

AL ATTACK ON NCP RALLY VENUE Four killed as violence grips Gopalganj

Dozens injured, curfew imposed in district

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

At least four people were killed and dozens injured in daylong running battles between law enforcers and Awami League followers in Gopalganj yesterday.

Tensions were already high in Gopalganj -- the home district of ousted AL leader Sheikh Hasina -- over the National Citizen Party's pre-scheduled rally at Poura Park in the town.

Since morning, activists and supporters of the AL, armed with local weapons, took position on the Gopalganj-Teknaf road in Ulupur area of Sadar upazila, blocking several roads by felling trees. They also set fire to a government vehicle and smashed another.

Later, they vandalised the venue of the NCP's rally in Poura Park area.

Fatalities were reported in clashes that erupted after the rally when AL members attacked the motorcade of NCP activists.

Mentionable, all political activities of the AL have recently been banned by the government.

Following the clashes in the southern district, the government enforced a curfew from 8:00pm yesterday until 6:00pm today to bring the situation under control.

The HSC, Alim and HSC (Vocational) exams in Gopalganj district have been postponed. The respective boards issued separate notices around 10:30pm yesterday announcing the decision, according to education board notices.

Gopalganj Civil Surgeon Abu Sayeed Md Faruk said four people were killed and

13 injured. The deceased are Dipu Saha, Ramzan Kazi, Sohel, and Emon. They are all from Gopalganj Sadar upazila.

Gopalganj General Hospital Superintendent Jibitesh Biswas told The Daily Star around 6:30pm that Dipu and Ramzan were brought to the hospital dead with bullet wounds.

AT A GLANCE

- 1 NCP leaders leave Gopalganj under army escort
- 2 Cops attacked, vehicles set on fire, vandalised
- 3 NCP issues 24-hour ultimatum to arrest culprits
- 4 NCP, Jamaat to hold countrywide protests today
- 5 Today's HSC, Dakshin exams in Gopalganj postponed

He also said that another eight people with bullet wounds were undergoing operations at the hospital.

Ramzan's father, Kamrul Kazi, told journalists, "My son was killed. I want justice. As a father, I cannot accept the death of my young son."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



SCENES FROM GOPALGANJ... Plastic chairs burn on a street, *left*, in Gopalganj town after members of the Awami League and banned Chhatra League attacked the venue of an NCP rally before and after the event yesterday. Afterwards, army personnel patrolled the area in armoured vehicles, *top right*, while locals were seen rushing an injured man to hospital on a rickshaw-van, *bottom right*.

PHOTO: AFP



Those responsible will face justice' Says govt; parties condemn attack on NCP rally venue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has said the attacks on the venue of the National Citizen Party's rally in Gopalganj, carried out by members of the Awami League and the banned Chhatra League yesterday, will not go unpunished.

Meanwhile, several political parties, including the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Andolan Bangladesh, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, the I2 Party Alliance, Gono Odhikar Parishad, Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal, AB Party, and Khelafat Majlis condemned the attack, blaming the deteriorating law and order situation and calling it an administrative failure.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

'We'll bury Mujibism'

Vows Nahid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Citizen Party Convenor Nahid Islam yesterday said they would bury "Mujibism" in the country to build a truly democratic Bangladesh.

He was speaking at the Poura Park in Gopalganj town, where the stage set up for an NCP rally had earlier been vandalised by leaders

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

ABU SAYED KILLING Justice within this govt's tenure

Says law adviser; Sayed's brother claims no visible trial progress

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

One year has passed, but there has been no visible progress in the trial of the Abu Sayed murder case, his elder brother Ramzan Ali alleged as the nation observed his first death anniversary yesterday.

Ramzan, also the complainant in the case, could not hold back tears after offering fateha at Sayed's grave at their village home in Madankhali, Pirganj upazila, Rangpur.

The day was observed as "July Martyrs' Day" to honour the martyrs of the July uprising.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

CHILD VICTIMS OF JULY UPRISING

Of abandoned toys and unlived tomorrows

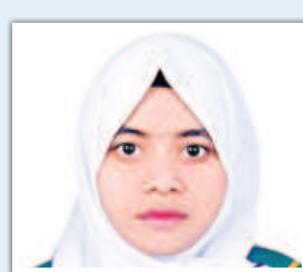
YOUNGEST VICTIM

Abdul Ahad, 4, shot on
8th-floor balcony



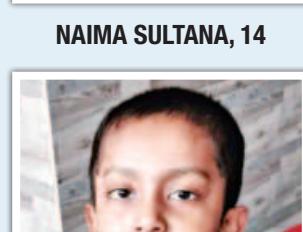
FIRST CHILD VICTIM

Farhan Faiyaz, 17, killed in
Dhanmondi on July 18



YOUNGEST GIRL CHILD VICTIM
Riya Gope, 6, shot on
rooftop in Narayanganj

DEATHS IN DHAKA
57 children



DEATHS OUTSIDE DHAKA
32 children

STUDENTS
42

CHILD LABOURERS
29

GUNSHOT OR SHOTGUN PELLETS
79 children

DEATH BY STUN GRENADE
SPLINTER
1 child



Nilima Jahan

They were readers of fairy tales, keepers of marbles, chasers of kites across twilight skies. Some still asked to sleep in their mother's arms. Others, on the cusp of adolescence, had just begun to dream in the language of futures -- of stethoscopes, classrooms, galaxies. They were children, dreamers of careers, cartoons, and cricket.

Some were students with notebooks in hand. Others were street children swept up in crowds.

In the heat and fury of the July uprising, they died -- on streets, in alleyways, even on their own rooftops.

Bullets did not ask for age.

Official figures say 132 children died. The UN confirms that at least

118 children made up over one in every eight of the victims.

Each number hides a name, a dream, a future that now exists only in memory; each representing a shattered family and a nation mourning the true cost of the unrest.

Take six-year-old Riya Gope, one of the youngest to die. She was born after years of her parents' waiting -- on a December 24. She left this world on another 24th, in July last year.

On July 19, she was playing on the rooftop of their four-storey home when a bullet struck her. She held on for five days at Dhaka Medical College Hospital before her heart gave out.

"We miss her terribly. She was the centre of our lives, and the grief just won't ease," said her father, Deepak Kumar Gope. "Sometimes, when

come home, I still expect her to run to me. It feels like she's everywhere, yet nowhere. The house is so quiet without her."

The couple are now trying desperately for another child.

"I've asked other parents if the child they had after loss looked like the one they lost; if the faces match; if the smile is the same. If we're lucky enough to have that... maybe then, our broken hearts will heal a little."

But Riya's mother, Beauty Ghosh, continues to battle both gynaecological complications and trauma. They've packed away Riya's belongings in an attempt to ease the pain. Still, the silence lingers.

In March, the Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex in Dhanmondi was renamed the Riya

SOURCES: THE DAILY STAR, PROTHOM ALO

We Deeply Mourn



Sayeed Hossain Chowdhury

11 November 1957 – 15 July 2025

HRC family of companies deeply mourns the sad demise of Sayeed Hossain Chowdhury, our founder Chairman. He breathed his last on Tuesday, 15 July, 2025. Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Illayhi Raji'un.

Sayeed H. Chowdhury was also a founder promoter Director of ONE BANK PLC and a key figure in the development of ONE BANK PLC. He served as Chairman from 2001 to 2008 and again from 2012-2020 and in later years as a Director.

A distinguished business leader, he completed his education in the UK and began his career managing his family's business in the Gulf before returning to Bangladesh in the year 1987.

In 1991, he established HRC family of companies, which grew into a large blue chip conglomerate including ship owning, chartering operations, shipping agency, distribution, leasing, foreign representation, travel trade, tea and rubber plantation, plantation owning, tea blending/packaging for local market/export, real estate, GLS bulb manufacturing, print media, etc.

HRC through its associate companies also has substantial investments in general insurance, housing finance and IT sectors.

Mr. Sayeed Hossain Chowdhury also served as president of BOGSOA and Honorary Consul of Spain in Bangladesh. He will forever be remembered with deep respect and admiration.

We pray for the salvation of his departed soul and extend profound condolence to members of his bereaved family.



Since March 1991

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Grief turns into defiance

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

On the public holiday marking Ashura, Dhaka and other parts of the country witnessed unrelenting student protests, road and highway blockades, symbolic funeral prayers, coffin processions, and repeated clashes with police and protestor activists.

Earlier in the day, students gathered outside Dhaka University's VC office, rejecting the hall closure and demanding justice for recent attacks and the killing of protesters. Police responded with sound grenades and tear gas. Similar protests and symbolic funeral prayers took place across other universities, including Jahangirnagar University, where students clashed with police throughout the day.

The Dhaka University campus remained tense throughout the day. From morning, heavy deployments of police, Rab, and BGB personnel with armoured vehicles were visible. As the coffin procession began, security forces launched a sudden assault, injuring at least 20 students, including several women, and 10 journalists. By 11:00pm, 35 more injured protesters were receiving treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital from clashes in various parts of the capital.

At 2:00pm, students had planned to hold a funeral prayer and coffin procession at the base of the Raju Sculpture to mourn fellow students allegedly killed by police and Chhatra League attacks. Police blocked the prayer, which was later held in front of the VC's residence. As the procession began, officers launched a barrage of sound grenades and tear gas, dispersing the students. Protesters regrouped near Surya Sen Hall, triggering another hour-long clash. Police stationed themselves near the VC's residence, while students took position near Surya Sen Hall. The students retaliated with stones. By 5:30pm, they had retreated into the dorms.



THE JULY THAT ROCKED BANGLADESH

JULY 17, 2024

At one point, Associate Professor Saiful Haque of the Mass Communication and Journalism Department intervened and urged police to stop firing tear gas, which they did. Students then moved towards Nilkhet, where police again launched tear gas. In response, protesters hurled bricks. They eventually dispersed into smaller groups, remaining on the campus periphery.

At 9:45pm, a fresh round of clashes erupted, starting in front of DU's Bangabandhu Tower and spreading to the Central Shaheed Minar, Dhaka Medical College Hospital, and Chankharpul. After about half an hour of confrontation, protesters moved towards Old Dhaka.

Although many students left their dorms by evening, several reported being harassed and assaulted by Chhatra League members near Shahbagh.

Activists of the ruling party held funeral prayers under the banner of freedom fighters, students, and the public at the National Museum premises. Afterward, they remained

there. Protesters leaving through Shahbagh were reportedly subjected to phone checks and beatings. Between 3:00pm and 3:30pm, at least three students were beaten, two of whom were rescued by police.

Despite the violence, many students—particularly women—stayed in their dormitories, declaring they would not leave without justice.

Meanwhile, university teachers retrieved two detained students from Shahbagh Police Station. Around 1:00pm, a group of teachers staged a silent march to the station and secured their release. Later, a "Teachers' Assembly Against Repression" was held at the base of Aparajeyo Bangla. Dr. Rushad Faridi of the Economics

all day. By evening, protesters clashed with police and engaged in running attacks. The clashes continued late into the night. Protesters reportedly set fire to the toll plaza of the Hanif Flyover. Demonstrators controlled the area from Jatrabari to Signboard, with police and Rab deployed in large numbers. Traffic on the flyover came to a halt.

Six people, including a two-year-old child, were wounded by shotgun pellets and taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, according to the hospital's police outpost.

The Chittagong University authorities announced the indefinite closure of the university. Female students were asked to vacate by 6:00pm today, and male students by



Protesters at Dhaka University held an absentee funeral on July 17, 2024, for those killed in the quota reform movement, with symbolic coffins wrapped in the national flag.

PHOTO: FILE/ORCHID CHAKMA

Department stated that police had coerced one student into a video confession admitting involvement in a movement to topple the government—evidence, he said, of growing state repression.

In Shonir Akhra, the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway remained blocked

10:00pm.

On a day meant for mourning, students across Bangladesh turned grief into defiance. Facing grenades, arrests, and state violence, they marched not just for quota reform—but for justice, dignity, and the right to shape the nation's future without fear.

Of abandoned toys and unlived tomorrows

FROM PAGE 1
Gope Women's Sports Complex in her memory.

"We heard about it," said Deepak. "But nothing feels important anymore when our daughter isn't here."

Six-year-old Jibir Ibrahim, the youngest in his family, was killed by police during a rally celebrating the fall of the government on August 5 in Uttara.

Jibir loved his birthday. May 19 was his favourite. He would scrawl it everywhere: on walls, notebooks, even on his hands. Since his death, his family no longer celebrates birthdays.

"Every birthday felt like Jibir's. He always cut the cake, even on his siblings' birthdays," said his mother, Rokeya. "Last month was my daughter's birthday, the month before was Jibir's, but we did nothing. It feels like birthdays don't exist anymore."

He was a picky eater, and Rokeya spent her days worrying about what to cook so he would eat. "Now I just lie in bed. There's no one left to feed," she said.

She spends hours looking through his photos, especially one taken minutes before he was shot, where Jibir holds up a victory sign. She's kept everything: his Spider-Man bag, his bicycle, his books, toys, and the bloodstained trousers he wore that day.

His father, Kabir Hossain, now lives among memories. He shares them online, unable to move past the weight of a loss too large for words.

The same grief weighs heavily on Abdul Matin and Jesmin Begum, parents of 14-year-old Abdul Motaleb, known as Munna.

An eighth-grader last year, Munna was shot near Jigatola and later found dead at the central Shaheed Minar,

where students carried his body in a solemn procession.

"My son was kind-hearted, always ready to help others," recalled Matin, a tannery worker. "I told his mother not to let him go out during protests; if needed, to keep him tied at home."

"On the day it happened, we had lunch together. I saw him resting, but after I left for work, he went out to join the protests, and was shot."

Munna didn't have a phone. After the pandemic began, he used his father's for online classes and made a few TikTok videos.

"When the pain gets too heavy, we watch those videos," said Matin.

Birthdays in their conservative family were simple. Munna would bring his own cake and share it with everyone. But last December, his birthday passed in silence—no cake, no celebration.

Even Eid, the day of joy for Muslims twice a year, has become a reminder of Munna's absence. During Munna's last Eid-ul-Azha, Matin found him at the cattle market in a volunteer's uniform, helping buyers.

At first, Matin felt angry—who had told him to do this? Was money so tight that Munna needed to work?

But Munna explained he wasn't there for money, only to spend time with friends and help others while school was closed.

"This year, at the cattle market, I found myself searching for Munna, even though I know he's gone," Matin whispered, his voice heavy with grief.

But grief is not the only burden these families carry. The pursuit of justice has become yet another endless road, filled with uncertainty, bureaucracy, and silence.

Some parents tried to file cases, only to be turned away or discouraged. Others managed to open cases, but there have been no arrests, no

updates, no accountability.

Deepak, for example, never intended to file a case. "What would we have gained? Our daughter is gone. Nothing can bring her back," he said.

However, on July 1, around 11 months after Riya's death, police filed a case against up to 200 unidentified individuals, allegedly affiliated with the Awami League and its associate groups.

Meanwhile, Munna's father, Matin, said they filed a case at Dhanmondi Model Police Station but have no idea about its progress.

"Sometimes the police call to check if we are facing any threats, but other than that, there is no update," he said.

Jibir's mother, Rokeya, also informed this correspondent that although they filed a case against the personnel of Uttara East Police Station, the perpetrators remain absconding, and there have been no updates.

In the case of 11-year-old Sufkat Samir from Mirpur 14, shot in the eye while closing a window on July 19, the bullet pierced his skull and exited, killing him instantly.

His father, Sakibur Rahman, said he was summoned to Kafrul Police Station that night through a local Awami League leader, where he was initially pressured to sign a statement saying he did not want to pursue a case.

Later, following extensive media coverage, the police compelled him to file another case in court against some prominent Awami League leaders. It was later discovered that the accused in that

case included the names of two of the group's rivals in a property dispute.

Although Sakibur appeared in court eight times and submitted affidavits stating that these men were not involved in his son's death, one innocent man was jailed for five months before being released on bail.

To date, there has been no progress in identifying or prosecuting the real perpetrator responsible for Sufkat's death.

But these deaths are only part of the tragedy. Many children were never counted, while countless others now live with injuries and silent wounds and trauma from what they saw and whom they lost.

"We don't even know how many street children died," said Child Protection Specialist Gawher Nayeem Wahra. "No one tried to find out, because children simply aren't on our agenda."

Wahra noted that survivors often saw violence firsthand and now need counselling and safe spaces to heal.

"Children hold memories deeply. They can recover, but only if given space. Schools, TV programmes, and families offer nothing to help them heal," he said.

He also warned against involving children under 18 in politics, especially with the election approaching. Without careful protection, more children could lose their lives during turmoil.

But beyond warnings and statistics, for the parents left behind, every sunrise is a reminder of what was lost. And every silence echoes with the laughter that won't return.

Leaving through Jibir's unfinished notebooks and the award he received at his last art competition, his mother Rokeya whispered, "If this country cannot protect its children, then what future are we even fighting for?"

He then warned, "If justice is not delivered swiftly, we will return to Gopalganj and take responsibility ourselves to free the district from their grip."

Before the start of the NCP rally, a group of people smashed the sound systems and chairs and hurled crude bombs.

After the rally concluded, the site was ransacked again and set on fire. A fresh round of violence broke out in the Poura Park area, as a group belonging to the banned Bangladesh Chhatra League attempted to attack the vehicles carrying NCP leaders.

This led to a chase and counter-chase between the attackers and law enforcers.

Iran seizes foreign tanker over fuel smuggling

AFP, Tehran

Iran has seized a foreign tanker in the Sea of Oman on charges of fuel smuggling, the judiciary said yesterday.

The vessel was intercepted "after legal documents related to its cargo were found to be incomplete," said Mojtaba Ghahremani, head of the judiciary in southern Hormozgan province, according to the judiciary's Mizan Online outlet.

He added that the ship was reportedly carrying two million litres of smuggled fuel.

"Seventeen suspects, including the captain and crew of the foreign tanker, have been taken into custody," Ghahremani said, without elaborating on the identity and nationality of those arrested.

Authorities are conducting laboratory tests and reviewing documents to verify the cargo's contents and legality, the report added.

The seizure comes months after Iran's Revolutionary Guards intercepted two Tanzanian-flagged tankers allegedly transporting 1.5 million litres of diesel in the Gulf.

Those vessels were later transferred to the port of Bushehr for legal proceedings.

The vessels, the Sea Ranger and Salama, had 25 foreign crew members, according to Iranian media.

CYBERSCAM CRACKDOWN

Cambodia arrests over 200 Vietnam citizens

AFP, Phnom Penh

Cambodian authorities have arrested more than 200 Vietnamese nationals in internet scam centre raids, police said yesterday, as Prime Minister Hun Manet ordered a crackdown on cybercrime sweatshops.

The United Nations has described Southeast Asia as the "ground zero" of scam centres, where workers typically use romance or business cons to defraud social media users of an estimated \$40 billion annually.

Hun Manet issued a directive made public on Tuesday, telling law enforcement and the military "to prevent and crack down on online scams", warning they risk losing their jobs if they fail to take action.

Four killed as violence grips

FROM PAGE 1

Dipto's uncle told reporters at the hospital that his nephew was going to his shop after lunch when he was shot in the abdomen in the Chowrangli area of the town.

A grocer working in the area, requesting anonymity, said he saw two people collapse on the street as security forces opened fire to disperse the agitating crowd.

NCP yesterday held protest programmes in several districts, including Chittagong and Noakhali, condemning the attack.

Demanding the arrest of the culprits within the next 24 hours, NCP Convener Nahid Islam at a press conference in Khulna last night said the attacks were carried out to kill them.

"After concluding our rally in Gopalganj, we were heading towards Madaripur when armed goons of the Awami League attacked our motorcade," Nahid said.

Despite the attack, he said, the NCP will hold a rally in Faridpur today as part of its month-long programme.

The Chief Adviser's Press Wing condemned the "utterly indefensible" attack on leaders and activists of the NCP and said it will not go unpunished.

Political parties, including BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, also condemned the attack.

According to witnesses, around 1:45pm, before the start of the rally, around 200-300 people armed with sticks vandalised the stage and tore apart the banner. They also exploded some crude bombs.

The police personnel were seen to retreat to the nearby court area during the attack. NCP leaders and activists also fled, they said.

NCP leaders and activists alleged that the attackers were supporters of the AL and the banned Chhatra League.

At one point, Gopalganj Superintendent of Police Md Mizanur Rahman showed up at the scene. Then the NCP activists and police jointly chased the attackers away.

Around 2:05pm, NCP Convener Nahid Islam, Member Secretary Akhtar Hossain, Chief Organiser (South) Hasnat Abdullah, Chief Organiser (North) Sarjis Alam, and other central leaders arrived at the venue.

No untoward incidents took place during the rally.

After the rally, as NCP members were heading to Chowrangli area, their motorcade came under attack by a group of individuals armed with sticks and batons.

Law enforcers then tried to control the situation by firing sound grenades and blank shots. Army members later joined the policing efforts.

NCP activists were seen leaving the

spot, turning their vehicles around. A live TV clip showed that key NCP leaders Nahid, Hasnat, and Sarjis were whisked away from the area in an Armoured Personnel Carrier of the Bangladesh Army.

Section 144 was then imposed in Gopalganj, and four platoons of Bangladesh Border Guard (BGB) were deployed in the area around 4:00pm.

According to witnesses, a police vehicle was attacked and set ablaze in Khatiachar on the Ulpur Durgapur road around 9:30am. Three police officers were reportedly injured. Later, around 11:30am, the car of the upazila nirbahi officer of Sadar upazila was also attacked on the same road.

UNO M Rakibul Hasan said, "After learning about the untoward incident involving the attack on a police vehicle, I visited the area. On my way back, when we reached Kansur, a group attacked our vehicle. The driver, Mohammad Hamim, was injured."

Mohammad Abdul Mabud, additional deputy inspector general (Admin & Finance) of Dhaka Range, told The Daily Star around 10:00pm, "A group of armed criminals carried out a sudden attack on a rally of the NCP in Gopalganj, leaving several injured, including police personnel and journalists."

"The NCP had scheduled their July rally to begin at 2:00pm at the open space of Gopalganj Municipal Park. However, around 1:30pm, a group of 25 to 30 attackers vandalised the stage area before the programme started."

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JULY MUSEUM TIB slams govt move for direct procurement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has expressed concern over the interim government's decision to spend nearly Tk 111 crore through direct procurement for construction and renovation work at the former prime minister's residence, Gono Bhaban, to establish the "July Uprising Memorial Museum".

In a statement signed by its Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman, TIB said the decision to bypass existing laws and regulations under the justification of direct purchase goes against the government's commitment to transparency and accountability.

According to media reports, the renovation work -- set to be completed by August 5 -- will be

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

JULY UPRISING ICT trials of several cases may finish by Dec: Tajul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Trials of several cases related to crimes against humanity during last year's July uprising could be wrapped up by December, said ICT Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam yesterday.

"The proceedings are progressing well, and we remain hopeful," he told reporters after a court session.

"We are confident the main perpetrators will be brought to justice..." he said.

He said a number of investigation reports related to the uprising are likely to be submitted later this month.

Meanwhile, ICT-2 yesterday directed the jail authorities to produce three accused in a case over

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Speakers at a roundtable, titled "Transforming Policy into Law: Dialogue on Domestic Workers' Rights and Barriers to Implementation", held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Domestic workers deserve dignity, legal protection

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fisheries and Livestock Adviser Farida Akhter yesterday called for a respectful definition of "domestic worker" based on workers' preferences and urged their inclusion under labour laws.

She stressed the need for legal protection, health security, safe working environments, proper training, fair wages, and labour-saving technologies to ease domestic workers' burdens.

She made the remarks while speaking as chief guest at a roundtable titled "Transforming Policy into Law: Dialogue on Domestic Workers' Rights and Barriers to Implementation", jointly organised by The Daily Star, ECHO, Shobujer Ovijan Foundation, and Oxfam at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Addressing the use of commonly used terms for househelps, the adviser said words like "bua" and "chhuta bua" should be avoided. The term "bandha bua" for full-time help, which implies servitude, must also be discarded.

"Many domestic workers feel uncomfortable being called 'domestic workers', " she said. "It's important to consult them and choose a respectful title they can proudly identify with."

She said the domestic workers' movement

Many domestic workers feel uncomfortable being called 'domestic workers'. It's important to consult them and choose a respectful title they can proudly identify with.

FARIDA AKHTER
Fisheries and Livestock Adviser

Protecting rights of domestic workers is everyone's responsibility, not just the state. Let's start with our own homes -- issue appointment letters. Let's motivate our buildings and neighbourhoods.

AHM SHAFIQUZZAMAN
Secretary at Ministry of Labour and Employment

is part of the broader women's movement and that mutual respect between employers and workers -- often both women -- is essential.

She also advocated for the use of technology, such as ready-to-cook food and labour-saving tools, to reduce the burden of domestic work.

Highlighting health concerns, Farida said

domestic workers are citizens with the right to health protection. Many consume "jorda/gul" to suppress hunger due to a lack of timely meals, which causes serious health risks.

Providing nutritious food and proper rest is crucial, she added, stressing the need to design homes with rest facilities for domestic workers.

Abul Hossain, acting coordinator of the Domestic Workers' Rights Network, said although the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy, which aims to safeguard their rights and well-being based on ILO Convention 189, was approved in 2015, it has yet to become law a decade later.

He expressed hope that the current interim government, free from political influence, would finalise the legal inclusion of domestic workers under labour law before the next elections.

Razequzzaman Ratan, member of Labour Reform Commission, said recognition, registration, and fair remuneration are key to valuing domestic workers' labour. He urged the immediate inclusion of domestic workers under labour law, as proposed in the commission's recommendations.

Until a law is passed, Ratan said the 2015 policy must be fully implemented. This includes replacing verbal agreements with written contracts and resolving complaints through apartment management or ward committees.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

55 pushed in from India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Fifty-five people were pushed into Bangladesh from India through four border points along Sylhet and Sunamganj districts yesterday.

The incidents took place between 4:00am and 12:45pm as the individuals, in five groups, entered the country via four border points -- Noakot, Kalairag, Sreepur, and Tamabil, said Lt Col Md Nazmul Haque, commanding officer of Border Guard Bangladesh 48 Battalion in Sylhet.

The official said patrolling BGB members detained them, and they primarily admitted that they had entered India illegally. He added that the identities of the detainees were being verified, and legal procedures were underway to hand them over to respective police stations for further action.

Of the detainees, 12 are male, 33 are female, and 10 are children.

Quoting the detainees, the BGB official said 12 of them are from Jashore, 23 from Narail, four from Sylhet, 10 from Satkhiria, two from Barishal, and one each from Kushtia, Khulna, Habiganj, and Narsingdi.

Since May 7, over 1,900 individuals, including around 120 Indian nationals and over 200 Rohingyas, have been forcibly pushed into Bangladesh by Indian authorities, according to official data.

This ongoing wave of push-ins comes at a time of strained bilateral relations between the two countries following Bangladesh's political changeover last August and is believed to be the largest of its kind in recent years.

Rights organisations have condemned the practice, saying it violates both bilateral protocols and international law, which require repatriation through legal and formal procedures.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

Rizwan Bin Farouq elected to Duke of Edinburgh's int'l council

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Businessperson Rizwan Bin Farouq has been elected as the international council (IC) member for the Asia Pacific sub region (South Asia) of Duke of Edinburgh's International Award for the 2025-2028 term.

At present, Farouq, managing director of B2M Technologies Ltd, is the Chairman of Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DEA) Foundation Bangladesh Board of Trustees.

In his new role, Farouq will collaborate with other IC members and work alongside the trustees of Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Association to address policy matters and oversee the operational functions of the International Award Foundation, DEA Foundation Bangladesh said in a media release yesterday.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2



A bus picks up and drops off passengers at the entrance of the Mohakhali flyover, forcing vehicles behind to wait. Despite earlier warnings through signs, later illegally removed, the practice continues, posing traffic and safety risks.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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Trade rivalry behind Sohag murder: police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The brutal killing of scrap metal trader Lal Chand alias Sohag in front of Mitford Hospital stemmed from a conflict over control of the illegal trade of "stolen" aluminium wires -- not any political motive, but business rivalry, police said.

Speaking at a press briefing at the DMP Media Centre yesterday, Additional Commissioner (Crime and Operations) SN Md Nazrul Islam said Sohag had previously operated under the political cover of Haji Selim's nephew, former commissioner Pillu, during the Awami League regime.

"For 17 years, Sohag had been involved in dealing with stolen aluminium wires from the Palli Bidyat network and selling those to factories producing aluminium utensils," he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

EC removes 'boat' symbol from its website

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After the suspension of the Awami League's registration, the Election Commission yesterday removed the party's polls symbol, "boat," from its website.

As of yesterday, the EC website lists the Awami League as the sixth party under "registered political parties (registration suspended)". While the party's "boat" symbol was still displayed next to its name on Tuesday, it was no longer visible by yesterday morning. The removal comes despite earlier statements from EC officials saying that polls symbols are owned by the commission and that the "boat" symbol would not be removed from the EC list.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

No alternative to polls for democratic transition: Moyeen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP standing committee member Abdul Moyeen Khan yesterday said no path outside the electoral process is acceptable for a transition to democracy.

"We want to make one thing very clear -- we believe in democracy. There is only one process for a democratic transition. And what is that process? That process is a free and fair election. Beyond this, we know of no other path -- not in Bangladesh, not anywhere else in the world," he said.

Moyeen made these remarks at a protest rally organised by the Jatiyatabadi Muktijoddha Dal at the Jatiya Press Club.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 8

SHAYESTAGANJ UPAZILA
Health complex out of reach for 1.5 lakh

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

The 50-bed Shayestaganj Upazila Health Complex in Habiganj has remained non-operational for the past eight years due to unresolved land acquisition complications, leaving more than 1.5 lakh residents without access to essential healthcare services.

Although the hospital was approved in 2017, construction is yet to begin. In the absence of a proper facility, locals continue to rely on a small, under resourced sub-health centre operating out of two tin-roofed rooms on one acre of land in the Mahalul Sunam area.

The current setup offers no in-patient beds or surgical services. Patients with even minor ailments or injuries must travel to Habiganj District Sadar Hospital, around 20 kilometres away.

Despite the approval of 47 staff positions in 2017 by the health ministry, recruitment remains stalled due to the absence of a hospital building. In 2019, the Habiganj Civil Surgeon's Office proposed the creation of 111 posts, but appointments are still pending.

On paper, the health complex is supposed to have 10 doctors. In reality, only three are currently stationed there – an upazila health and family planning officer, a resident medical officer, and a medical officer. Of the remaining seven, four are serving on deputation in other districts, while

three have reportedly been absent without approval.

"For the past eight years, we've been running both the sub health centre and the upazila health complex from this limited space," said Dr Aditi Roy, upazila health officer. "Last year, a new tin shed was built, and we are trying to provide care within our limitations."

Patients say the existing setup fails to meet even the most basic medical needs. "There are no doctors, no X-ray facilities, and not even basic medicines," said Anowara Khatun of Barachar village.



Dr Mukhlisur Rahman Ujjal, deputy civil surgeon of Habiganj, said a proposal has been sent to the ministry for the appointment of 111 staffers. Once the land is acquired, construction of the 50-bed hospital can begin, he said.

Shayestaganj UNO Pallab Hom Das said a proposal for acquiring five acres of land was submitted to the health ministry several years ago, but it has not been finalised yet. He said construction is being delayed due to this land complication.

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Potholes have formed at various points along the 20-kilometre highway from Bhurghata to Batajor Kobibari in Gournadi upazila under Barishal district, making the route risky for travellers.

This highway is the only gateway to the southern region, including Barishal, and drivers and passengers are facing extreme hardship as it now takes twice as long to cover a distance that should take 16 minutes.

A recent visit to the area revealed small and large potholes in multiple locations, including Torki, Gournadi, Ashokath, Batajor, Kasba, South Palradi, South Bijoypur, Kashemab, Bezhbar, Mahilara, and other bus stand areas along the Barishal Dhaka highway. The damage is attributed to the rising pitch, bitumen, and stones.

At least 86 local buses carrying passengers operate daily from Barishal Natullabab bus terminal to Bhurghata in Gournadi, Hosnabad, and Poysarhut in Agoijhara and Mostafapur of Madaripur.

More than 350 long distance passenger buses and over 300 microbuses ply from Barishal Bus Terminal to various highways connecting Dhaka, Khulna, Jashore, Kushtia, Benapole, Meherpur, Pabna, Rajshahi, Faridpur, Rangpur, Chittagong, and Sylhet throughout the day and night.

Additionally, more than 2,000 freight trucks and over 1,000 covered vans from different

parts of the country use this highway daily.

Since the commissioning of the Padma Bridge over the Padma River at Mawa Ghat in Shibchar, the importance of the Barishal-Dhaka highway, the only road connecting the southern regions, has greatly increased.

Although more than 4,000 to 5,000 vehicles travel this busy route daily, the highway remains risky as it has not been expanded to four lanes.

Bus driver Akbar Hossain said they have to drive cautiously due to the potholes formed during the monsoon season.

Drivers Tapash Pal, Nayan Boyati, Suman Fakir, and Bellal Akon echoed him.

They said their vehicles often get damaged after falling into the potholes, and water accumulated in the holes causes accidents and delays.

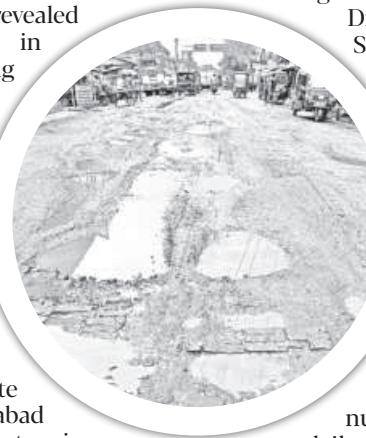
Amirur Rahman, in-charge of Gournadi Highway Police Station, said the monsoon rains have eroded the asphalt and stones on the highway, creating numerous potholes that cause daily accidents.

As a result, thousands of passengers suffer extreme hardship every day.

Motorcycle riders Manjur Alam Talukder said accidents on the road have become a common phenomenon due to the potholes.

Contacted, Masud Mahmud Sumon, executive engineer of the Barishal Roads and Highways Department, said work has begun to fill the potholes with bricks, bats, and stones.

He said once the rain subsides, full repairs will be carried out using stones and bitumen.



ICT trials of several cases may

FROM PAGE 3
the killing of five protesters in Lakshmipur before the tribunal on July 28.

The order came after prosecutors filed a petition seeking their production.

The accused are Lakshmipur Sadar upazila AL president Humayun Kabir Patwari, Digholi

Union Parishad's former chairman Salauddin, and organising secretary of the district Chhatra League Shahin Alam. All three are currently behind bars in other cases.

The tribunal also ordered that public notices be published in two newspapers, asking eight

fugitive accused to appear before the court on July 28.

The case concerns the shooting of six student protesters in Ashulia on August 5 last year. Police then burnt five of the victims who were already dead, while another was still alive, according to the case.

Trade rivalry behind Sohag

FROM PAGE 3
Nazrul added that following the political changeover on August 5, another group from the same area got involved in the trade, sparking a rift between the two sides that ultimately led to Sohag's murder. Both groups were already familiar with each other, he said.

"There was no attempt to disrupt the election... through this killing. It was purely due to personal and trade-related disputes," he added.

On July 9, Sohag was dragged out of his shop and beaten to death near the gate of Sir Salimullah Medical College Mitford Hospital. His battered and broken body was later left on the street as onlookers watched in horror.

Speaking at the briefing, DMP Commissioner Sheikh Md Sazzat Ali said upon receiving a call through the emergency helpline 999, police went to the scene within minutes. There, they found the attackers trying to incite a mob, chanting slogans such as "No place for extortionists, no fear for businessmen".

Soon after the incident, police arrested Mohin from the scene and Robin from a nearby area. Later, based

on CCTV footage analysis, seven more suspects -- including the two seen hurling concrete chunks -- were arrested. In total, nine people have been detained so far in connection with the killing.

The latest arrestee, Rizwan Uddin Ovi, who crushed the victim with large chunks of concrete to ensure his death, was arrested in Patuakhali on Tuesday night, he said.

When asked whether the arrestees have any political affiliations, the commissioner said any citizen may have a political identity, but it is irrelevant in this case. "Their political affiliation has nothing to do with the incident," he added.

He also said misleading information about the case statement has been circulated on social media and in some news outlets.

A copy of an FIR has gone viral on social media, but it was actually a draft prepared by the victim's ex-wife and stepbrother before the official case was filed. That draft included the names of 23 individuals.

Later, when the victim's elder sister, Manjuara Begum, came to Kotwali Police Station to file the

case, her daughter took a photo of the draft FIR. Manjuara then removed five names from the draft and added one new name, ultimately naming 19 accused in the final FIR, he added.

PRAYER TIMING

JULY 17
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-15 12-45 5-00 6-54 8-15
JAMAAT 4-50 1-15 5-15 6-58 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Dengue claims two lives, 321 hospitalised

UNB, Dhaka

Two more deaths were reported from dengue in 24 hours till yesterday morning, raising the number of fatalities from the mosquito-borne disease in Bangladesh to 60 this year.

During the period, 321 more patients were hospitalised with the viral fever, raising the total infected case to 15,906 this year, according to the DGHS. Last year, dengue claimed the lives of 575 people.

In 2023, 1,705 people lost their lives due to dengue, making it the deadliest year on record. The DGHS recorded 321,179 dengue cases and 3,18,749 recoveries in the same year.

Two more die in Sutrapur gas blast

UNB, Dhaka

Two individuals, who sustained burn injuries in a gas explosion at their residence in Sutrapur last week, died at a Dhaka hospital yesterday.

The deceased are Rokon, 14, and Tamim Peda, 16.

Motorcycle riders Manjur Alam Talukder said accidents on the road have become a common phenomenon due to the potholes.

Contacted, Masud Mahmud Sumon, executive engineer of the Barishal Roads and Highways Department, said work has begun to fill the potholes with bricks, bats, and stones.

He said once the rain subsides, full repairs will be carried out using stones and bitumen.

School student drowns in the Bay

UNB, Cox's Bazar

A school student drowned in the Bay of Bengal at Cox's Bazar yesterday morning, just nine days after three students of Chittagong University died in a similar incident.

The deceased -- Raiyan Noor Abu Samim, son of Md Ismail from the city's Boidyaghona -- was a class eight student at Cox's Bazar Government High School. The incident occurred around 10:00am at the Shaibal Point of the beach.

Raiyan drowned while he was bathing in the sea after playing football with his friends, said his brother Faiyan Noor Abu Ramim. Mohammad Osman, supervisor of Sea Safe Lifeguard, said swimming at Shaibal Point is prohibited and there are no lifeguards stationed in that area.



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD

Road Division, Faridpur

Phone/Fax: 0631-63256/66367

E-mail: eerhdfaridpur@gmail.com

e-Tender Notice (Re-Tender)

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Faridpur for the procurement of:

SI. No.	Tender ID No./ Package No.	Name of works	Last date and time for tender security submission	Tender closing/ opening date & time
1	2	3	4	5
1	1131666, 04/c- GP/FRD/Rev- PMP Major Bridge Culvert/2024-2025	PMP (Major-Bridge/Culvert) work for Construction of 60.75m (2x12.20m R.C.C Girder+33.54m P.C Girder) Long P.C Girder Bridge (Saltha Bridge) at 19th km (Ch.18km+185.50m) on Faridpur (Badarpur)-Saltha-Sonapur-Muksudpur (Z-7004) Road, under Road Division Faridpur during the FY 2024-2025.	07/08/2025 11:00 hour	07/08/2025 11:30 hour

e-Tender details can be downloaded from 15/07/2025 time: 17:00 to 06/08/2025, time: 17:00 of e-GP System Portal <http://www.eprocure.gov.bd> for pursue.

e-Tenders will be accepted only as stated in above list, accepted tenders will be opened online immediately as stated in above list.

Khalid Saifullah Sardar
ID No. 602287
Executive Engineer, (C.C) RHD
Road Division, Faridpur

Asian Development Bank Bangladesh Resident Mission				
Sale Notice				
The Asian Development Bank (ADB), Bangladesh Resident Mission (BRM), Plot E-31, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka intends to sell one used vehicle (yellow plate) Reg No: AJA 01-040. Interested parties may inspect the vehicle at the ADB-BRM premises and collect the Bid Form from 10 AM to 4 PM from 17 July to 29 July 2025 except holidays and weekend (Friday and Saturday). Sealed bids must be dropped in the Bid Box at the ADB-BRM office within 2 PM on 30 July 2025. The bids will be opened at 3 PM on the same day.				
Khulna University Khulna-9208, Bangladesh				
Invitation for Tender				
01	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Education		
02	Agency	Khulna University, Khulna-9208		
03	Procuring Entity Name	Kazi Nazrul Islam Central Library Khulna University, Khulna-9208		
04	Procuring Entity District	Khulna		
05	Invitation for	Supply of Books for Kazi Nazrul Islam Central Library Khulna University, Khulna-9208		
06	Invitation Ref. No. & Date	Tender No. KU/LI/37/1994-V/5(02) Date - 16.07.2025		
07	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)		
08	Budget and Source of Funds	GOB		
09	Tender Last Selling Date & Time	10/08/2025 Up to banking hour		
10	Tender Closing Date & Time	11/08/2025 12.00 pm		
11	Tender Opening Date & Time	11/08/2025 12.00 pm		
12	Selling Tender Document	Agrani Bank Ltd, Khulna University Branch, Khulna-9208		
13	Receiving & Opening Tender Document	Office of the treasurer, Khulna University, Khulna-9208		
14	Eligibility of Tender	This invitation for Tender is open to all qualified tenders as mentioned below: a) The Tenderers shall have a minimum of five (5) years of overall experience in the supply of Books. b) The Satisfactory completion of the supply of Books of minimum Tk.25.00 Lac (Twenty-five Lac) under one (1) contract/ Tk.35.00 Lac (Thirty-five Lac) under two (2) contracts in the last Five (5) years. c) The minimum amount of liquid asset or working capital or credit facility is Tk. 40.00 lac (Forty Lac). d) The Tenderers must have updated Trade		

Israel steps up Syria strikes

Two drones hit entrance to defence ministry in Damascus as Druze clashes continue

REUTERS, Damascus

Powerful airstrikes shook Damascus yesterday, targeting the defence ministry as Israel vowed to destroy Syrian government forces attacking Druze communities in southern Syria and demanded they withdraw.

Reuters reporters heard warplanes swoop low over the capital and unleash a series of massive strikes on central Damascus. The cityscape was blanketed in smoke with a thick plume rising from the defence ministry. Health ministry said one person was killed and another 18 were injured.

An Israeli airstrike hit next to the presidential palace in Damascus. There was no immediate Israeli comment on powerful strikes that hit in the mid-afternoon, which Syrian state media said were carried out by Israel.

The Israeli military had earlier announced a strike on the gate of the defence ministry. Shortly before the massive blasts, Defence Minister Israel Katz had said "painful blows will come".

Scores of people have been killed this week in violence

- » Israel warns Syria to leave Druze alone, vows continued strikes
- » Violence in Syria involves Druze, Bedouin, govt forces
- » Death toll from southern Syria violence rises to 169

around the southern city of Sweida, pitting fighters from the Druze minority against government security forces and members of Bedouin tribes, prompting Israel to strike repeatedly with the declared aim of protecting the Druze.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights reported that 169 people had been killed in this week's violence. Security sources put the toll at 300. "We are surrounded and we hear the fighters screaming ... we're so scared," said a resident of Sweida, a predominantly Druze city, who was reached by phone.

The crack of gunfire interspersed by booms could be heard in the background. "We're trying to keep the children quiet so that no one can hear us," the man added, asking not to be identified for fear of reprisals.

The violence has underlined big challenges facing interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa despite warming ties with the US, as he seeks to stitch Syria back together in the face of deep misgivings from groups that reject Islamist rule. Syrian government troops were dispatched to the Sweida region on Monday to quell fighting between Druze fighters and Bedouin armed men.



Syrian security forces deploy as residents flee their homes amid ongoing clashes in the southern Sweida city yesterday. Damascus deployed troops in the predominantly Druze province of Sweida, after clashes between Druze fighters and Bedouin tribes killed scores of people.

PHOTO: AFP

Russia defies Trump's warning over Ukraine

Fires hundreds of drones at Ukraine; one killed, dozens hurt; energy infrastructure hit

AFP, Kyiv

Russia fired hundreds of drones, artillery and a ballistic missile at Ukraine between late Tuesday and early yesterday, Ukraine said, defying calls by Donald Trump to reach a peace deal.

The attacks left one woman dead and wounded more than two dozen people across multiple regions, while a missile attack cut power and water in Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's home city of Kryvyi Rih, according to authorities.

The bombardment came two days after US President Trump threatened to impose severe

sanctions against the country unless it reached a peace settlement within 50 days to end its three-year war on Ukraine.

Ukrainian and Russian officials last met for direct peace talks more than a month ago, and no further meetings have been scheduled despite the Kremlin saying it is open for more talks.

Russia fired at least 400 drones at Ukraine between late Tuesday and early yesterday, as well as an Iskander ballistic missile launched from the annexed Crimean peninsula, the Ukrainian air force said.

Overnight drone attacks on the central Ukrainian city of Vinnytsia

left eight wounded, while three were wounded in an attack on the northeastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, local authorities said.

Russian attacks on the city of Kryvyi Rih wounded at least 15 people, destroyed an industrial building and disrupted power and water supplies, according to local officials.

A 17-year-old boy was among those injured, the city's mayor Oleksandr Vilkul said on Telegram.

"He was wounded in the abdominal cavity. He was immediately taken to the hospital, in serious condition. Now doctors are fighting for his life," he wrote.

'Those responsible will face justice'

FROM PAGE 1

So far, four people died during the clashes between law enforcers and the Awami League supporters yesterday.

In a statement issued by the chief adviser's press wing, the government termed the Gopalganj violence "utterly indefensible".

"The perpetrators must be swiftly identified and held fully accountable," it said, adding, "Those responsible for this brutality will face justice. Let it be made absolutely clear: violence has no place in our nation. Justice must and will prevail."

The government commanded the army and police for their prompt response, and applauded the resilience and courage of the students who carried on with their rally despite prior threats.

Announcing that a curfew has been imposed in Gopalganj, LGRD Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain posted on Facebook at 6:43pm, "Unless it is a matter of life and death, no general people should leave their home. The number of law enforcers has been increased. The terrorists of the banned organisations... will be broken. Everything is being monitored from the police control room, with instructions being given by the home affairs adviser, the youth and sports adviser, and heads of law enforcement agencies."

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir expressed grave concern and demanded immediate arrest and strict punishment of those responsible.

In a statement, he said, "With law and order collapsing, Awami League allies are now fuelling chaos and exploiting the situation to put the interim government in a difficult position."

Wishing a quick recovery for the injured

police officers, Fakhrul urged the government to respond with an "iron fist".

"Since the fall of the Awami regime in the student-public movement, miscreants are once again trying to destabilise the country through anarchy... Today's barbaric attack on NCP's pre-announced programme in Gopalganj, the cocktail explosions, arson attacks on the UNO's and law enforcers' vehicles, and injuries to police, these all are manifestations of anarchy."

Urging locals to refrain from unrest, Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Shafiqur Rahman wrote on Facebook, "The government must urgently take necessary steps. Otherwise, it will bear the full responsibility of history."

In a separate statement, Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar announced the party would hold peaceful protests nationwide.

"It is the government's duty to assist any political party in holding their programme. But there was no visible action from law enforcers on the ground -- and that is deeply concerning," he said.

In its statement, Islami Andolan Bangladesh said yesterday's violence makes it evidently clear that the administration has failed.

The party's Amir Syed Mohammad Rezaul Karim demanded an investigation into the role of law enforcement officers. "There must be an inquiry into whether the superintendent of police in Gopalganj and others on duty deliberately allowed the violence to occur."

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis Secretary General Jalaluddin Ahmed demanded immediate arrest of the attackers.

"This incident proves that the country's law and order is deteriorating fast. The government must take firm, neutral, and

responsible action."

The 12-Party Alliance also issued a statement condemning the violence and said, "There is no alternative but to suppress these miscreants with a firm hand."

The Biplobi Workers Party echoed this, saying the incident exposed the failure of law enforcement agencies.

It's General Secretary Saiful Haque said, "Identified criminals had been openly threatening the NCP rally on social media and other platforms. Why were no preventive measures taken despite this?"

Gono Odhikar Parishad President Nurul Haque Nur in a Facebook post warned, "If the administration does not take visible steps within 24 hours to free Gopalganj from goons and the 'Terror League', we will march from Dhaka to Gopalganj."

Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (Basud) General Secretary Basud Rashid Firoz said it was the government's duty to protect lives, property, and public gatherings.

"But what we saw -- law enforcement's failure to ensure security at a pre-announced political programme -- is extremely alarming."

AB Party and Khelafat Majlis, in separate statements, said Awami collaborators are taking advantage of the worsening law-and-order situation to create chaos in the country.

Meanwhile, Islamist organisation Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh said the attack was a direct violation of democracy, freedom of expression, and human rights.

"Uprooting fascism from this country is now the demand of the time," it said in a statement, adding, "The indifference and failure of the law enforcement agencies is deeply concerning and questionable."



জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

বাংলাদেশ

Legal Notice

This notification is placed on behalf of our client, National University, Bangladesh established in 1992, having its registered office located at Board Bazar, Gazipur-1704, Bangladesh.

This is to notify the public that our client, National University has executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Md. Abu Taher, Father's Name: Bosir Uddin, Mother's Name: Shabana Bibi, NID No- 8698578773, Hazi Bari, Pedda, Mudaforgonj-3562, Borura, Cumilla where the parties have proposed to enter into a transaction to purchase immovable assets together with all fixed structures described in the schedule detailed below:

In relation to the proposed transaction detailed above, Legal Due diligence of the said assets together with all fixed structures described in the schedule has been initiated and the same is in process.

With regard to the proposed transaction, it is hereby requested that any person or entity claiming to have any right, title, interest, claim or demand whatsoever in respect of the said land together with all fixed structures by way of sale, inheritance, bequest, exchange, gift, possession, trust, mortgage, lease, license, lien, charge, tenancy, pendency, development rights, maintenance, easement or under any agreement of sale or power of attorney, opinion, right of first refusal or pre-emption whatsoever or otherwise however, to make the same known in writing with documentary proof thereof, to the address mentioned hereinbelow within 15 days from the date of the publication of this notice, failing which the sale transaction shall be completed without any reference to such right, title, interest, claim or demand and the same shall be deemed to have been waived to all intents and purpose.

Schedule-1

Total Land Area: 22.44 decimal
Mouza: Colmessor: J. L. No.-016 Circle: Tongi District: Gazipur

Name of the Seller	SA Khatian No	SA Dag No	RS Khatian No	RS Dag/Plot No	RS Zot No	Total Land
Md. Abu Taher Father: Bosir Uddin Mother: Shabana Bibi NID No- 8698578773 Hazi Bari, Pedda, Mudaforgonj-3562, Borura, Cumilla	242	620	333	807/863	6918	22.44 decimal

Farzana Sharmin (Ms)

Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh (Appellate Division)

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45 Bijoy Nagar, Dhaka-1000

Mobile: 01714447698

Email: fsharmin661@gmail.com

Israel war meant to 'overthrow system' in Iran

AFP, Tehran

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said yesterday that Israel's attacks during last month's 12-day war were intended to weaken the Islamic republic's system and spark unrest to topple it.

"The calculation and plan of the aggressors was to weaken the system by targeting certain figures and sensitive centres in Iran," said Khamenei in a statement published on his website.

He said the move was meant to stir "unrest and bring people into the streets to overthrow the system".

Israel's attacks took place two days before Iran and the United States were scheduled to meet for a sixth round of nuclear talks which had begun on April 12. The talks have not since resumed.

'Strong argument' for video in airline cockpit: IATA chief

AFP, Singapore

There is a "strong argument" for putting video cameras in airline cockpits to assist in accident investigations, the head of global aviation industry group IATA said yesterday.

The comments by Willie Walsh, director general of the International Air Transport Association, followed the release of a preliminary report on last month's Air India crash, which found that the plane's engine fuel switches had been turned off.

The report, issued Saturday by India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), did not offer any conclusions or apportion blame for the June 12 disaster, but indicated that one pilot asked the other why he cut off fuel, and the second pilot responded that he had not.

The crash killed all but one of the 242 people on board as well as 19 people on the ground.

Walsh, a former commercial airline pilot, said he understood the reluctance of pilots to put video cameras in the cockpit.

Time running out for a deal with US

Govt should have been better prepared, more proactive

The concerns raised by trade experts and private sector representatives regarding the interim government's handling of the US tariff negotiations are quite justified. At a roundtable organised by this daily, they expressed frustration over the government's poor preparation, lack of transparency, and minimal private sector involvement in the trade talks with the US. They warned that a steep 35 percent tariff on Bangladeshi exports including garments to US markets—scheduled to come into effect from August 1—would have greater ramifications for the apparel sector and the wider economy than the government appears to realise. The lack of urgency displayed by it in the face of this enormous threat, and the limited progress made as time runs out to conclude the negotiations, has therefore placed our economic future in a precarious position.

Dhaka is now preparing for a third round of negotiations with the US, but it remains unclear when the talks will take place. While other countries, including our direct trade competitor Vietnam, have either already secured a favourable deal or made significant progress in that direction, Bangladesh still seems to lack any concrete plans. Until recently, the government kept the private sector largely at arm's length. And with very little time left before August 1, how much of the sector's input it can incorporate remains a major question. What the government should have done is establish both a steering committee and a working committee to ensure stakeholder inclusivity and proper preparation.

Moreover, inter-ministerial issues relating to the negotiations also appear to remain unresolved. At this stage, it is not even clear who exactly is leading the talks on Bangladesh's behalf. According to experts, the uncertainty surrounding a deal may prompt buyers to adopt a "wait and see" approach when considering orders from Bangladesh. This could leave businesses idle for several months. Small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular, will struggle to absorb such losses, potentially leading to factory closures and significant job losses.

The uncertainty triggered by the threat of harsher US tariffs will likely have spillover effects in other markets as well. Garment suppliers from other countries may also move quickly to capture European and other export markets, posing further risks to Bangladesh's market share.

Bangladesh, being heavily dependent on garment exports, has always been vulnerable to such external shocks. Despite repeated warnings, little has been done over the years to diversify the export basket, resolve longstanding structural bottlenecks, and enhance overall competitiveness. Given the current global trade landscape, experts believe Bangladesh now has no choice but to reduce trade and business costs through improved logistics and a more enabling business environment, while also boosting productivity through investments in technology and skills development.

However, such changes cannot be achieved overnight—they require consistent, long-term commitment. In the meantime, what the government must urgently do is bring all stakeholders on board and use all possible diplomatic and institutional channels to secure a win-win deal with the US.

Rangamati needs improved healthcare

Sadar hospital needs proper

infrastructure, manpower to serve patients

It is deeply concerning that people in Rangamati are being deprived of critical medical services due to the absence of basic facilities and a shortage of doctors and staff at the Rangamati General Hospital. Reportedly, critically ill patients are being transferred to Chattogram regularly as the district hospital does not have the capacity to treat them. Established in 1984, the hospital still lacks vital facilities such as an ICU, CCU, or even a dialysis unit. As a result, patients suffering from heart disease, kidney failure, or other serious conditions are referred to the Chattogram Medical College Hospital, located about 60 kilometres away. In many cases, patients even need to travel to Dhaka for better treatment. Reportedly, 100 to 150 critical patients are sent to Chattogram for treatment every month. These patients have to face high medical expenses including additional costs of transportation, accommodation, and food, along with the physical strain of travel. This is unacceptable.

As per an estimate, Rangamati General Hospital serves approximately 650,000 residents across the 10 upazilas. Although it has only 100 beds, 200 to 250 patients are often admitted at a time. Due to overcrowding, patients frequently receive treatment on the floor. Moreover, shortages of doctors and support staff have been a persistent issue, causing many to be denied care. Reportedly, despite there being 31 sanctioned positions for doctors, only 22 are currently serving. Furthermore, the hospital lacks the infrastructure needed to provide intensive care. A six-storey building constructed near the hospital in 2009—to house a CCU for cardiac patients—is now being used by Rangamati Medical College, as its permanent campus is yet to be built. In 2021, another initiative was undertaken to introduce ICU, CCU, and dialysis units, and increase the number of hospital beds, with the foundation of an 11-storey building laid. However, that project remains incomplete.

This situation mirrors the long-standing mismanagement and systemic irregularities witnessed across our healthcare sector, and has real impacts for struggling districts like Rangamati. We, therefore, urge the government to ensure the General Hospital is fully equipped to provide comprehensive care. The authorities must establish ICU, CCU, and dialysis units there to serve critically ill patients, while the ongoing crisis of doctors and medical staff must also be resolved. For the overall improvement of our health sector, the reform proposals forwarded by the Health Sector Reform Commission must be implemented.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

UN adopts Rome Statute

On this day in 1998, the United Nations adopted the Rome Statute, the treaty that founded the International Criminal Court. The court began sittings four years later.

EDITORIAL

Why the July Charter matters



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H.M. NAZMUL ALAM

A charter is never just a document. It is a declaration of intent, a mirror of the times, and a manifesto for the future. From the Magna Carta of 1215 to the Atlantic Charter of 1941, history tells us that when societies reach moments of rupture—when old systems crumble under the weight of public discontent and new possibilities shimmer just beyond the horizon—a charter becomes a lodestar, a moral and political compass. Today, in the throes of political transition and institutional uncertainty, Bangladesh faces such a moment. The July Charter, currently being negotiated under the stewardship of the National Consensus Commission, could very well become the most important political document of this generation. But that is only if it survives the weight of competing interests, ego-driven politics, and the absence of moral imagination.

The July Charter is being crafted in the aftermath of a mass upheaval that unseated the long-standing regime of Sheikh Hasina on August 5, 2024. That movement—driven by students, workers, professionals, ordinary citizens, and the politically disenfranchised—was not merely a revolt against a particular government, but a rejection of a broken system. Authoritarian control, erosion of constitutional accountability, manipulation of the legal system, and strangulation of public institutions had long replaced democratic norms. When the people finally erupted, they were not simply protesting against a regime—they were protesting against the wreckage of a republic.

It is in this context that the interim government initiated a national reform process through 11 thematic commissions and a consensus commission tasked with building inter-party agreement. The July Charter, as envisioned, is supposed to be the crystallisation of the recommendations and agreements achieved through this expansive dialogue. So far, at least 80 of the 166 proposals have achieved consensus, according to a BBC Bangla analysis, with some critical reforms still awaiting agreement.

But to understand why this charter matters, we must turn to history. When the Magna Carta was drafted by the rebellious English barons, King John had little choice but to accept its conditions. While the immediate goal was protection of aristocratic privilege, over the centuries the document became a bedrock for

of 1966 was not called a "charter," but in essence, it was one. It laid out a clear political blueprint for economic autonomy and federalism within Pakistan. Likewise, the Proclamation of Independence in April 1971 provided the first written basis of a sovereign state of Bangladesh. These documents were not born of luxury or leisure. They emerged from resistance and resilience, from moments when existing structures could no longer contain the democratic aspirations of a people.

The July Charter sits within that historical continuum. Yet, unlike its predecessors, it arrives in a digital, polarised, and dangerously impatient age. The consensus commission has

intent and light on implementation? Because implementation, of course, is where many dreams go to die.

How will the July Charter be implemented, then? The consensus commission has offered several pathways: through ordinance,

through referendum, through a constituent assembly, or through a post-election parliament acting in both legislative and constituent roles. But here again, divisions emerge. The BNP and CPB BASOD want parliamentary adoption. The NCP

wants a constituent assembly. Jamaat and other right-wing parties want full consensus before committing to anything. And looming over all

of this is a ticking clock: the interim

government's mandate is temporary, and public patience is not infinite.

The danger here is déjà vu. Bangladesh has seen countless reform pledges fade into dust. The Electoral Reforms of 2007-08, the caretaker government compromise of 1996, even the aspirations of the 15th Amendment—all began with hope and ended in co-option. What makes the July Charter different, if at all, is its proximity to a grassroots revolt. Unlike previous reform cycles that were elite-driven, the present reform moment has a legitimacy born of public rage.

But legitimacy is a wasting asset. If the charter takes too long, or emerges too diluted, it will lose the momentum of the mass uprising. Worse, it will embolden the reactionary elements lurking in the wings—those who never accepted the interim transition, those nostalgic for strongmen, those who see democracy as a luxury Bangladesh cannot afford.

For this reason, the July Charter must be both ambitious and realistic. It cannot do everything, but it must do enough. It must tackle the deep rot in institutional appointments. It must claw back parliamentary authority



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

from the grip of party high commands. It must give the judiciary breathing space. And most importantly, it must offer a clear mechanism for its own implementation—before or immediately after the upcoming parliamentary election.

None of this will be easy. The forces of inertia are strong. Every reform means someone somewhere will lose the privilege of operating without oversight. But the price of inaction is greater. Without meaningful structural reform, the next government—whatever forms it—will merely inherit a broken vehicle with shinier paint.

If we fail to grasp this moment, we may not get another soon.

A call to fill up Bangladesh's empty transparency chairs



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S.M. REZWAN-UL-ALAM

Bangladesh's dedication to transparency is in a state of jeopardy. The core of the country's right to information (RTI) system, the crucial Information Commission, has been stuck in a limbo for months. Following the political changeover last year, the then chief information commissioner and one information commissioner resigned, and the third commissioner was later removed. These vacant positions are a direct blow to the spirit of government accountability.

The annual report for 2024—a legally required document summarising the previous year's activities—is unavailable on the Information Commission's website. The timeframe of the government's strategic plan to implement the RTI Act expired in 2021. Bangladesh passed its RTI Act in 2009 with high hopes, but its global ranking has been stalled

at 27th since 2022. The law looks good on paper, but people still struggle to access information easily.

Only 7.7 percent of citizens were aware of the law, according to the Bangladesh Right to Information (RTI) Survey 2019; two-thirds of designated officers said they had not received any applications. Although the law requires vigorous campaigns and severe penalties, their actual application and effectiveness are woefully inadequate. There is a persistent disconnect between the RTI law and the people it intends to serve. Its implementation is still hampered by "red tape" and a deeply rooted "culture of secrecy." Information commissioners, frequently drawn from senior civil servants, have had difficulty letting go of their previous gatekeeping responsibilities and adopting a pro-citizen stance.

There are also concerns about the implementation of the Information Commission's budget. The notable underspending in its 2023 annual report suggests possible inefficiencies or a lack of clear direction.

It is now imperative to infuse the genuine spirit of the July Charter into the RTI-specific reform recommendations that the interim government considers implementing, as envisaged in the Public Administration Reform Commission's report. This entails giving people's demands for accountability and transparency a top priority.

The interim government must take decisive action to close the gap between the law and lived reality. By bringing in new viewpoints and questioning established bureaucratic conventions, the appointment of information commissioners—particularly those with research experience on the RTI—can create a truly pro-citizen atmosphere. Rebuilding trust, upholding democratic values, and ensuring that the RTI empowers every Bangladeshi citizen are the goals here, not just filling vacant seats.

The Information Commission also needs to rethink how it communicates. This entails embracing dynamic, citizen-centric outreach in place of bureaucratic notifications.

Public awareness campaigns that are easy to understand and are run across various media platforms, including social media and local radio, are crucial. To foster trust and enable citizens to exercise their right, the commission must aggressively streamline application processes, showcase success stories, and engage with communities.

Finally, it's time to make the right to information more than just a legal requirement. A clear commitment to openness at the highest level of government would be demonstrated by making RTI a fundamental constitutional provision. While the current law offers a legal framework, a constitutional guarantee would strengthen the foundation for judicial enforcement and bring Bangladesh into line with international best practices where access to information is increasingly acknowledged as an intrinsic part of democratic freedoms, much like freedom of speech. This critical step would make transparency an indisputable principle.

The interim government must show its steadfast dedication to accountability and transparency. Implementing the RTI Act and reviving the Information Commission are its litmus tests.

FROM OLIGARCHY TO CITIZEN'S REPUBLIC

Reforming the executive branch



Dr Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir
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RASHED AL MAHMUD TITUMIR

The absence of rule-based functioning of the state led the country into an oligarchy during the previous regime. The erosion can be attributed to collusion between rule-makers (politicians) and a section of money-makers (business elite). Complexity also arises from the country's inherited bureaucratic structure, originally designed by the British for colonial resource extraction.

The task of state-building is to establish an executive branch, comprising two distinct yet interconnected components: elected executives (politicians gaining office through democratic elections) and career executives (civil servants appointed based on merit and expertise). This division can strike a delicate balance between democratic representation and administrative efficiency. However, in Bangladesh, the crucial distinction between elected and career executives has unfortunately never truly gained a foothold.

The tripartite patronage of business, politics, and bureaucracy forms the bedrock of the oligarchic structure, where business elites fund political campaigns and gain legislative favours, while simultaneously securing the cooperation of career executives in implementing policies beneficial to their interests. This involves a complex web of informal understandings and quid pro quo arrangements, blurring ethical boundaries and diverting state resources for private gain. Thus, civil service appointments and promotions are frequently influenced by loyalty to the ruling party rather than by merit or professional competence.

Another significant factor is the decay of institutions designed for checks and balances. Critical independent bodies, such as the judiciary, parliamentary oversight mechanisms, the Election Commission,

the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (OCAG), and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), are struggling to operate with autonomy. Their powers are frequently curtailed or their appointments influenced, ensuring that they primarily serve the interests of the ruling elite rather than acting as genuine bulwarks against abuse of power. Without robust checks and balances, the distinction between the elected mandate and bureaucratic implementation fades into a unitary, self-serving apparatus, where power remains concentrated and largely unchallenged.

A demarcation between political appointees and career bureaucrats

The historical development of the executive branch highlights different approaches to political accountability and administrative competence.

In Europe, the emphasis has been on establishing a professional and impartial civil service. The United Kingdom, through its Northcote-Trevelyan Report of 1854, initiated a merit-based civil service to ensure continuity in governance irrespective of changes in elected leadership. France adopted a centralised, elite bureaucracy under the Napoleonic system, operating independently to implement policies set by elected officials. Germany, with its Weberian model, has a non-partisan, rule-bound bureaucracy.

The US grappled with the "spoils system" in the 19th century, where elected leaders appointed loyalists, often leading to corruption. The Pendleton Act of 1883 marked a turning point, introducing merit-based recruitment. Today, the US executive branch is a blend of political appointees, such as cabinet secretaries, and career civil servants who are largely protected from

partisan removal.

Many Asian and African developing countries inherited colonial bureaucracies. These countries have witnessed civil service appointments turn into tools for patronage, undermining institutional autonomy and efficiency. Botswana, in Africa, stands out as a notable exception, with a relatively meritocratic bureaucracy. Singapore is a beacon of a merit-based bureaucracy.

There is also a need for a whistleblowing law. Establishing a truly independent Public Service Commission is essential for appointments and a senior selection board for promotions on merit.

Public money accountability framework
The country's accountability framework for public money and revenue rests on three constitutional pillars: legislative authorisation for any expenditure,

enhancements, there are concerns about executive influence. Notably, any rules or agreements with foreign or international bodies now require government approval—a move that might constrain the CAG's operational independence and conflict with Article 128(4) of the constitution, which prohibits external direction or control over the CAG's duties.

Additionally, while the ordinance permits audits of revenue receipts credited to the consolidated fund, it excludes audits of the accuracy of tax and non-tax revenue assessments, creating an accountability gap in revenue collection processes. This could open avenues for collusive fraud in revenue assessment. It also deviates from the Supreme Court's directives on comprehensive audit coverage.

To curb undue influence, strict laws on campaign finance must be enacted and enforced to limit recorded and unrecorded donations and lobbying. Mandatory disclosure of politicians' business interests, similar to the US's Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge (STOCK) Act, could enhance transparency and accountability, helping to identify potential conflicts of interest.

The ACC needs to be significantly empowered with genuine autonomy and resources to effectively investigate collusion amongst politicians, bureaucrats and business elites. Furthermore, robust judicial oversight is necessary to review arbitrary executive decisions and ensure adherence to legal and constitutional norms.

In the grand mechanism of a state, the elected executive is the engine, and the career executive is the transmission.

For Bangladesh to truly navigate the road of progress, these two vital components need to work in harmonious and seamless coordination, transcending its colonial bureaucratic past.

Without reforms to depoliticise the civil service, install local self governments, and enforce transparency and accountability, the nation risks an entrenched system that hinders the journey towards public welfare. A transformed, effective, and strong executive can only champion rule-abiding state-building and uphold the social contract for a citizens' republic.



FILE VISUAL: MAHIYA TABASSUM

In Latin America, countries such as Brazil and Argentina have experienced cycles of politicisation, where new governments frequently replace bureaucrats with loyalists. In contrast, Chile has developed a more stable civil service.

Key reforms are needed, particularly in the "rules of business," to transform the executive branch for state-building towards a citizens' republic.

A critical step is to legally protect career executives from arbitrary transfers and dismissals. The US's Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, the UK and France's principles of a merit-based, autonomous civil service, and Germany's Länder system can offer insights. Botswana's experience provides a model for effective anti-patronage bureaucratic reforms.

independent audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) under Article 128 of the constitution and the Comptroller and Auditor General (Additional Functions) Act, 1974 (now replaced by the Public Accounts Audit Ordinance, 2025), and parliamentary scrutiny through the Public Accounts Committee. Together, these mechanisms can establish a robust foundation for fiscal transparency. Yet, certain provisions in the 2025 ordinance require a revisit to safeguard the OCAG's autonomy to ensure that audits of revenue assessments are fully integrated to preserve the integrity of public financial management.

The 2025 ordinance formalises audit procedures by vesting the performance audit mandate in the CAG. Despite institutional



Arju Afraim Kathy
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ARJU AFRIN KATHY

these women endure? What is the weight of the hidden burden they carry while navigating exclusion and microaggressions instead of focusing fully on productivity? What emotional and mental labour is demanded simply to maintain composure in predominantly male environments?

Another incident gave me a very similar realisation. It took place at a university debating club where a group of senior alumni—both men and women—were seriously discussing the state and its power. Suddenly, one guy said, "Let's change the topic. This is going over the heads of these girls." These were educated professionals working in important national and international roles. Yet, they still believed that some topics were too difficult for women to understand.

Lastly, and perhaps most uncomfortably, we must also reflect on how women in national political leadership—both seasoned figures and the newcomers—are treated in our public discourse. The nation has witnessed, time and again, how the focus shifts from their political work to their appearance.

Their sarees, eyebrows, and even undergarments have become topics of discussion and viral memes. This speaks volumes about our collective tendency to trivialise women's contributions by reducing them to objects of scrutiny and mockery.

For too long, researchers and policy experts have generalised that women's voices are absent in rural, economically disadvantaged, and less-educated population settings. They have confined women's lack of agency to blue-collar (jobs involving manual labour) sectors. But the examples cited above are within the boardrooms, conference tables, auditoriums, and lecture halls of urban Bangladesh, the so-called "progressive spaces." Our narrow focus has led to an overestimation of progress in establishing gender equality in urban, white-collar environments, where women's empowerment is often portrayed as being complete.

It is high time we examined the root causes of these persistent exclusions beyond simply attributing them to patriarchy. While patriarchy is deeply embedded in society and shapes

people's behaviours and attitudes, this explanation alone is insufficient. Undoubtedly, a big part of the failure also lies in our education system. It teaches the rules of inclusion but doesn't change mindsets. It produces skilled female graduates but doesn't

prepare men to work with women as equals.

Symbolic gestures and headline-friendly policies are no longer enough. What is urgently needed is systemic transformation. Structures that enable women to not just be

present, but to belong. To not just speak, but to be heard. To not just perform, but to lead freely without fear of invisibility. Until then, we will continue to ask ourselves: are we truly in the room or just in the photo?

শিল্প আৰ্থিক প্রযুক্তি		বিদ্যুৎ ও জ্বালানী নিরাপত্তা	
গৃহস্থানীতে বিকল্প জ্বালানী		সৰ্বোচ্চ অ্যাধিকার	
বাংলাদেশ পেট্রোলিয়াম এক্সপ্লোরেশন এন্ড প্রোডাকশন কোম্পানী লিমিটেড (বাপেক্স)		বাংলাদেশ পেট্রোলিয়াম এক্সপ্লোরেশন এন্ড প্রোডাকশন কোম্পানী লিমিটেড (বাপেক্স)	
BAPEX		BALENGHES PETROLEUM EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION COMPANY LIMITED (BAPEX)	
(A Company of Petrobangla)		Foreign Purchase Department, Administration Division, BAPEX Bhaban (Level-4), 4 Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh	
web: www.bapecx.com.bd			
Invitation for International Tender			
1. Ministry /Division	Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources/ Energy & Mineral Resources Division		
2. Agency	Bangladesh Oil, Gas & Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla)		
3. Company	Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration & Production Company Limited (BAPEX)		
4. Procuring Entity Name	General Manager, Administration Division, BAPEX		
5. Procuring Entity District	Dhaka		
6. Invitation ref. No.	BAPEX/ADMIN/INT/TEN-1299/2025, dated: 13-07-2025		
7. Invitation for	Procurement of Wireline Logging & Related Services for Rupganj #01 workover Cum drilling and Semutang #06 workover wells.		
KEY INFORMATION			
8. Procurement Method	One Stage Two Envelope Tendering Method (OSTETM)		
FUNDING INFORMATION			
9. Budget and Source of Funds	BAPEX Own Fund (Under Cash Foreign Exchange)		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION			
10. Division/Project Name	Well Services Division/Rupganj #01 workover cum drilling and Semutang #06 workover wells		
11. Last Selling Date of Tender Document	07-09-2025 at 15.00 hrs. (BST)		
12. Place of Tender Selling	a) Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration & Production Co. Ltd. (BAPEX), Accounts & Finance Division (level-3), BAPEX Bhaban, 4 Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215. b) Petrobangla, Petrocenter, 3, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215. c) Titas Gas T & D PLC, 105, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215.		
13. Tender Closing Date & Time	08-09-25 at 11.00 Hrs. (BST)		
14. Tender Opening Date & Time	08-09-25 at 11.30 Hrs. (BST)		
15. Place of Tender Receiving & Opening	Foreign Purchase Department, Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration & Production Co. Ltd. (BAPEX), BAPEX Bhaban (Level-4), 4, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215.		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER			
16. Eligibility of Tenderer	i) The Tenderer shall have overall 10 years and minimum 7 years specific experience of relevant field. ii) Bonafide Service Providers or their authorized agents of all countries except which Countries do not have any diplomatic relation with Bangladesh.		
17. Brief Description of Goods	Procurement of Wireline Logging & Related Services for Rupganj #01 workover Cum drilling and Semutang #06 workover wells.		
18. Price of Tender Document	Bangladeshi Taka 5,000.00 or USD 45.00 (Non-refundable).		
19. Procuring Entity Details	General Manager (Administration) BAPEX		
20. Address of the Official Inviting Tender	Level 5, BAPEX Bhaban, 4, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh.		
21. Special instruction	a) Tender must remain valid for 120 (one hundred twenty) days from the date of closing of the tender. b) Time for Completion of Delivery: for Rupganj #01 workover cum drilling is 90 (ninety) days and Semutang #06 workover is 45 (forty five) days. c) Amount of tender security for USD 14,000.00 or BDT 17,00,000.00, or any equivalent amount of freely convertible currency in the form of Bank Guarantee or Pay Order issued by a scheduled bank in Bangladesh or from any reputable foreign bank duly endorsed by a scheduled bank in Dhaka with full obligation and liabilities. d) The tender security must remain valid for 148 (one hundred forty eight) days from the date of closing of the tender. e) If tender opening day happens to fall on any Govt. holiday or any unavoidable circumstances such as strike, Civil Commotion, Lockdown etc, tenders shall be opened at the same hours on the first subsequent working day. f) This tender notice will also be available at BAPEX Website: www.bapecx.com.bd and Petrobangla Website: www.petrobangla.org.bd and BPPA Website: www.bppa.gov.bd		
22. This tender will be conducted as per the PPA-2006 & PPR-2008.			
23. The procurement entity reserves the right to accept or reject in part or full of any or all tenders at any stage without assigning any reasons whatsoever.	General Manager (Admin.)		

WOMEN-CENTRIC ROLES FLOURISH ON OTT: MITHILA

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Rafiath Rashid Mithila has taken on several remarkable roles in the OTT space, from Shayla in *Myself Allen Swapan* to the journalist Jinia in *Baaji*. She is naturally drawn to characters that challenge her, and allow her to push the boundaries of her craft.

According to Mithila, OTT platforms have played a major role in amplifying female perspectives by making space for more women directors and female-led narratives.

"Movies are mostly dominated by the male perspective, where stories are usually told from a man's point of view. With the rise of OTT, more female directors are stepping forward and telling stories through a woman's lens," she said.

"We are now seeing more female-centered stories told from their own perspective, which is crucial. Genres like thrillers and dramas are exploring these narratives with more depth. Even in *Myself Allen Swapan*, where the focus is on Allen Swapan, Shayla's character plays a significant role in driving the story forward," she added.

The actress also shared that *Myself Allen Swapan* is full of emotional highs and lows, and Shayla is a character who experiences intense inner conflict. "I have portrayed many characters throughout my career, but this is the first time I have played someone like Shayla. I gave my full effort to bring her to life. For days, I immersed myself in becoming her and living within her world," she said.

Speaking about her role in *Baaji*, the actress said, "I approached my character in the show with the same dedication. We all worked on this project with great eagerness, and I believe the audience will appreciate it."

Beyond OTT, Mithila also impressed viewers with her performance in *Kajol Rekha*. Her portrayal of Kankon Dasi in the anthology film earned her widespread praise, with many suggesting it ranks among her finest performances to date.

NEWS

India ignoring

FROM PAGE 12 anyone is involved in any radical militant group.

"Two more people have been arrested on the same charges. We have been given an indication that more arrests will be made," he said.

Earlier, the ministry of foreign affairs said Dhaka will cooperate with Kuala Lumpur in the 'terror investigation' after Malaysia arrested 36 Bangladeshis in recent security operations.

If anyone is involved, they want punishment according to the provisions of that country.

"If proven against them under the law there, they can be jailed for two to seven years. If they are acquitted, it

will be fine."

Meanwhile, while addressing the inauguration of a month-long photography and graffiti exhibition at the Foreign Service Academy, Touhid said the history of the July movement will serve as a mirror for future leaders of Bangladesh, reminding them of the distinctions between justice and injustice, who stood where, who spoke the truth and who ultimately paid the price.

The July movement evolved into a people's movement that transcended classes and professions, uniting people in the fight for justice and human rights, beyond partisan boundaries, he added.

'Not Satyajit Ray's ancestral home'

FROM PAGE 12 structure for the Shishu Academy.

Standing just behind Shashi Lodge -- one of the region's most prominent archaeological landmarks -- the house has fallen into disrepair after years of neglect by the authorities.

After the partition in 1947, the property came under government ownership, and in 1989, it started housing Mymensingh Shishu Academy.

It has remained abandoned for over a decade, and Shishu Academy's activities have been operating from a rented space. A decision was made to construct a semi-concrete building on the site to house the academy, said Md Mehedi Zaman, Mymensingh's district children affairs officer.

THE DEBATE

Earlier, a debate arose over the history of the house.

Some said the structure is the ancestral home of eminent litterateur Upendrakishore Ray Chowdhury, father of celebrated poet Sukumar Ray and grandfather of Satyajit Ray.

But some others said it was constructed by Maharaja Shashikanta Acharya Chowdhury of Muktgarhachha.

On Monday, Sabina Yeasmin,

field officer of the Department of Archaeology (Dhaka and Mymensingh divisions), wrote to the district children affairs officer, seeking information about the demolition of the house. In her letter, she described the house as the ancestral home of the Ray family.

"This is a historic house belonging to the Ray family. Though not listed as a protected site, it is over a hundred years old and linked to Satyajit Ray's ancestors. It should be considered for heritage protection," she said that day.

Swapan Dhar, a researcher on archaeology in Mymensingh and a part-time lecturer at the Department of Theatre at Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, rejected the claim.

He asserted that the house in question was not the ancestral home of Satyajit Ray's forefathers, but rather one of the houses belonging to philanthropist Ranada Prasad Saha, reports BBC Bangla.

Dhar claimed this information came to light during a 2010 research project jointly funded by the governments of Bangladesh and Germany.

However, the researcher added that there indeed was a house

He added that police were trying to arrest those responsible.

'Prove they're Rohingyas'

FROM PAGE 12 the National Register of Citizens", reports NDTV online.

"I challenge you to prove that Bengali speaking people are Rohingyas," the CM said yesterday. She launched a sharp attack at the BJP, accusing it of rigging polls in Maharashtra and Delhi by "removing names from electoral rolls."

"BJP won in Maharashtra by removing names from electoral rolls, it is doing same in Bihar now. BJP has plans to remove names from Bengal's electoral rolls, we will fight them inch by inch," the TMC leader added.

belonging to Satyajit Ray's ancestors on Harikishore Road, but it was demolished about a decade ago.

There is no doubt this road was named after Satyajit Ray's ancestor Harikishore, he added.

A local elderly resident, Rabindranath Paul, 69, also a journalist, told this correspondent the house is the ancestral home of Ray family. Later, Ranada Prasad Shaha bought the house from the Ray family.

Social activist Ali Yusuf in his Facebook post claimed the house was constructed by Maharaja Shashikanta Acharya.

Man shot dead

FROM PAGE 12 Rubel and Sajib were hospitalised.

A pistol and a magazine were recovered from their possession, said the police official.

In another incident, a 30-year-old man, Al Amin, was stabbed to death by criminals over a previous enmity in the Dhaka Udayan area around 7:00pm yesterday, said Hafizur Raham, inspector (investigation) of Mohammadpur Police Station.

The commission recommended appointing officers of the rank of senior assistant secretary as secretaries to the upazila parishes.

It also suggested that upazila nirbahi officers be given the authority and law and order, land management and the operation of mobile courts without placing them under the

THE STAGE IS SET.
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Justice within this govt's tenure

FROM PAGE 12 Ramzan said, "My brother sacrificed his life while protesting discrimination and through that struggle, the people of this country have gained a new kind of freedom. Today marks one year, but there has been no judicial progress. People at home and abroad know that my brother was killed in police firing. This truth is not hidden. Yet where is the justice?"

He asked, "Whom can I share this sorrow with? Who can I go to for justice for my brother? I find no words to express it."

He added that the chief adviser, the chief justice, and other high-ranking officials visited their home last year. "Everyone came, expressed sympathy, and gave assurances. But we want only one thing -- justice for my brother's murder. That hasn't even begun yet."

He believes that Abu Sayed's sacrifice gave a generation the courage to speak up.

Stressing the need for constitutional reforms, he said, "The country has changed. The constitution needs changing too. Without that, fair elections or citizens' rights cannot be ensured. The light that Abu Sayed

has kindled is the light for building a Bangladesh free from discrimination."

Meanwhile, Law Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul said, "We firmly believe that justice for the murder of Shaheed Abu Sayed will be served during the tenure of our government." "To make the trial internationally credible, we are carefully considering every step," he said while speaking at a commemorative event marking the first death anniversary of Abu Sayed at the Shadhinota Sarok ground of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR), yesterday.

The event's chief guest was Shaheed Abu Sayed's father, Mokbul Hossain. Twenty-one other family members of martyrs from Rangpur district were present as special guests.

The adviser said, "Many lives have been lost in the struggle for democracy, but the kind of courageous and ideological sacrifice made by Abu Sayed is rare. He is truly a Bir Shrestha [valiant hero] of our time."

"It will take us years to fully understand the magnitude of his sacrifice. The students knew that the police might open fire, but they didn't

jurisdiction of the upazila parishes. No decision has come through on these recommendations yet.

A final decision was not made in last Monday's meeting regarding the recommendation to form an independent and permanent public administration reform commission.

It was also decided that the cabinet division would form a committee comprising the secretaries of the ministry of public administration, the local government division and the finance division to assess various aspects of implementing the commission's recommendations and submit a report.

The commission recommended appointing officers of the rank of senior assistant secretary as secretaries to the upazila parishes.

It also suggested that upazila nirbahi officers be given the authority and law and order, land management and the operation of mobile courts without placing them under the

foundation of the movement."

Today, our ability to speak freely and question the authority is owed in large part to the July uprising, he said.

Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Education Adviser Prof CR Abrar, Liberation War Affairs Adviser Faruk E-Azam, Bir Protik, University Grants Commission Chairman Prof SMA Fayed, and BRUR Vice Chancellor Prof Shaukat Ali, among others, spoke at the programme.

20 crushed to death

FROM PAGE 12 have killed at least 17 people across the enclave yesterday.

On Tuesday, the UN rights office in Geneva said it had recorded at least 875 killings within the past six weeks in the vicinity of aid sites and food convoys in Gaza - the majority of them close to GHF distribution points.

Most of those deaths were caused by gunfire that locals have blamed on the Israeli military. The UN has called the GHF's model unsafe and a breach of humanitarian impartiality standards - an allegation GHF has denied.

"People who flock in their thousands (to GHF sites) are hungry and exhausted, and they get squeezed into narrow places, amid shortages of aid and the absence of organization and discipline by the GHF," Amjad Al Shawa, director of the Palestinian NGOs Network, told Reuters.

NBR official suspended

FROM PAGE 12 the United States Trade Representative, The Daily Star has learnt from people with knowledge of the matter.

In May, Bangladesh and the US signed a non-disclosure agreement to protect sensitive information related to the negotiations.

A case has been filed in connection with the incident under the Official Secrecy Act with the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, Officer-in-Charge Imaul Haque told to The Daily Star yesterday.

EC removes

Asked about this matter, Md Rafiqul Haque, system manager at the EC Secretariat, said, "The boat symbol has been removed following instructions from the higher authorities."

When asked about the removal of the AI's registration date and boat symbol from EC's website, EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said those were taken down to avoid any confusion.

"There has been some recent public discussion about the boat symbol. To eliminate any confusion or misunderstanding, the Commission decided to remove it. There's no other reason behind this," he said.

Although the boat symbol has been removed from the EC's website, it will remain in the election schedule, the EC Secretary clarified.

When asked whether the EC removed the boat symbol from the website under pressure from the NCP, Akhtar Ahmed said, "If the Election Commission were under pressure, then why would I be speaking with you? There is no pressure or influence from anyone in this matter."

On July 12, a delegation from the National Citizen Party (NCP) met with the chief election commissioner and demanded that the "boat" symbol be removed from the EC's list of election

symbols.

Meanwhile, in a Facebook post on Tuesday night, Local Government Affairs Adviser Asif Mahmud criticised the EC. He wrote, "On what grounds did you send the cursed 'boat' symbol to the law ministry for inclusion in the schedule again?"

Currently, there are 50 registered political parties in the country. For these parties, the EC has a total of 69 scheduled electoral symbols. The EC recently proposed to increase this number to 115 and has sent the draft to the law ministry for vetting.

Rizwan Bin

FROM PAGE 3

His duties will include reviewing and approving forum agendas and arrangements, ensuring implementation of forum decisions, and accepting qualified National Award Operators as provisional members of the association, added the release.

Farouq has been a dedicated advocate for youth development in Bangladesh. In recognition of his 10 years of voluntary service, he was honoured with a Letter of Commendation and a Royal Mint Coin by Prince Edward, the Duke of Edinburgh on International Volunteer Day in 2021 - an accolade given to only 100 individuals globally.

Domestic workers deserve dignity

FROM PAGE 3

He also stressed the need for skill training, employment opportunities at home and abroad, an end to hiring children under 14, and the right to unionise for domestic workers. Ensuring their health, education, nutrition, and rest is essential for family safety and the well-being of future generations.

Rowshan Ara Baby, member of Naripokkho, said, "ILO Convention 189 and CEDAW both mandate protection for domestic workers. Ensuring their health, education, nutrition, and rest is essential for family safety and the well-being of future generations.

He also called for hostels and daycare centres in high-rise residential areas, noting that many domestic workers lose their jobs due to a lack of childcare, leaving them vulnerable to homelessness and crime.

He further urged targeted research on the occupational health risks of domestic workers and the need for fair wages, bonuses, maternity leave, and other benefits.

She highlighted the need for written contracts detailing working hours, leave, healthcare, and other benefits. Domestic workers are often abused, she added, stressing the need for a monitoring system and complaint mechanism.

Sumaiya Islam, member of the Women's Affairs Reform Commission and executive director of Bangladesh Nari Sramik Kendra, said all stakeholders - workers, organisations, and commissions - are united in demanding legal inclusion.

She said both the Labour and Women's Affairs Reform Commissions have recommended including domestic workers under

labour law, which is essential for the state, society, welfare, and the economy.

Highlighting the contribution of domestic workers abroad, whose remittances help boost the national economy, she said, "The time to act is now."

Tapon Kumar Das, deputy director of CAMPE, recommended creating a database of domestic workers, with data collected at police stations or ward levels, to ensure their safety and identification.

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TIB slams govt move

FROM PAGE 3

He said nearly Tk 111 crore worth of electrical, mechanical, and public works have already been awarded directly to two firms.

"Why was direct procurement used for a routine project? On what grounds were these two entities selected? How were the contract values set, and how will value for money be ensured?" he asked.

Ittekhuzzaman said without answers to these basic questions, awarding such contracts raises valid concerns about possible collusion and favouritism.

TIB warned that awarding a significant volume of public work without competitive bidding undermines the government's stated stance on fighting corruption and upholding reforms.

"On one hand, the government promises anti-corruption and reform. On the other hand, it breaches key procurement principles. This contradiction is self-defeating," he said.

"This project was approved in December 2024. Under procurement rules, there was enough time to call for tenders and ensure open competition," he said.

"Yet, seven months later, and just three weeks before the deadline, the decision to bypass Sections 76(1) and 76(2) of the Public Procurement Rules appears unjustified. These rules clearly prohibit using direct procurement to avoid competition or show favouritism."

"Unless transparency and competition are ensured in public spending," Ittekhuzzaman warned, "promises of reform will remain mere rhetoric, while corrupt practices continue to be normalised."

No alternative

FROM PAGE 3

He said those who do not believe in democracy and want to run the country by other means are on a "different path" than the BNP.

"It must be made clear: if anyone wants to impose autocracy under the guise of democracy, the BNP will not allow it."

Condemning the offensive remarks made against the party's acting chairman Tarique Rahman, Moyeen said, "There is a mystery behind the various incidents that have taken place in the country over the past few days. That mystery must be revealed to the 18-crore people of Bangladesh. We believe in peaceful politics, we believe in orderly politics, and we believe in fair politics."

Addressing the freedom fighters, the BNP leader said, "We grew up in this country. You fought in the Liberation War -- have you ever seen such words, such language, such offensive remarks being used openly like this in Bangladesh?"

"The actions we have been witnessing over the last few days, which are being carried out with a deliberate intention of destroying Bangladesh's image -- we must analyse why this is happening and identify those responsible," he added.

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তারিখ: ১৫ জুলাই, ২০২৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দ
১৫ আয়াচ্চা, ১৪৩২ বঙ্গাব্দ

সংশোধিত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

কারিগরি ও মানবিক শিক্ষা বিভাগ, শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয় এর অধীন জাতীয় কম্পিউটার প্রশিক্ষণ ও গবেষণা একাডেমী (নেকটার), বঙ্গাব্দের রাজবৰ্ষ খাতের (অসমীয়া/হাঙ্গামা) পদসমূহে সরাকারী নিয়োগের মাধ্যমে পুরণে নিয়িত ইচ্ছেপূর্ণে প্রকাশিত ১৪ জুন, ২০২৪ইঁ: তারিখ: ৫৭.২১.০০০০.০০৩.১২.০০১.২৫.১০৩।
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BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

From the margins, a voice remembered

Review of 'The Last Bench' (Ekadā, 2025) by Adhir Biswas

Biswas's prose does not dwell in bitterness. It is illuminated by affection for his ailing mother, with whom he shares quiet, wonder-filled journeys into the forest.

NAMRATA

In *The Last Bench*, Adhir Biswas returns to the landscapes of his childhood with the tenderness of a son and the precision of a chronicler. This deeply moving memoir, translated masterfully by V. Ramaswamy, is at once an act of remembrance and resistance, a testimony to growing up Dalit, poor, and displaced in post-Partition India.

Born in 1955 in Magura (now in Bangladesh), Biswas was 12 years old when his family migrated to Calcutta in 1967, carrying with them little more than loss. For a Bangladeshi reader, this journey from the familiar rhythms of East Pakistan to the hostile margins of Indian society evokes not

and classroom silence.

Yet Biswas's prose does not dwell in bitterness. It is illuminated by affection for his ailing mother, with whom he shares quiet, wonder-filled journeys into the forest; for Bhombol, the loyal dog who becomes his companion after her death; and even, in moments, for the father who pins all his desperate hopes on him, his youngest son. There is grief, but also a defiant love that sustains the boy through hunger, ridicule, and loss.

What elevates *The Last Bench* beyond memoir is Biswas's sunflinching gaze at caste oppression in Bengal, an aspect often conveniently omitted from mainstream narratives. The notion that caste discrimination is a southern or rural issue is powerfully

accompanied with a quiet, stripped down prose that reveals just enough without veering into sentimentality.

For readers, *The Last Bench* also serves as a mirror into a shared, fragmented past. Biswas's memories of Magura are lush, intimate, filled with ancestral echoes. They remind us that the wounds of Partition are still tender. His return to that lost land is not nostalgic but aching. It asks: *What do we carry when we lose home? What parts of us remain rooted even after the soil beneath our feet has changed?*

The title itself is layered with meaning. The last bench is not just a place in the classroom. It becomes a metaphor for marginality, for a childhood spent in the shadows of

unnamed for a large part of the book. Until nearly the last fifth of the story, he's simply referred to as "the artist." While this might be an intentional choice to keep a sense of mystery, or to hold the reader's attention around the painting itself, it can also create a slight sense of distance, making it harder to feel fully connected to him. Similarly, because the painting is described in fragments across different chapters, it might be difficult for some readers to imagine it clearly as a whole. That, too, could be intentional; like memory, the painting slowly comes into focus.

Still, these are gentle bumps in a story that largely knows where it's going. And by the time it arrives, it does so with softness, clarity, and a deep emotional hum.

Backman writes, "We ache with homesickness without knowing what home is yet. That's all childhood friends are: people stuck on the same island. If you find a single one of them, you can cope with almost anything." This is where *My Friends* really lives; not just in the dual timeline or the soft mystery behind a painting, but in this aching homesickness. That feeling of being 14, of wanting to stay 14, because everything after that becomes too complicated. As Ted says at one point: "Everyone should be allowed to be fourteen for far longer than a year. There are so many other ages we could skip instead. Thirty-nine, for instance." Backman treats that idea with tenderness. He doesn't romanticise pain, but he honours how much it means to be seen, especially in youth. He reminds us that when we're young, we build versions of ourselves through the people around us. And if we're lucky, those people never really leave.

This novel is for anyone who's ever longed for a place, a person, a time that felt like home even if they didn't know it then. It's gentle, funny, a little sad, and full of heart. Like all good friendships, it stays with you. And maybe we won't all connect directly with the lives in this novel—the artist without a home, the teenager who's never seen the sea, but we'll recognise the feeling. The ache of growing up. The joy of being seen. The kind of friendship that holds your memories when you no longer can.

So this is for all the friends. All the good friendships we've made along the way. The ones who were there in the summers when we didn't yet know how life would change, or what it might throw at us. The ones who, even now, feel like home.

Mahmuda Emdad is a women and gender studies major with an endless interest in feminist writings, historical fiction, and pretty much everything else, all while questioning the world in the process. Reach out at mahmudaemdad123@gmail.com.

just Partition, but the continuing exile and erasure many refugees experience in the subcontinent. But *The Last Bench* is not just a refugee story. It is an intimate portrait of caste, class, and childhood told with searing honesty and lyrical restraint.

At the heart of the memoir is the figure of the young boy, Biswas himself, made invisible in a world structured to exclude him. School becomes the starker symbol of this exclusion. He is relegated to the literal last bench, isolated and humiliated, his cracked slate and wet rag a silent protest against poverty and prejudice. These classrooms, which should have been spaces of learning and liberation, are instead sites of cruelty with social hierarchies mapped neatly onto seating arrangements

dismantled here. In a state that prides itself on intellectualism and egalitarian ideals, Biswas exposes how caste continues to determine access, dignity, and voice. His father's humble profession as a barber not only defines the family's economic standing but also their social visibility or lack thereof.

The narrative unfolds with sensory richness: the aroma of the weekly market, the oppressive heat of tin-roofed schoolrooms, the silent companionship of a dog's footsteps. Ramaswamy's translation preserves these textures with fidelity and grace, ensuring that the reader never feels detached from the Bengali or rural idioms that shape Biswas's world. There's a humility in the language that mirrors the boy's own life

both history and hierarchy. But it is also from this place of invisibility that Biswas emerges as one of Bengal's foremost Dalit voices, a writer and publisher who has made it his life's work to speak for those still seated at the back, unseen and unheard.

The Last Bench is essential reading, not only as a memoir of a refugee child, or a Dalit writer, but as a fierce and beautiful act of memory. In recounting his personal struggles, Biswas tells a much larger story, that of migration, caste, belonging, and survival. It is a story we in Bangladesh too often forget we are part of.

This is a voice that has waited too long to be heard.

Namrata is a literary consultant, columnist, and podcast host.

WHAT WE ARE READING THIS WEEK

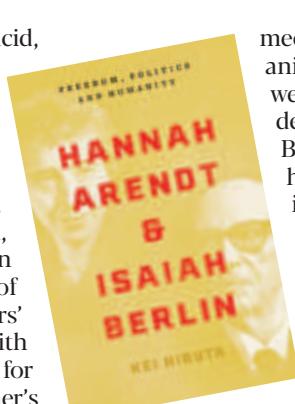
Freedom, Politics, and Humanity: Hannah Arendt and Isaiah Berlin

by Kei Hiruta (Princeton University Press, 2021)

NAZIA MANZOOR

I must admit I have never read the philosopher Isaiah Berlin, nor am I familiar with his life and writings. Kei Hiruta's study of the two thinkers—Hannah Arendt and Isaiah Berlin—drew me in primarily because I have remained an ardent reader of Arendt's work, having been deeply benefitted from and influenced by her thoughts on totalitarianism, the essential crises of the human condition, the concept of political violence, and what she terms as the 'banality of evil'. As I begin

reading Hiruta's lucid, careful prose delineating the stunning similarities between the two thinkers' lives, politics, and work, I find myself drawn into the particulars of what kept the thinkers' disagreement with one another alive for decades. Each other's contemporaries, Arendt and Berlin clashed spectacularly since their



meeting and the animosity lived on well after Arendt's death. While Berlin's "detest" for her feels visceral, in her own evaluation of the former, Arendt was "indifferent" at best, and "occasionally suspicious" at worst. Hiruta traces their personal tension with nuance and depth and throughout the

course of this meticulously researched book backed up by archival research, brings the two thinkers and their ideas into conversation. The result is a stunning meditation on some of the concepts that haunt our present moment—humanity and moralism, Zionism today, democracy and imperialism and perhaps most significantly, the question that lies at the very heart of the human condition: what does it mean to be free?

Nazia Manzoor is Editor, Star Books and Literature.

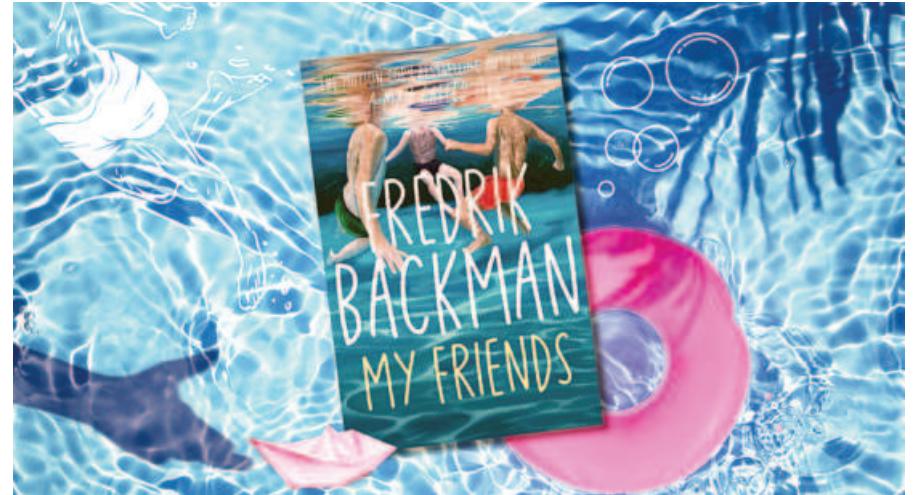


ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

PAINTED IN FRIENDSHIP, framed by grief

Review of 'My Friends' (Simon & Schuster, 2025) by Fredrik Backman

MAHMUDA EMDAD

"Art is empathy," Fredrik Backman writes. So is friendship—the kind that stays with you long after the summer ends. The kind you find when you're 14 and everything is breaking and beginning at once. The kind of friendship that becomes a map back to yourself, years later, when you're lost in grief, guilt, or even just the quiet ache of growing up. Fredrik Backman's *My Friends* is a love letter to those friendships.

The novel opens with 18-year-old Louisa, a lonely, angry girl drifting through the world after a difficult childhood in foster care. She's an artist—in a way. She understands beauty and more importantly, she understands longing. All she's ever known of the sea is a small, worn-out postcard. It carries an image of a painting called "The One of the Sea", and she has kept it for years, not knowing why. She has never seen the sea in real life. But this painting, this imagined sea, has been her whole ocean.

One day, unable to hold back the ache anymore, she goes to the auction of the painting, to stand in front of it, to really see it, up close. In the swirls of paint, she notices something hidden: three tiny figures painted into the waves. They feel familiar, though she doesn't know why. What follows is part mystery, part pilgrimage, as Louisa sets out to find the painting's origins and the story of the people inside it.

That story takes us back 25 years to a summer in a coastal town, where four teenagers—Joar, Ted, Ali, and a gentle, gifted boy named Kimkim; create a small world for themselves on a forgotten pier. Their homes are broken in different ways, but together, they make something whole. They talk about life, love, and the future. They bicker. They climb and swim and hide and heal. And Kimkim, quietly, paints it all.

The painting becomes a secret diary of that summer, a visual memory of the warmth they gave each other and the weight they carried. Decades later, it's Louisa's compass. And when she finally meets the artist, now living in heartbreaking circumstances, the stories of past and present fold into each other.

One part of the plot that feels a little sudden is Louisa's first meeting with the artist. After all the buildup, her quiet obsession with the painting, the long journey to find him, the moment between them happens very quickly. He seems to trust her almost instantly, convinced in just a few words that she somehow belongs to that painting, to that summer. It's not that the scene lacks emotion, but compared to the slow, thoughtful pace of the rest of the book, this felt a little too quick, almost too easy. It could have been even more moving if their connection had been given more space to grow. Another small thing is how the artist remains

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Think a new thought, they sometimes tell themselves. The thoughts you have in orbit are so grandiose and old. Think a new one, a completely fresh unthought one. But there are no new thoughts. They're just old thoughts born into new moments—and in these moments is the thought: without that earth we are all finished. We couldn't survive a second without its grace, we are sailors on a ship on a deep, dark unswimmable sea.

—Samantha Harvey, *Orbital* (2023)



TIGERS
END SRI
LANKA
TOUR ON
A HIGH

'A big achievement'

Bangladesh and Litton Das turned things around in an incredible fashion, ending their full tour of Sri Lanka with a piece of history yesterday when they beat the hosts by eight wickets in the third and final T20I at Colombo's R Premadasa Stadium. Having lost the preceding ODI and Test series, Bangladesh were under pressure in the final phase of the tour, while a misfiring Litton was searching his mojo. "I have no words to express at the moment how our team played, the boys showed character. It's a big achievement for Bangladesh. This win will boost Bangladesh," Litton, who was adjudged Player of the Series, rightly summed up what it meant for him and Bangladesh at the post-match presentation.

- ➲ This was Bangladesh's maiden T20I series victory over Sri Lanka. This was also the first time that the Tigers beat the Lankans in a series in Sri Lanka in any format.
- ➲ Bangladesh won by eight wickets with 21 balls to spare -- the biggest win for the Tigers against the Lankans in terms of balls remaining in the format. The previous best was a win with 11 balls remaining in Sylhet last year.
- ➲ By winning the T20I series 2-1 against Sri Lanka, Litton Das became the first Bangladeshi skipper to win two T20I series abroad. He also led Bangladesh to a 3-0 series victory against the West Indies in the Caribbean last year.
- ➲ Since Litton got full-time T20I captaincy, he has lost all nine tosses.
- ➲ Off-spinner Mahedi Hasan became only the fifth Bangladeshi bowler to take 50 wickets in T20Is after Shakib Al Hasan, Mustafizur Rahman, Taskin Ahmed, and Shoriful Islam. His career-best bowling figure of 4-11 yesterday is the best-ever by a Bangladeshi bowler against Sri Lanka in this format.
- ➲ Tanzid Tamim's career-best score of unbeaten 73 off 47 balls is the highest score by a Bangladeshi opener against Sri Lanka in this format. The previous highest score was Mohammad Naim's 52-ball 62, which he made in Sharjah during the 2021 ICC T20 World Cup.



PHOTO: AFP

'Unprecedented decision' alters CWAB's playing field

SAMSUL ARREFFIN KHAN

Focusing on constitutional amendments and preparations for an election likely in September, the Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Tuesday.

Since the previous committee's dissolution in March, the CWAB has been run by an ad-hoc committee led by Salim Shahed.

A key decision that raised eyebrows was the removal of voting rights for former first-class players. While the earlier constitution allowed all current and ex-national, first-class, and List A cricketers to vote, the new amendment limits this to only current first-class and all national players.

However, former first-class cricketers can still become life members for Tk one lakh but cannot vote or contest elections.

Former CWAB general secretary Debabrata Paul alleged that the "unprecedented decision" was made due to the "influence" of ex-national captain Tamim Iqbal, despite Salim's reported preference to include all former players as permanent members.

"He [Tamim] said in the meeting that he represents many cricketers and so everyone should take his decision into



account," Debabrata told The Daily Star on Tuesday, also questioning the legitimacy of the AGM held at the BCB premises.

"We have like 1,000 members or so. For an AGM, at least 300 members needed to be present, but it took place with only 30-35 members... Because of that [the decision to take away the voting rights of the former first-class players], the membership number will be reduced quite drastically," he added.

When contacted, Tamim declined to comment on the matter and insisted that this reporter talk to convenor Salim instead.

"I'm not the right person to ask this. You should talk to the ad-hoc committee's [Salim] Shahed bhai and he will give you a

better answer," said Tamim.

Salim later confirmed he "wanted to have all as permanent members" but said the decision followed the AGM majority view. He also abstained from voting on the issue.

"Our cricket started in 1972-73, and since then, those who represented first-class, premier league or the highest level, I feel they should be entitled to be permanent members," Salim told The Daily Star.

"They [former first-class cricketers] can come with the life member criteria... They can be members but won't have the voting rights. But the majority wants to have this," Salim added.

He also mentioned that CWAB has "no

audit record in the last 15 years," having remained inactive in the period, and efforts are now being made to hand over leadership to an elected body.

"The most unfortunate thing is we don't have any list of members. Those who will pay for membership will stay, and the rest will join later as per the current situation. We have to start from zero after reforming all the things," Salim informed further.

Ad-hoc committee member Neeyamur Rashid Rahul said they plan to finalise membership subscriptions by August 15 to enable a September election, introducing a tiered fee structure for different cricketer categories.

"In the last 15 years, nothing has been done in this organisation. It was like garbage. We made the decision after taking consent from all... We have been given responsibility to select a representative body," said Neeyamur.

Among unanimously approved resolutions was a rule barring BCB directors or contracted employees from serving on CWAB's executive committee -- though they will retain voting rights.

Meanwhile, CWAB received official recognition from the National Sports Council (NSC), which has allotted it an office at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur -- its first official address.



Pakistan T20I squad arrived in Dhaka on Wednesday ahead of their upcoming three-match T20I series against Bangladesh, set to begin on July 20 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur.

PHOTO: BCB

FIFA WC 26 ticket sales to begin Sept 10

AGENCIES

FIFA announced that the first ticket draw for the FIFA World Cup 26 will open on September 10, 2025. Fans must register at FIFA.com/tickets and create a FIFA ID to apply.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino said excitement is soaring after the success of the FIFA Club World Cup in the USA, with the 2026 tournament set to be the biggest ever. The World Cup will kick off on June 11, 2026, in Mexico City, and end with the final on July 19 in New York New Jersey.

The expanded event will feature 48 teams and 104 matches across Canada, Mexico, and the USA, with around 6.5 million fans expected to attend. The Final Draw is set for December 2025.

FIFA urges fans to buy only from official sources and reminds that a match ticket alone does not guarantee entry into host countries. Visa remains the preferred payment method.

Once-a-prodigy, Ayman returns to 'same problems' after 9 years

Three-time national champion Ayman Ibn Zaman made a return to the Bangladesh badminton scene after a nine-year hiatus by taking part in the 39th National Badminton Championships. Once a prodigy who won the 2013 Bangladesh Games men's singles title at just 15, Ayman also clinched back-to-back national titles in 2014 and 2016. After representing Bangladesh at both youth and senior levels, he moved to the United States in 2020 for higher studies and professional pursuits. Now 28 and working as a software engineer, Ayman spoke to *The Daily Star's* Anisur Rahman about his comeback, the evolution of badminton in Bangladesh, and his hopes for the sport's future. Following are the excerpts:



AIZ: The facilities haven't improved much, but I do see a promising new generation of shuttlers, mostly between 17 to 25 years old.

DS: Why did you stay away from Bangladesh's badminton scene for so long?

AIZ: I left in 2020 to pursue my Master's in Computer Science, which I completed in two years. I now work in the US and have permanent residency. While I was busy with studies initially, I returned to serious training once things settled. That allowed me to win titles in Minnesota, Iowa, and Nebraska, and rank among the top four in Chicago.

DS: You trained in Malaysia during your early career. Are you engaged in similar training in the US?

AIZ: Definitely. In Nebraska, I train with an international group of players, including shuttlers from Malaysia and China. Before major tournaments, I usually head to Chicago for one or two weeks of intense training.

DS: What changes do you see in Bangladeshi badminton since your departure?

the camp here, especially since an Indonesian coach will be leading it. I'm already training regularly in the US, so I'll be ready either way. The SA Games are coming up, and I want to contribute.

DS: Based on your international experience, what's lacking in our shuttlers?

AIZ: The problem lies in the structure. Abroad, players are trained from the grassroots with strong foundations in technique, recovery, and mental resilience. By 17 or 18, their potential is already clear. In Bangladesh, we're hardworking, but we often lack the tactical know-how to handle pressure during matches.

DS: How can we overcome this gap?

AIZ: Consistent training and exposure to international tournaments are key. Competing regularly overseas improves match temperament and confidence. But it's expensive, and players need sponsorship or federation support to make it happen.

DS: What do players expect from the new committee of Bangladesh Badminton Federation?

AIZ: We hope the new leadership supports us with access to more international tournaments, quality coaching, proper nutrition, and high-level training. These are tough to provide, but if the federation can make it happen, I'm confident Bangladeshi players will deliver strong results.

MERCANTILE BANK CREDIT RATING



Year	Long Term Rating	Short Term Rating	Date of Rating	Validity Date
2024	AA	ST-2	July 10, 2025	July 09, 2026
2023	AA+	ST-2	June 11, 2024	July 10, 2025

Rating Description

AA	ST-2	Outlook
Higher Safety and High Credit Quality	High Certainty of Timely Repayment	Stable

Credit Rating Information

Credit Rating Information and Services Limited (CRISL) has assigned the long term rating of Mercantile Bank PLC, at AA (pronounced as double A) and the short term rating at ST-2 on the basis of audited financials up to December 31, 2024 and unaudited financials up to March 31, 2025 and other relevant quantitative as well as qualitative information.

Mercantile Bank thanks to its all valued stakeholders for making it happen. The bank is upbeat of further upswing of its rating in future.

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NBR official suspended for leaking 'state secrets'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday suspended an official of the National Board of Revenue on allegations of breaching service discipline by 'disclosing a highly confidential state document'.

Mokutul Hasan, who was serving as the second secretary of customs policy at the NBR, has also been made an officer on special duty, according to a government notification.

Hasan's actions violated the service conduct rules, prompting the authorities to initiate departmental proceedings against him following a preliminary investigation, the notification said.

As per the government rules, Hasan has been temporarily suspended from his duties.

Hasan was involved in leaking a document related to the tariff negotiation between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6



Bangladesh players and team officials celebrate with the trophy after beating Sri Lanka 2-1 in a three-match T20I series in Colombo yesterday. This was the Tigers' maiden T20I series victory over Sri Lanka, which came after they won the final match by eight wickets with 21 balls to spare at the R Premadasa Stadium.

PHOTO: AFP

PUSH-INS India ignoring established protocol Says foreign adviser

STAR REPORT

No border guard force has the right to shoot and kill someone who violates the law along the border, said Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain.

"It is illegal -- we have been protesting about this regularly," he said while talking to reporters yesterday at the Foreign Service Academy, reports UNB.

Asked whether the interim government has become softer in its stance of protesting the border killings by the Indian Border Security Force, he said: "Not at all."

He went on to stress that those who shoot and kill along the border should be tried under the Indian law.

Regarding push-ins from India to Bangladesh, he said there is a prescribed process between the two countries to identify and take back citizens through exchange of lists.

But push-ins are being carried out without following the process.

"It is a clear violation of the rules."

Since May, India pushed about 2,000 people into Bangladesh.

India has recently taken back several of its citizens through the existing arrangement.

"We insist that they maintain this procedure. This is our expectation."

Asked on the arrest of some Bangladeshi migrants in Malaysia on alleged links to militancy, he said there is an indication that more Bangladeshis are likely to be arrested as Malaysia is looking across the country to see whether

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

'Not Satyajit Ray's ancestral home'

Says Mymensingh DC; demolition of century-old house halted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The authorities yesterday halted the demolition of a century-old house in Mymensingh city following public outcry.

The demolition was stopped on instructions from the DC, Mymensingh District Children's Affairs Officer Mehedhi Zaman told journalists.

Meanwhile, talking to The Daily Star last night, Deputy Commissioner Mdofidul Alam said the house is not the ancestral home of legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray, as reported by different news outlets on Monday and Tuesday.

The media reports cited Sabina Yeasmin, field officer of the Department of Archaeology (Dhaka and Mymensingh divisions), who claimed the house was the ancestral home of the Ray family.

The DC said, "We have taken opinions from senior residents, archaeologists and researchers in the city. Based on their input, we have come to this conclusion that the house is not the ancestral home of Satyajit Ray."

He added that Rai Bahadur Ranada Prasad Shahi, the eminent philanthropist, occasionally resided in that house, and that Ray's ancestral home was a short distance away.

Earlier in the afternoon, the DC held a meeting with civil society members and researchers where representatives from different government bodies were also present.

The house, located on Harikishore Roy Road, was being demolished to make way for a new semi-concrete

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

PUBLIC SERVICE RECRUITMENT

Govt to scrap political vetting

BAHARAM KHAN

The practice of vetting a candidate's political affiliation through intelligence agencies before recruitment and promotion in public service is set to be scrapped following the recommendation of the Public Administration Reform Commission.

The decision came in a meeting held on Monday at the Chief Adviser's Office and chaired by his Principal Secretary M Siraj Uddin Miah, according to the meeting minutes.

The move comes as part of the efforts to de-politicise the civil administration.

However, the commission's recommendation that "no police verification be carried out before written and viva results are published" was not mentioned in the meeting minutes.

The recommendation of background check for criminal record after a candidate passes the BCS exams was accommodated.

If necessary, the authorities can seek relevant information from the Anti-Corruption Commission before final appointment.

Also at the meeting, the Public Security Division was instructed to move forward with amending the

Official Secrets Act-1973.

The commission proposed amending both the Official Secrets Act of 1923 and the Right to Information Act of 2009.

Abolishment of political vetting by intelligence agencies before the recruitment and promotion of public servants was one of the key recommendations of the Public Administration Reform Commission

While draft amendments to the Right to Information Act were prepared by the information and broadcasting ministry, there was no update on amending the Official Secrets Act. At Monday's meeting, the public security division was instructed to take prompt action in this regard.

The commission recommendation of bringing the land registration directorate under the land ministry

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Man shot dead during arbitration in Adabar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was shot dead during an arbitration over a dispute in the capital's Adabar area yesterday evening.

The victim, Md Ibrahim, 32, of Bhola's Dularhat upazila, was a resident of the Nabobdor Housing Society area.

Abdul Malek, inspector (investigation) of Adabar Police Station, told The Daily Star that the arbitration was between Ibrahim and two others, Rubel, 35, and Sajib, 32, in front of Baitul Mamur Jame Mosque around 7:00pm.

At one stage, an altercation broke out, he said.

One of the two shot Ibrahim and attempted to flee the scene.

Locals caught the two and beat them up. A joint patrol team of the army and police, which was nearby, arrested them and sent Ibrahim to a hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

20 crushed to death at Gaza aid site

GHF blames 'armed agitators' in crowd; 17 more killed in Israeli strikes across enclave

REUTERS, Jerusalem

At least 20 Palestinians were killed yesterday at an aid distribution site run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), in what the US-backed group said was a crowd surge instigated by "armed agitators".

The GHF, which is supported by Israel, said 19 people were trampled and one fatally stabbed during the crush at one of its centres in Khan Yunis in southern Gaza.

"We have credible reason to believe that elements within the crowd – armed and affiliated with Hamas – deliberately fomented the unrest," GHF said in a statement. There has been no immediate comment from Hamas.

Palestinian health officials told Reuters 21 people had died of suffocation at the site. One medic said lots of people had been crammed into a small space and had been crushed.

Gaza local health authorities said Israeli military strikes

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

Oldest known domesticated dog breed discovered

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Centuries-old DNA has confirmed that Greenland's sledge dog Qimmit is the oldest yet known domesticated dog breed, a discovery that sheds more light on their close relationship with the region's indigenous Inuit people.

The findings, published in the journal Science, also reveal fresh insights into the history of Inuit migration and their Arctic adaptation.

Researchers, including those from the Ilisimatusarfik University in Nuuk, Greenland, assessed genomes from over 90 dogs across Greenland spanning the past 800 years, capturing data from both ancient and modern canines.

They then compared the genome data with those of over 1,900 published dog genomes.

Scientists discovered that the Qimmit breed forms a distinct clade with other ancient Arctic dogs, most notably a 3,700-year-old Alaskan dog. Sledge dogs have been a central part of Arctic life for over 9,500 years.

While many Arctic dog breeds have been replaced, mixed with other dogs, or shifted into a domestic role, Greenland's Qimmit has uniquely preserved its traditional role as a working sledge dog, researchers found.



Despite it being illegal and dangerous to set up shops along rail lines, hawkers continue to do so near the Jurain rail gate area in Old Dhaka. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

'Prove they're Rohingyas'

Mamata on arrest of 'Bengali' workers

in BJP-ruled states

AGENCIES

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee yesterday expressed concerns over the alleged harassment of Bengali-speaking people in BJP-ruled states, challenging the BJP to prove they were Rohingyas.

Chief Minister (CM) Banerjee, accompanied by TMC National General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee and other party leaders, hit Kolkata streets against the detention and deportation of "Bengali migrant workers" to Bangladesh.

She has earlier accused the Election Commission of India of "acting like a stooge of the BJP" and wondered if the voter list revision was a "backdoor attempt to implement



SEE PAGE 8 COL 3