

Weight chart

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Staffers who fall outside the standard weight range may be referred for medical evaluation and corrective measures, according to prison officials.

Exemptions will be considered for certain medical conditions.

All unit chiefs have been ordered to submit compliance reports, while the Prisons Directorate will oversee implementation through periodic follow-up assessments.

"Those who are overweight usually avoid exercise and, in some cases, even skip the daily parade," said an official of Kashimpur Central Jail.

"But now, they've started participating in physical activities. It's a significant change. I believe this initiative will transform both the mindset and appearance of prison officials and staff, bringing them more in line with other disciplined forces," he said.

Shameem Iqbal, jail superintendent of Narsingdi District Jail, said, "It's a good initiative, as we are generally less conscious of our health."

"We've already started raising awareness among our staff. Those who are overweight are being given advice and guidance to help them get back in shape," he added.

Bangladesh

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He highlighted the importance of achieving practical, time-bound outcomes from the upcoming High-Level Conference on Rohingya, scheduled for September in New York.

Bangladesh, he said, remains committed to working with international partners to find a comprehensive and lasting solution through the voluntary, safe, and dignified return of Rohingyas to Rakhine.

"It is the collective duty of the international community to ensure that the rights and dignity of the Rohingyas are upheld and the conditions for their return are created without delay," Ambassador Tareq added.

The 59th session of the UN Human Rights Council began in Geneva on June 16 and will continue until July 9.

Yunus calls for equality

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"On this somber day of Holy Ashura, I pay my deepest respects to Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), the beloved grandson of the greatest Prophet and Messenger Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), and all those who were tragically martyred in the desert of Karbala," said the chief adviser.

He said Islam is the religion of truth, justice and peace and in order to uphold this great ideal of Islam, on 10th Muharram of 61 AH, Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), his family members and close companions were martyred in the desert of

Jamaat's criticism

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the first anniversary of the July mass uprising.

The BNP leader said an elected parliament with public representatives, who are accountable to people, is essential to speed up political progress in the country.

"But instead of supporting such elections, you [Jamaat] are trying to delay them under the pretext of political rhetoric. You are questioning the election atmosphere, but we know your history. You had no hesitation in joining an election under an autocrat [in 1986], following Sheikh Hasina's footsteps," he said.

Earlier on Friday, Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman said a neutral election is not possible in Bangladesh under the current circumstances.

"Under the current circumstances, a neutral

KALNI RIVER IN HABIGANJ

Hundreds displaced as erosion worsens

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

"I thought, perhaps, I would be able to spend my few remaining days in peace at my late husband's village home. Kalni devoured it all. Only a part of the door now remains," said Suniti Rani Sutradhar, 87, of Badarpur village under Ajmeriganj upazila of Habiganj.

Recently, the elderly woman was having a meal when a crack suddenly appeared on her floor, and moments later, almost the entire house was washed away by the river.

While some neighbours offered her a place to sleep temporarily, Suniti knows she cannot expect them to continue supporting her for long. "Where will I seek shelter at this age?"

At least 500 families across eight villages – including Kalnipara, Badarpur, Nadipur, Soulari, Manipur, and Sahanager – have been displaced due to persistent erosion of the Kalni



River over the years. Hundreds of homes, religious institutions, and other establishments have also disappeared.

Locals said the erosion worsened in recent years, particularly intensifying during the monsoon season.

They alleged that despite repeated assurances from the authorities concerned, no sustainable river protection measures have been implemented. Only temporary steps have been

taken sporadically, including the dumping of geo-bags in some areas like Soulari, which have had no lasting impact.

"In the past two and a half years, geo-bags were dumped in only a few places, leaving much of the riverbank areas unprotected in the eight villages," said Shankar Sutradhar, a resident of Badarpur.

"We are surviving in a temporary shelter behind someone else's house after our house was lost to erosion," said Sandhya Rani

Sutradhar, another victim.

Local union parishad member Md Mohibur Rahman said the matter has been repeatedly reported to the Water Development Board, but no visible action has been taken so far.

According to sources, more than Tk 3 crore was allocated in the 2023-24 and 2024-25 fiscal years for river erosion prevention in Ajmeriganj. Yet, the situation has hardly improved, said locals.

Ajmeriganj UNO Nibhip Ranjan Talukder said, "BWDB informed us that a project has been sent for approval, while emergency measures will be taken if necessary."

Contacted, Shamim Hasnain Mahmud, executive engineer of BWDB in Habiganj, said a project to construct a permanent embankment has been submitted to the Planning Commission. Work will begin once the project is approved and tenders are offered, he added.

Journalism during AL regime

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experts to examine what kind of journalism took place during this time," he said.

Such a probe is essential to restore public trust in journalism in Bangladesh, he said.

He added that the growing "lack of public confidence" in Bangladesh's media must be addressed to strengthen democratic values.

"Journalism in Bangladesh must move forward with truth at its core," he said. "This is essential for democracy. A vibrant media is key to a vibrant democracy," said Shafiqul Alam.

He warned that if the necessary reforms are not implemented now, they may become much harder to achieve in the future.

Regarding the report of the Media Reform Commission, he said there is room for broader discussion.

However, he noted that in its 11 months in office, the government has already taken significant steps to promote press freedom and

free speech.

The current government has aimed to create a vibrant space for press freedom, where everyone can pursue ethical journalism, he said, adding that while not all obstacles have been removed, major progress has been made.

Shafiqul described the now defunct Digital Security Act (DSA) as a "sword of Damocles," pointing out that around 7,000 cases were filed under the law, often to silence dissent.

However, freedom of expression was not suppressed only by misusing the law, but in various other ways, he said.

He said that although mechanisms exist to address misinformation and disinformation, a culture of fear persisted during the previous government's tenure, aimed at suppressing free speech.

He stressed that the interim government welcomes constructive criticism from the media but cautioned against using media platforms for personal smear campaigns.

Chairing the event, BJC

Chairman Rezwanul Haque Raza urged the government to begin implementing the Media Reform Commission's recommendations, saying this would restore journalists' confidence.

He added that financial stability is essential for journalists to work without fear or compromise.

Prof Gitari Nasreen of Dhaka University, a commission member, said rebuilding public trust is the biggest challenge for Bangladesh's media, which must remain accountable to the people.

She said the commission's aim was to ensure journalists can work with dignity and freedom.

Shahnewaj Patwari, head of programmes at Article 19, criticised the blanket filing of cases against journalists and called for a case-by-case approach based on specific allegations.

Jamuna Television CEO Fahim Ahmed, Maasranga TV Chief News Editor Rashed Ahmed, and BBC Media Action Country Director Md Al Mamun also spoke.

Mother raped

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The driver of the vehicle chasing them, who was known to the survivor, asked her to get off. "As soon as I got off, seven passengers from that vehicle dragged me and my child to a tea garden nearby."

Both vehicles then left the scene. When the woman screamed in fear, the men held a knife to her child's throat to silence her, and then raped her. "Six of them raped me while another kept a lookout. At one stage, I lost consciousness."

According to OC Zaman, some locals heard the child crying around 12:30am and

rushed to the spot. They found the child and his unconscious mother and immediately called 999, the national emergency helpline.

Police rescued the woman and her child and admitted them to a local hospital. After gaining consciousness, she named four of the perpetrators.

"Based on the case filed by the victim, four accused have already been arrested," added the OC.

A medical officer said the woman was brought to the hospital around 1:30am in an unconscious state. "There were signs of physical assault. We have collected samples for forensic tests."

Jamaat doesn't want

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"We don't want an election for the sake of it," he said.

The Jamaat chief addressed four roadside rallies on his way to Feni to attend a party event.

Shafiq warned, "We are observing how some parties are looting and grabbing everything. We

urge them to restrain themselves; otherwise, people will resist them."

The rally was presided over by Jamaat's central executive council member and Cumilla city Ameer Qazi Din Mohammad, and was attended by senior party leaders.

50% of bank directors

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and a proposal can be made with the Bangladesh Bank's approval."

But if just anyone is proposed, the BB will not grant approval.

"Their educational qualifications, experience, and knowledge of the banking sector will be taken into account. In other words, a professional will be appointed to the position."

Asked about the planned merger of weak banks, he said that in the initial phase, five private banks will be merged.

"State-owned banks will also be included in the merger process. Some state-owned banks are nearly bankrupt and must be included, while others are in relatively good condition and will be merged with them."

The matter will be discussed with the government and the BB is currently making some procedural preparations.

"We see this as an ongoing process, as I have mentioned before. It will remain in place permanently and has nothing to do with a change in government or the government staying in power. Whenever any bank or multiple banks face problems, we will intervene. That is our policy."

Sponsor-directors of banks must understand that the BB can remove them as early as tomorrow, and they will be removed if they fail to manage the bank properly, said Mansur, also a former economist of the International Monetary

Fund.

"Just being an owner doesn't mean they bear all responsibilities, nor does it give them the power to do whatever they want. They have no right to plunder. Banks operate with the people's money. The owners are merely custodians of that public money."

If they deviate from this role, the central bank will take action and remove them.

"That's why we have established a dedicated department. It's a constant warning: if you don't act responsibly, we are here to intervene."

While discussing the ailing situation of the non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs), Mansur said the central bank had already conducted an assessment and the findings show that at least 15 financial institutions are completely non-functional.

"They have no capacity to operate. Their NPLs [non-performing loans] might be 80 percent or even 100 percent."

As many as 10 NBFIs are in good condition.

"For the remaining 20 institutions, we have issued notices asking why their licences should not be suspended."

Show-cause notices have been served to the 20 NBFIs.

"We are moving towards a resolution in their cases – whether through liquidation or merger, something must be done."

There are some financial costs involved: about Tk 9,000 crore will be

required.

While talking about the legal barriers to recovering bad loans, Mansur said they are planning to amend the Money Loan Court Act, increase the number of benches dealing with financial sector cases to expedite the legal process.

A decision must be made within six months or ideally within three months.

"However, this is subject to discussion and depends on whether the Chief Justice and the Supreme Court agree, since the judiciary is independent."

He will also push for creating a special judicial cadre focused solely on financial matters.

Currently, most of the judiciary's workload involves cases related to murder, violence and land disputes, according to Mansur.

But beyond that, there is a vast financial world, which legal professionals often lack adequate understanding of, and the judicial process lacks sufficient engagement with.

"We need to invest significantly in this area – and it is the judiciary that must take the lead. We will also try to introduce another provision that a defaulter would not be able to file writ petitions repeatedly."

Former CEC Shamsul

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commissioner on February 5, 2007 amid a volatile political situation.

Just a month before, on January 11, 2007, a state of emergency was declared due to growing political unrest and violence, eventually causing the indefinite suspension of the ninth parliamentary polls scheduled for January 22.

The state of emergency led to the formation of a caretaker government headed by Fakhruddin Ahmed.

When Huda took charge of the EC, it was mired in controversy due to actions by his predecessor Justice MA Aziz. The flawed voter list prepared during Aziz's tenure had only deepened the crisis.

With the army's help, the Huda commission prepared a largely error-free voter list with photographs – considered one of the major achievements of the EC under his leadership.

He also oversaw the introduction of National Identity Cards as a by-product, said Abdul Alim, an election expert.

The Huda-led EC introduced party registration requirements, an electoral code of conduct for parties and candidates, and transparent ballot boxes. It also piloted the use of electronic voting machines, and held a successful election on December 30, 2008.

However, the commission drew flak when it initially invited the Saifur Rahman-led BNP faction for talks on electoral reforms. The matter was later resolved when it also invited the Khaleda Zia-led faction.

It was under this commission that the practice of consulting political parties, non-government organisations and eminent citizens began.

Under Huda's leadership, the commission implemented reforms in the EC Secretariat by having it removed from the direct supervision of the Prime Minister's Office.

The Shamsul Huda-led Election Commission, before completing its tenure, left behind several recommendations to strengthen the commission's authority. One of those included a draft law for appointing the chief election commissioner and other commissioners.

It had proposed that the CEC and commissioners be appointed through the parliamentary advisory committee headed by the Speaker of the House and including both the leaders

Hope for Gaza truce

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Trump said it was good that Hamas said it had responded in "a positive spirit" to a US brokered Gaza ceasefire proposal.

He told reporters aboard Air Force One there could be a deal on a Gaza ceasefire by next week but that he had not been briefed on the current state of negotiations.

Two previous ceasefires mediated by Qatar, Egypt and the United States have seen temporary halts in fighting, coupled with the return of Israeli hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners.

Efforts to broker a new truce have repeatedly failed, with the primary point of contention being Israel's rejection of Hamas's demand for guarantees that any new ceasefire will be lasting.

A Palestinian source familiar with the negotiations told AFP earlier this week that the latest proposal included "a 60-day truce, during which Hamas would release half of the living Israeli captives in the Gaza Strip" – thought to number 22 – "in exchange for releasing a number of Palestinian prisoners and detainees".

Out of 251 hostages seized by Palestinian militants during the October 2023 attack, 49 are still held in Gaza, including 27 the Israeli military says are dead.

Nearly 21 months of

of the House and the opposition.

It further suggested that a search committed be formed first to scrutinise the qualifications of potential candidates as per legal requirements and submit a panel of names, which the parliamentary committee would then finalise and issue appointments accordingly.

Eventually, the Awami League government passed a law outlining the appointment process. Currently, the responsibility lies with a search committee led by a justice of the Appellate Division, nominated by the chief justice, to recommend names for appointments.

Huda remained chief election commissioner till 2012.

Yesterday, the Election Commission expressed its condolences over his demise.

Born on July 10, 1943 in Faridpur, Huda completed his graduation and post-graduation in history from Dhaka University, earning top positions in both. He also held a doctorate in public administration and a Master of Public Administration from Syracuse University in the USA.

After a 34-year civil service career, he retired in 2000.

In the course of his career, Huda served as secretary at the water resources ministry from 1996 to 2000, and at the Banking Division from 1994 to 1996.

He is survived by his wife and daughter.

8 held over

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flashlight were recovered from the arrestees, said Lt Col HM Sajjad Hossain, commander of Rab-11.

The arrestees will be handed over to Bangra Bazar Police Station for further legal proceedings, the Rab official added.

Earlier yesterday, a special team led by the army conducted an overnight raid and arrested Sabir Ahmed and Nazim Uddin Babul from Akubpur area of Muradnagar in connection with the murder.

Roksana Akter Rubi, her daughter Taspiya Jonaki, and son Russel – were hacked to death in broad daylight in the village of Karoi Bari at around 9:00am on July 3. Roksana's two other daughters – Rikta and Ruma, were also injured in the incident.

Rikta yesterday filed a murder case with Bangra Bazar Police Station, accusing 33 named and 25 unnamed individuals, said Mahfuzur Rahman, officer-in-charge of the station.

war have created dire humanitarian conditions for the more than two million people in the Gaza Strip, where Israel has recently expanded its military operations.

A US- and Israel-backed group, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, took the lead in food distributions in the territory in late May when Israel eased a more than two-month blockade on aid deliveries.

The group said two of its US staff were wounded in an "attack" on one of its aid centres in southern Gaza yesterday.

UN agencies and major aid groups have refused to cooperate with the GHF over concerns it was designed to cater to Israeli military objectives.

Its operations have been marred by chaotic scenes and near-daily reports of Israeli fire on people waiting to collect rations.

UN human rights office spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani said Friday that more than 500 people have been killed waiting to access food from GHF distribution points.

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.

PRAYER TIMING

JULY 6

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4:10 12:45 5:00 6:55 8:17

JAMAT 4:45 1:15 5:15 7:00 8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION