



PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

A farmer ploughing a field in knee-deep water. Aman seedlings were planted here around 10-12 days ago. However, due to several days of continuous rain, the area became submerged. Now, as the water has started to recede, the farmer is trying to restore this patch of land so he can eventually replant the Aman seedlings from scratch. The photo was taken in the Darusha area of Rajshahi yesterday.

Govt to blame if 'July Charter'

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told a rally in the capital's Pallabi yesterday.

BNP's Dhaka Metropolitan North unit organised the event.

The BNP leader added that it would be unfortunate for the nation if the consensus commission were to base its decisions on the views of individuals who have, at various times, been affiliated with the Awami League.

"Those who are going to the commission, holding discussions, eating, and leaving without making any decision - who are they? Some are from 13 parties, some from 14 parties, and some belong to other parties.

"But we had objected to calling the parties who have connections with the Awami League."

Regarding the national polls, the BNP leader said, "We consider this neutral interim government to be a caretaker government. Your only responsibility is to hold a free and fair national election. It is not your duty to conduct the local government polls."

The Election Commission has no

mandate to conduct local government polls. Its mandate is limited to conducting the presidential and the national elections."

Salahuddin said local elections are held only if the local government ministry requests.

Without naming any political party, he said even those who maintained relations with the AL over the last 16 years want the PR system in the national polls.

"Another party engaged in confusing politics in Bangladesh has joined them. At one time, they opposed the country's independence, at another, they stood against the people, and at yet another, against public sentiment."

"... this time they are trying to catch fish in muddy waters."

Salahuddin said that those who are plotting to bring back fascist Sheikh Hasina into the politics of Bangladesh will be identified.

"We must honour the spirit of this student-mass uprising. Their sacrifices must be recognised. We will give constitutional recognition."

PR is an electoral system

in which the distribution of seats corresponds with the proportion of the total votes cast for each party.

At another rally in Nayapaltan, BNP Standing Committee member Mirza Abbas has called on the government to put an end to its biased attitude.

Regarding the national polls, he said, "You [government] should hold the election soon. If you do, the current situation in the country will calm down. But if you don't, we will hold you responsible for the situation."

In another development, party leader AZM Zahid Hossain urged all to stay alert, saying those who are conspiring against the restoration of democracy are secretly continuing their evil activities, reports UNB.

"It is our responsibility to expose the conspirators who are hiding among us and trying to block the path to democracy. We are seeing that a web of conspiracy is being spread in many ways, very cunningly," said the party Standing Committee member while speaking at a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Mehedi Hasan, 32, an ambulance driver

Fight to continue until the end

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The rally, which took place in front of the Krishi Bank square in Munshiganj town, was also attended by central leaders Hasnat Abdullah, Sarjis Alam, Nasir Uddin Patwari, Tasnim Jara, and Samanta Sharmin.

Nahid also addressed local issues, including rampant illegal sand extraction, worsening river erosion, the dilapidated road network, and a fragile healthcare system.

"River erosion is displacing families every month, turning people into climate refugees," he said. "We will stop the river from devouring our lands... We will end illegal sand mining and bring sweeping reforms to the healthcare sector."

He also highlighted the district's poor state of education and lack of employment opportunities.

"The people of Munshiganj must rise again, just as they did during the mass uprising.

We need to build a culture of protest in every neighbourhood," he added.

Speaking on diaspora voting rights, he added, "Thousands from Munshiganj live abroad. We are committed to ensuring their voting rights."

the July massacre, the BDR carnage, and the Shapla Chattar killings is now sitting in Delhi. She must be brought back and tried. We want to witness her receiving the highest punishment, death," he said.



NCP procession in Narayanganj.

PHOTO: STAR

Sarjis Alam, NCP chief organiser (north), accused ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina of ordering multiple mass killings.

"The one who ordered

those orchestrating armed attacks from abroad must be arrested. The safety of our July comrades must be guaranteed," he added.

27km of Dhaka-Barishal highway

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bricks and soil have become exposed, eventually forming potholes.

In front of the Messr Brothers Filling Station in Pukhuria, potholes have merged with muddy water. Near Bhubukdia Thakur Bari, a turning point on the highway has uneven surfaces and potholes as deep as five inches - posing serious risks for vehicles. The stretch from Dangi Bridge to Bhubukdia Bus Stand is also in a sorry state.

In Bakhunda, potholes about two inches deep have formed across the road. From Talma Mor to Jamtoli Bridge and Mohila Road Bazar, large craters dominate the surface.

RHD officials said the 30km stretch between Faridpur's old bus stand and Bhangha interchange includes a 3km bypass in Munshibazar that remains intact. But the remaining 27km is heavily damaged and nearly impassable due

to persistent potholes.

Acknowledging the road's condition, Khalid Saifullah Sardar, executive engineer of Faridpur RHD, said, "The road is on the verge of being unusable. The ministry has allocated 49 crore takas, and we've awarded the contract to RBL Company through tender. But we couldn't begin due to continuous rainfall. Work will start as soon as conditions improve."

He added that the four-lane project is still underway, but land acquisition delays have prevented progress on the Faridpur portion.

"Other districts like Barishal and Patuakhali are well ahead in terms of construction. In Faridpur, although 500 crore takas was deposited years ago with the district administration for land acquisition, they haven't handed over the land yet. That's why we can't start the main work."

Rashed Ahsan, 49, a passenger from Dhaka, said, "The road from Dhaka to Bhangha is excellent. But once I enter this part, it feels like you've entered a disaster zone."

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20 HC judges

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in May, the HC observed that many past judge appointments were not based on merit, which has harmed the judiciary's image.

The bench of Justice Md Akram Hossain Chowdhury and Justice Debasish Roy Chowdhury noted that while the constitution's framework for appointing judges is generally sound, in practice, there have been flaws.

The bench, nevertheless, has prevailed that the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court has not always been made on merit, and many unsatisfactory appointments were made on political or other grounds, with the result that the fittest persons were not appointed, which has badly affected the image of the judiciary of the country," they said.

On April 28, the bench

delivered the verdict

after disposing of a writ petition that challenged four sections of the 2025 ordinance.

Following the ordinance, on May 28, the Supreme Court issued a public notice for the first time, inviting applications for the posts of additional High Court judges.

Meanwhile, on May 30,

Supreme Court lawyer MA Sayeed Khan filed a writ petition with the HC seeking a stay order on the effectiveness of the public circular.

He also challenged the legality of the ordinance, saying it was issued without parliamentary debate or legislative scrutiny.

The petitioner, Sayeed Khan, told The Daily Star that the hearing of the petition may take place next week.

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Govt to cut power

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For the current fiscal year (FY2025-26), around Tk 37,400 crore has been allocated for power sector subsidies and Tk 10,000 crore for gas.

Subsidies in the power sector were between Tk 7,000 crore and Tk 9,000 crore until FY2020-21, but have sharply increased afterwards.

Officials said the government is now looking at ways to reduce power production costs as a means to limit subsidy requirements.

The initial plan aims to bring down production costs by around 10 percent, which would potentially save Tk 10,000-11,000 crore.

Zahid Hussain said that small steps have already been taken. These include lowering the service charge for furnace oil-based power plants from 9 percent to 5 percent. He also pointed to the need for a cost review of power producers and mentioned that the coal for Payra power plant is currently overpriced.

He added that starting operations at gas-based power plants like the one in Khulna's Rupsha would also help reduce dependency on more expensive fuels.

"But the government needs to act fast," he said, noting that the price of the dollar has a direct impact on production costs as it affects dollar-denominated capacity payments.

The recent fall in the dollar's price might reduce the cost, but the Bangladesh Bank's intervention to encourage exports and remittances did not let the price to decrease sharply, he said.

The central bank purchased \$313 million from 22 commercial banks in an auction last Tuesday, reacting to the sharp drop in the US dollar rate.

Officials said the government is ramping up imports of liquified natural gas (LNG) to meet growing demand and increase power generation from gas-based plants, which remain cheaper than other energy sources except coal.

Increasing coal-based power production is also under consideration, they said.

The government is also reviewing power purchase agreements with high-cost Independent Power Producers (IPPs), aiming to renegotiate the prices.

After a meeting of the advisory council last Tuesday, Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed told reporters that legal consultants would be appointed to review those deals.

Meanwhile, the IMF has made subsidy rationalisation in the power sector a key condition for the release of future tranches of its \$5.5 billion loan programme.

As part of the agreement, the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources must adopt and publicly share a three-year roadmap to reduce the gap between generation costs and electricity selling prices to a fiscally sustainable level.

The plan must outline tariff reforms and safeguards for vulnerable groups, according to recently released IMF documents.

In response, the government told the IMF it has already begun curbing generation costs by phasing out high-cost, fuel oil-based plants and boosting gas-based production.

It also said subsidies are expected to stay within the agreed Tk 37,400 crore cap for FY2024-25. Should costs rise beyond this ceiling, electricity tariffs may be adjusted, but only after all other cost-cutting measures have been exhausted.

MoU signed

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finding report, as well as to engage directly on the ground with the government, civil society and others with our expertise and assistance on the fundamental reforms Bangladesh is undertaking going forward," he said.

The new mission will offer training and technical assistance to the authorities across a range of areas, towards meeting the country's national and international human rights commitments, as well as undertake capacity-building for government institutions and civil society actors.

Violence persists

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come to an end following the change in government.

However, they claimed that "there was no reflection of that hope".

"Rapes, disappearances, and murders continue in the hills because the agreement (peace accord) remains unimplemented," they said.

The speakers demanded that all those involved in the rape incident be brought to justice and face appropriate punishment.

The protest rally was presided over by Kavita Chakma, vice president of the Hill Women's Federation Rangamati District Committee.

Among the speakers were Sumitra Chakma, general secretary of the Rangamati District Committee of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Youth Association, and Mranusingh Marma,

general secretary of the Hill Women's Federation Central Committee.

Police on Wednesday arrested four men in connection with the rape, shortly after the victim's father filed a case against six named individuals with Sadar Police Station, according to Arefin Jewel, superintendent of police in Khagrachari.

According to the case statement, the girl had been staying at a relative's house after attending a fair on the night of the incident. The six men allegedly broke into the house, tied up the girl, and raped her.

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Around 354 millimetres of rainfall were recorded in June this year, compared to 750 millimetres in June last year. Up to July 12 last year, 650 millimetres of rainfall were recorded, whereas this year it is only 27 millimetres.

According to the Water Development Board, around two crore tonnes of silt and sand enter Bangladesh each year through the Teesta from upstream India. Over 100 chars have formed along 115 kilometres of the river within Bangladesh. In the dry season, these sandy lands become cultivable during the monsoon, allowing silt to deposit. This makes them highly fertile in the dry season. But this year, the sandbars haven't been submerged - it's alarming."

Dalia Water Development Board Executive Engineer Amitab Chowdhury said it is essential to dredge the Teesta. "This matter has been forwarded to higher authorities," he added.

Starlink officially launches

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"While many nations deliberate, Bangladesh acted," Dreyer said. "By embracing connectivity as a foundation for human potential, you have positioned your nation as a model for others to follow."

She highlighted the speed and decisiveness of the government, noting that within just a few months of initial dialogue, Starlink service had moved from discussion to deployment. Approvals were finalised by May 2025, and the first Bangladeshi customers were online shortly thereafter.

"This is not just about satellites," Dreyer said. "We are launching opportunities - opportunities for remote learning, telemedicine, digital entrepreneurship, and inclusive growth."

The company has been granted a 10-year "Satellite Operator Licence" and "Radio Communication Operators Licence" by the Bangladesh

She also acknowledged the role of local partners including Felicity IDC and Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited, emphasising that long-term success depends on collaboration between global innovators and national stakeholders.

"The future we are building together," Dreyer concluded, "belongs to every person in Bangladesh who will now have access to the boundless opportunities that connectivity provides."

Following approximately three months of trial operations, Starlink formally started service yesterday.

The company has been granted a 10-year "Satellite Operator