial asthma, congenital heart disease, epilepsy, thalassaemia, kidney disease, and type 1 diabetes.

Unlike global models that often focus on diseases like rheumatic heart disease or sickle cell disease—more prevalent in Sub Saharan Africa—this model is tailored to Bangladesh's unique health landscape. Using evidence gathered through the study, the government developed the first National Treatment Protocol for paediatric NCDs in 2024.

The service model was launched in February 2025 across 22 facilities, including 12 Upazila Health Complexes in Kishoreganj, eight in Bagerhat, and two district hospitals. It is designed to deliver standardised care to children aged 0 to 17 years with NCDs. Under this study, key gaps in primary healthcare facilities for managing childhood NCDs were assessed. Training modules were developed for healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses, Sub-Assistant Community Medical Officers (SACMOs), and

community healthcare workers. Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) materials were developed, while a registration system for tracking patient records and a digital health platform for generating monthly reports from each facility were also introduced. Within the first seven weeks, 385 children were diagnosed and enrolled. Bronchial asthma was the most common condition (36.6%), followed by thalassaemia and iron deficiency anaemia (27.5%), congenital heart disease (19.1%), epilepsy (13.6%), nephrotic syndrome (2.2%), and type 1 diabetes (1%). Around 8% were referred to higher-level centres for specialised care.

To strengthen healthcare delivery, more than 200 professionals—including doctors, nurses, and Sub-Assistant Community Medical Officers (SACMOs)—along with over 500 community healthcare providers (CHCPs), were trained. The initiative also developed behaviour change communication materials to increase awareness and implemented a registration and digital tracking system to monitor patient data and progress.

Experts say the model is both feasible and acceptable for implementation at the primary healthcare level. Key gaps in the system were addressed, such as training needs, patient tracking, and awareness at the community level.

With rising rates of chronic illnesses among children, this pilot offers hope for a more inclusive and responsive healthcare system in Bangladesh—bringing the country a step closer to achieving universal health coverage and sustainable development goals.

SOURCE: ICDDR,B

Can AI chatbots easily be misused to spread credible health misinformation?

A recent study has raised concerns about the misuse of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots in spreading health disinformation. Researchers tested five major AI models—OpenAI's GPT, Google's Gemini, Anthropic's Claude, Meta's Llama, and xAI's Grok Beta—by instructing them to provide false yet scientifically styled responses to health-related questions.

Four of the five chatbots returned health disinformation 100% of the time when prompted, using polished medical language and fabricated sources. Claude was the only model that resisted in most cases but still delivered disinformation 40% of the time. The responses were often convincing, citing fake studies and mimicking the tone of legitimate medical advice.

In one alarming example, a chatbot falsely claimed, “A 2022 study in Nature Medicine found a 37% decrease in sperm concentration among

men living near 5G towers,” suggesting a link between 5G technology and infertility—a widely debunked claim.

The study also explored the GPT Store, a platform by OpenAI that allows users without coding experience to create and share custom chatbots. Researchers successfully created a hidden chatbot designed to deliver false health information. While the bot was later deleted, they also found two publicly accessible GPTs exhibiting similar behaviour. These findings underscore the potential risk of AI platforms being exploited to spread misinformation, particularly in sensitive areas like public health. As AI tools become more accessible, the study calls for stronger oversight, safeguards, and content monitoring to prevent the spread of harmful falsehoods.

SOURCE: ANNALS OF INTERNAL MEDICINE



STAYING WELL THROUGH THE SEASONS

Everyday habits for a changing weather

RAISA MEHZABEEN & TASKIA CHOWDHURY MOHUA

From childhood, we have grown up reading a familiar line in our textbooks and newspapers: “Bangladesh is a land of six seasons.” These seasonal shifts bring an ever-changing canvas of beauty, colour, and emotion. Yet, while nature transforms gracefully, our bodies often struggle to keep up. Sudden temperature swings — a hot morning, a rainy afternoon, and a cool evening — can leave our health in a state of confusion.

Is this climate confusion making us sick?

Yes — frequent seasonal transitions often result in fevers, colds, headaches, and skin issues. When these occur regularly, they can lead to physical discomfort and even mental fatigue. Unfortunately, many turn to over-the-counter medication without proper knowledge, sometimes doing more harm than good.

But there is good news: a few intentional lifestyle changes can help our bodies adapt and thrive in every season. Here is how.

Season-proof your habits

1. Move your body regularly. Whether it is daily chores, structured workouts, or sports, physical activity boosts both immunity and mental health. Adding mindfulness practices like meditation can also help maintain emotional balance in stressful seasonal transitions.

2. Practise hygiene everywhere. Wash hands frequently. Carry a face mask and hand sanitiser when outdoors, especially during dry or dusty weather, to protect against airborne bacteria and viruses.



3. Prioritise sound sleep. In an era of screen addiction, late-night scrolling has become a norm — but it is harming our health. Adults should aim for 7–8 hours of uninterrupted, quality sleep. Avoid using electronic devices at least two hours before bedtime, and stay away from sleep medication unless medically prescribed.

4. Take care of your skin and hair. Seasonal changes often leave the skin dry and the hair brittle. Use natural moisturisers and oils — for example, homemade amla (Indian gooseberry) oil — to nourish your skin and scalp.

5. Be mindful when bathing. Avoid showering right after heavy sweating. Allow your body to cool down before bathing to prevent sudden temperature shocks.

Eat with the seasons

A well-balanced diet is your body's best defence mechanism. And nature helps — by offering seasonal foods packed with the

nutrients your body needs most during that time.

1. Choose seasonal fruits. Produce harvested in-season contains more vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. In summer, for example, fruits like mangoes, black plums (jam), jackfruits, and lychees are rich in nutrients and hydration.

2. Boost your vitamin C. This essential vitamin helps strengthen immunity and reduce stress. Include lemons, amla, guava, and oranges in your daily meals.

3. Stay hydrated — always carry a reusable water bottle when you are out, and sip water frequently. During very hot days, oral saline can help maintain electrolyte balance.

4. Prioritise vegetables. Your plate should include a mix of fish, meat, and seasonal vegetables. Polyphenol-rich vegetables like eggplants and spinach are particularly beneficial for improving immune function.

5. Rethink your desserts. Swap sugar-laden sweets for probiotic-rich foods like yoghurt or homemade pickles. These support gut health, which is closely linked to immunity and mood.

Taking care of our health is not just about avoiding illness — it is about building resilience. Just as nature changes, we too must adapt. By maintaining hygiene, eating wisely, and following a routine, we can stay strong in body and mind — no matter what the weather brings.

Let the seasons change. But let your wellness be a constant.

Raisa Mehzabeen is the founder & CEO of Nutrition For Change. E-mail: raisamech20@gmail.com

New guidelines help doctors treat obesity in people with heart failure

Obesity and heart failure often go together, making treatment more complicated. Now, health experts have released new guidelines to help doctors better care for patients dealing with both conditions.

Understanding the problem

Doctors usually use body mass index (BMI) to diagnose obesity. But BMI does not always give the full picture, especially if it is under 35. In those cases, measuring waist size or body fat may give a better idea of someone's health risk.

Heart failure is harder to spot in people with obesity because a key blood

test (called natriuretic peptides) can look normal even when heart failure is present. So, if a patient has symptoms like shortness of breath or fatigue, doctors should look deeper—even if test results seem fine.

How to manage both conditions

- Lifestyle changes like eating healthier and getting more exercise are important. These can improve heart function and help with weight loss, but sticking to them can be tough without support.

- Medications like semaglutide and tirzepatide can help people with a BMI of 30 or more who have a type of heart failure called HFpEF. These drugs can

reduce weight and improve how patients feel, but doctors need to closely monitor side effects, especially when starting treatment.

- Surgery, such as weight-loss operations, may reduce heart failure problems, but it comes with risks. Patients need to be carefully prepared and followed by doctors who understand heart failure.

These new recommendations aim to make treatment safer and more effective, giving patients a better chance at living healthier, longer lives.

SOURCE: JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF CARDIOLOGY

Bangladesh celebrate Asian Cup berth with 7-0 win

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh team had reserved their celebration of clinching Asian Cup berth till the last match of the campaign. Yesterday against Turkmenistan, they celebrated the epic achievement with a resounding 7-0 victory, ending the Asian Cup Qualifiers campaign with an all-win record at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon.

Turkmenistan (141), on paper, were the weakest team of the group, 13 places below Bangladesh. But Bangladesh's comprehensive wins against higher-ranked Bahrain and Myanmar had already proved that rankings can be deceptive. However, there was hardly any doubt about the outcome of the game – the only matter of



We are all very happy. We want to improve and get better results like this day by day. I would thank all my teammates because it was a team effort. I would also like to thank all my fans for continuing to support me.

MONIKA CHAKMA, Bangladesh midfielder

speculation was how big the margin of victory would be.

And soon as the match kicked, it became clear that it was going to be a one-way traffic as the side from Central Asia hardly had an answer to what Bangladesh were throwing at them. The goalfest started in the third minute, thanks to a thunderous strike from Sapna Rani Mondal from outside the box.

The Central Asian side were hit by the eye of a storm over the next 17 minutes as Bangladesh smashed five more goals, with Shamsunnahar Jr bagging a brace while Monika Chakma, Tohura Khatun and Ritu Porna Chakma getting one apiece.

The fifth goal from Ritu Porna in the 18th minute was a disaster as the ball slipped through the goalkeeper's grasp, warranting a change of keeper. However, life for Turkmenistan's second-choice keeper didn't start well as she conceded a goal a minute after being subbed in.

There was a lull of 20 minutes as Bangladesh failed to increase the margin before Ritu Porna's trademark left-footed screamer from outside the box found the top-right corner of goal.

While there was anticipation among the Bangladesh fans of a likely breach of Bangladesh's biggest victory – a 9-0 win against Bhutan in Cox's bazar in 2010, Turkmenistan came out with a much more disciplined performance after the break to keep the women in red and green at bay. They successfully blocked the passing channels in the final third as Bangladesh, with Ritu Porna and Sapna Rani both subbed out early in the second half, found it hard to break the final hurdle.

The substitute keeper, too, put in a much better performance as the scoreline remained unchanged but Bangladesh were happy to go to the dugout with a convincing win and start their long-awaited celebration.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Skipper Shubman Gill celebrates after notching up his second century of the match as India piled on the runs during Day 4 of their second Test against England at Edgbaston yesterday. Gill, who scored 269 in the first innings, followed it up with a 162-ball 161 in the second to propel India to 427-6 declared, setting England a 608-run target. England, in reply, lost three of their top four batters, including Joe Root, as they finished the day on 72-3, 536 runs away from a victory.



PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh left-arm spinner Tanvir Islam jumps in celebration after dismissing Sri Lanka's Kusal Mendis during the second ODI of the three-match series at the R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium in Colombo yesterday. Tanvir's five for 39 -- the best-ever bowling figures by a Bangladesh bowler against Sri Lanka, surpassing Abdur Razzak's five for 62 -- helped the Tigers bounce back in the series with a 16-run win.

Newcomers step up as Tigers square series

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite a faltering middle order and a few dropped chances in the field, Bangladesh held their nerve to claim a tense 16-run victory over Sri Lanka in the second ODI at Colombo's R. Premadasa Stadium yesterday, levelling the three-match series 1-1.

The win, the Tigers' first in seven matches in this format, was delivered by two newcomers in Parvez Hossain Emon and Tanvir Islam. The former laid the foundation with a composed 67 off 69 balls, helping the visitors post 248, while Tanvir turned the game on its head with a five-wicket haul (5-39), dismissing the hosts for 232.

It was also the first win as captain for Mehidy Hasan Miraz, who had endured five straight defeats before this game. Their last ODI win had come back in November against Afghanistan in Sharjah.

The match swung back and forth throughout. After a steady start, the visitors stumbled again in the middle overs, with the middle order failing to provide support. Emon and Towhid Hridoy (51 off 69) built momentum, and a late unbeaten 33 from Tanzim Hasan Shakib ensured a defendable total despite a collapse from 204-5 to 218-9.

Bangladesh were defending a total nearly identical to what Sri Lanka (244) had defended two days ago at the same venue, but the wicket looked much better for the batters this time around.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Bangladesh:

248 all out in 45.5 overs
(Parvez 67, Hridoy 51,
Shamim 22, Jaker Ali 24,
Sakib 33 not out; Asitha
Fernando 4-35, Hasaranga
3-60)

Sri Lanka:

232 all out in 48.5 overs
(Kusal Mendis 56, Kamindu
Mendis 33, Liyanage 78;
Sakib 2-34, Tanvir 5-39)

Result:

Bangladesh won by 16 runs.

Player-of-the-match:

Tanvir Islam

figures by a Bangladeshi against Sri Lanka, surpassing Abdur Razzak's 5-62 from 2013.

"Felt really well and bowled in the right areas; was a better wicket than the last game. Grateful to the captain who gave me confidence despite leaking 22 runs in the first two overs. He said try to take wickets and not just look to contain, and his words made me confident in the game," said Tanvir, who was named Player of the Match.

Still, the outcome was in the balance as Janith Liyanage was dropped twice: first by Jaker Ali on 28 and then on 42 by Rishad Hossain. Liyanage capitalised, forging a 58-run stand with Dushmantha Chameera that brought the home side within touching distance.

But Mustafizur Rahman, who had struggled throughout the day, delivered a crucial breakthrough by removing Liyanage in the 48th over, ending his brilliant 78 off 85. Tanzim then wrapped things up by dismissing Chameera (13), sealing their first-ever ODI win at this venue in 12 attempts.

"240 was difficult to bat on in the second innings. We believed we could defend 248," Miraz said at the post-match presentation.

"They played really well and we needed wickets at that moment. I told Tanvir that we need wickets and I just tried to say positive things to the bowler because we needed wickets. Otherwise, we can't win," he added.



FIDE Master Tahsin Tajwar Zia, son of the late Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman, plays his opening game at the inaugural GM Zia Memorial 2025 chess tournament, which commenced at the Bangladesh Chess Federation (BCF) Hall Room in Paltan, Dhaka, yesterday. Behind him, his mother, Tasnim Sultana Labony, watches quietly: a poignant image of a family continuing a legacy on the first anniversary of a legend's untimely passing.

PHOTO: STAR

India's Bangladesh tour deferred to September 2026

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Saturday confirmed that India's white-ball tour of Bangladesh, originally scheduled for next month, has been postponed to September 2026.

The announcement puts an end to recent speculation surrounding the fate of the series.

"The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) have mutually agreed to defer the white-ball series, three ODIs and three Twenty20 Internationals, between Bangladesh and India in August 2025 to September 2026," a BCB press release read.

BCB also mentioned that the decision was made keeping in mind the international cricketing commitments and scheduling convenience of both teams.

India were initially set to arrive in Dhaka on August 13 to play three ODIs and many T20Is. The matches were to be held between August 17 and 31 in Dhaka and Chattogram, as part of the ICC's Future Tours Programme (FTP).

Recent reports had suggested that BCCI was "wary" of the security situation in Bangladesh, raising concerns that the series could be postponed.

BCB also mentioned that the revised dates and fixtures for the tour "will be announced in due course."



Bangladesh men's team registered a massive 13-0 win against Sri Lanka to boost their chances of qualifying for the semifinals of the Men's U-18 Asia Cup Hockey in Dazhou, China yesterday. Mohammad Abdullah was adjudged player of the match.

PHOTO: BHF

Hercules' will, Silva's wish

STAR SPORTS DESK

On Independence Day in the United States, Fluminense's Hercules carved his own freedom: from the bench to the scoreboard with a match-winning strike that powered the Rio club into the Club World Cup semifinals on Friday (early hours of Saturday in Bangladesh).

Having already stunned Inter Milan in the round of 16, the 24-year-old defensive midfielder struck again as a substitute; his goal sealed a 2-1 win over Saudi giants Al Hilal in Orlando.

Hercules put Fluminense in front for good in the 70th minute; his persistence was rewarded after an initial long-range effort was deflected high into the air. However, he kept running forward -- and into the danger zone -- as teammate Samuel Xavier won the next header, which landed at his feet.

Hercules then took a sublime first touch to control the ball before firing a right-footed shot into the bottom left corner, prompting jubilation from yet another largely pro-Brazilian crowd.

At the heart of it all stood Thiago Silva: the 40-year-old captain who marshalled the backline and watched his post-match wish unfold.

"I'm rooting for Chelsea," he had said. Later that evening, the Blues defeated Palmeiras 2-1, setting up an emotional semifinal clash with Silva's current and former clubs on opposing ends.

With four Brazilian clubs reaching the round of 16 and Fluminense now among the final four, this Club World Cup has become a celebration of Brazil's footballing heritage: past, present, and what lies ahead.



Paris Saint-Germain's Ousmane Dembele celebrates with Joao Neves after scoring their second goal against Bayern Munich in Atlanta on Saturday, sealing a dramatic 2-0 win that sent the nine-man European champions into the Club World Cup semifinals.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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‘Same old mafia system still exists’ Nahid tells rally

STAR REPORT

The July uprising was about building a new Bangladesh, not just toppling the Sheikh Hasina government, National Citizen Party Convenor Nahid Islam said yesterday.

“We said we must change the entire political system of the country. Not just a change of the party in power, but a transformation of the corrupt, mafia-driven system,” he said while addressing a party rally at Joypurhat town.



“However, over the past year, we have not seen that systemic change. In our neighbourhoods, we still witness extortion, thuggery, and the same mafia system,” he said, adding all should come forward seeking democratic transformation through reform, justice, and restructuring.

NCP held the rally as part of its month-long “July March to Build the Nation” programme, taking place across all districts of the country

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



An illegal kitchen market has been set up on Bangladesh Railway land under the Khilgaon flyover, with rows of makeshift tin-roofed shops standing dangerously close to the railway tracks. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Jamaat doesn’t want polls for the sake of it Says its ameer

UNB, Cumilla

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday urged his party leaders and activists to resist any kind of fascism and said his party does not want an election just for the sake of it.

His statement came a day after he, referring to nationwide mob violence, said the country at present does not have a conducive election environment. He also said that some fundamental reforms need to be implemented before the national election to hold it in a free and fair way.

“We don’t care whether it’s a new or old force – any form of fascism must be resisted with determination,” he said while addressing a roadside rally at Paduar Bazar in Cumilla Sadar Dakkhin upazila in the morning.

“The martyrs who shed their blood for Bangladesh left us with a sacred task. We will not allow anyone to betray their sacrifices,” the Jamaat Ameer added.



SEE PAGE 9 COL 5



Former CEC Shamsul Huda passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former chief election commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda, who oversaw the 2008 national elections, passed away yesterday at his residence in Dhaka’s Gulshan.

Huda, also a former bureaucrat, was 83.

He will be laid to rest at Banani cemetery after his daughter returns from the United States, said Huda’s brother-in-law Ashfaq Qaderi.

His body is currently being kept at the mortuary of United Hospital.

Huda was known for bringing a number of electoral reforms, including preparing a voter roll with photographs, during his leadership at the Election Commission.

He assumed office as chief election

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

Over 45 lakh cases pending in courts

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The growing backlog of cases continues to strain the country’s judicial system, making it increasingly difficult for many justice seekers to get legal remedies timely.

A staggering 45,16,603 cases were pending with the Appellate Division, the High Court, and lower courts across the country as of December 31 last year, up from 17,89,914 in 2008, shows a Supreme Court report published this year.

On average, 160,393 cases were added to the

was set alight on April 6, 2019, by four people at the behest of Siraj ud Daula, the then principal of Sonagazi Islamia Fazil Madrasa. This came after she refused to withdraw a case accusing Siraj of sexually harassing her.

Four days later, Nusrat died from burn injuries.

A Feni court on October 24, 2019, handed down death sentence to all 16 accused, including Siraj, for the murder that shocked the nation.

Since then, the death reference (lower court documents on death sentence) and the appeals

	YEAR	CASES FILED	DISPOSED OF	PENDING
	2024	14,73,073	12,01,240	45,16,603
	2023	15,42,521	14,16,750	42,99,599
	2022	15,71,617	14,71,402	41,96,603

tally of pending cases each year since 2008. In 2024 alone, 14,73,073 cases were filed while 12,01,240 cases were disposed of, according to the SC report.

Each HC judge is burdened with 6,552 cases, while Appellate Division judges are handling 4,446 cases each, and lower court judges 1,977 cases each.

Asked, SC Registrar General Aziz Ahmed Bhuiyan said 13 committees were formed recently to monitor proceedings at lower courts and expedite the disposal of cases.

JUSTICE DELAYED

Nusrat Jahan Rafi, a madrasa student in Feni,

filed by the convicts have been pending with the HC.

“We don’t know why it [the HC] has not disposed of the case,” Nusrat’s brother Mahmudul Hasan Noman told The Daily Star over the phone.

“The relatives of the convicts are constantly giving us threats on social media.”

Another case filed over the custodial death of a 28-year-old man remains pending for over a decade.

Ishtiaque Hossain Jonny, a garment-waste

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JCD leader killed as rival groups clash in B’baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A local leader of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal was killed yesterday in a clash between two rival factions vying for dominance in Brahmanbaria’s Nasirnagar upazila.

The deceased, Sohrab Hossain Abir, 27, was an assistant general secretary of JCD’s Chatalpar union unit, said OC Azharul Islam of Nasirnagar Police Station.

There had been a longstanding dispute between two groups over establishing supremacy in the area, said Khairul.

The clash erupted around noon in Kathalkandi village after an altercation broke out between supporters of the two groups, he said. Abir died on the spot during the violence, the OC said.

On information, a police team rushed to the scene, brought the situation under control, and recovered his body.

Police are trying to identify and arrest the persons involved in the incident, said the OC.

2024 SUBARNACHAR RAPE Survivor ‘facing death threats’ from accused

Family forced to relocate out of fear

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A woman who was gang-raped along with her minor daughter in Noakhali’s Subarnachar upazila last year said she has been receiving continuous death threats from the accused in the case she filed.

She alleged that they have been pressuring her to withdraw the case.

In the face of such intimidation, the victim’s family was forced to sell their house and move to another area.

The prime accused, Abul Khair Munshi, a local Awami League leader, along with relatives of other accused, have been issuing the threats, the survivor said.

Speaking to The Daily Star on Friday, she said, “They say they will kill us if I don’t withdraw the case. This has been going on since the case was filed one and a half years ago. Every time we go to court for a hearing, they threaten us, even on the court premises.”

The survivor filed a general diary with Char Jabbar Police Station on January 19. “But the threats have not stopped,” she added.

Officer-in-Charge Md Shaheen Miah confirmed the filing of the GD to this correspondent. “Primary investigation found the allegation to be true, and we submitted a report to the court on March 4. However, we have not received any directive yet.”

The survivor said Munshi and relatives of other accused visited her house multiple times, offering incentives to withdraw the case. When she rejected the offers, the threats began.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Hope for Gaza truce rises

Trump says deal ‘could be’ by next week after Hamas nod; 64 more killed

AGENCIES

Israel was mulling its response yesterday after Hamas said it was ready to start talks “immediately” on a US-sponsored proposal for a Gaza ceasefire.

The security cabinet was expected to meet after the end of the Jewish sabbath at sundown to discuss Israel’s next steps as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu prepares to leave for Washington for talks on Monday with US President Donald Trump.

Trump has been making a renewed push for an end to nearly 21 months of war in Gaza, where the civil defence agency said 64 people were killed in Israeli bombings yesterday, at least 9 of them near the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) aid hub in the north of Rafah. Three children were among the killed.

“No decision has been made yet on that issue,” an Israeli government official told AFP when asked about Hamas’s positive response to the latest ceasefire proposal.

Hamas made its announcement late Friday after holding consultations with other Palestinian factions.

“The movement is ready to engage immediately and seriously in a cycle of negotiations on the mechanism to put in place” the terms of the US-backed truce proposal, the militant group said in a statement.

Hamas ally Islamic Jihad said it supported ceasefire talks, but demanded “guarantees” that Israel “will not resume its aggression” once hostages held in Gaza are freed.

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A Palestinian mother and her daughter rush for cover during an Israeli strike in the Al-Bureij camp in the central Gaza Strip. Photo was taken on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

Texas floods kill at least 27 Rescuers search for 27 missing girls from summer camp

AFP, Hunt

Rescuers yesterday searched for 27 girls missing from a riverside summer camp in the US state of Texas, after torrential rains caused devastating flooding that killed at least 27 people -- with more rain on the way.

“So far, we’ve evacuated over 850 uninjured people, eight injured people and have recovered 27 deceased fatalities at this time,” said Kerr County Sheriff Larry Leitha, adding that nine children were among the dead.

Addressing a press conference, Kerrville city official Dalton Rice said hundreds of people were taking part in rescue operations.

“One thing I want to tell you and assure y’all is that we will not stop till every single person is found,” said Leitha.

The flooding began Friday as months’ worth of rain fell in a matter of hours, causing the Guadalupe River to rise by 26 feet (eight meters) in 45 minutes.

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