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## CA'S APPOINTMENT Five-member search panel proposed

Parties can't agree on PM holding multiple posts

MD ABBAS

The National Consensus Commission has proposed a new method for appointing chief advisers to caretaker governments and asked political parties to submit their opinions by today.

A final decision on the caretaker framework is expected Tuesday.

On the 15th day of the second phase of talks at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday, parties also failed to agree on a separate proposal to bar one individual from simultaneously holding the posts of prime minister, Leader of the House, and party chief.

Speaking after the meeting, Prof Ali Riaz, vice president of the commission, said the latest caretaker proposal outlines a detailed procedure for selecting the chief adviser.

Under the proposed plan, a five-member search committee would recommend names for the role. The committee would include the prime minister, the Leader

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**Audits expose hidden bad loans at 6 Islamic banks**  
International auditors KPMG and Ernst & Young conduct asset quality reviews

1. Bad loans lead to capital provisioning shortfalls
2. Five banks currently undergoing merger process
3. Merger move triggers fresh deposit withdrawals
4. Merger slowed as central bank lacks prior experience

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Asset quality reviews by international auditors KPMG and Ernst & Young have revealed that six Shariah-based banks in Bangladesh are in a dire financial state, with non-performing loans (NPLs) skyrocketing four times greater than previously reported.

The reviews, initiated in January with backing from the Asian Development Bank, expose deep-seated financial mismanagement at First Security Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank, Union Bank, Global Islami Bank, ICB

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**A unique approach to looking at the future**

From today we launch the publication of a three-part series of articles on a "foresight analysis", written by

DR DEBAPRIYA BHATTACHARYA, TOWFIQUL ISLAM KHAN

AND

NAJEEBA MOHAMMED ALTAF,

which methodologically tries to predict the possible outcomes for Bangladesh in the months ahead. The first part, published in today's editorial page, outlines the context and approach of this predictive exercise.

We invite the readers to read these insightful pieces.

SEE PAGE 6



Bangladesh opener Parvez Hossain Emon (L) celebrates scoring his second T20I fifty as Jaker Ali looks on during the opening match of their three-match series against Pakistan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The left-handed batter remained unbeaten on 56 off 39 deliveries, helping the hosts to a seven-wicket win by chasing the 111-run target in 15.3 overs.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



**THE JULY THAT ROCKED BANGLADESH**

**JULY 21, 2024**

**2nd day of curfew, clashes continue**

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

At least seven people were killed and dozens injured in sporadic clashes between law enforcers and protesters in Dhaka, Narayanganj, and Narsingdi on July 21, 2024 – the second day of a nationwide curfew. Police and hospital sources

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

## STUDENT UNION ELECTION DU, JU set for Sept polls, other univs lag behind

ARAFAT RAHMAN

The much-anticipated Dhaka University Central Students' Union (DUCSU) election is likely to be held in the second week of September.

The official schedule will be announced on July 29, said DUCSU Chief Election Commissioner Prof Jasim Uddin yesterday after a final meeting with stakeholders at the university's Senate Bhaban.

"It typically takes 40 to 45 days after the schedule is announced. We are committed to holding the election within this timeframe," he said.

DU is the second public university, after Jahangirnagar, to announce a tentative timeline for student union polls. Rajshahi and Chittagong universities are yet to declare concrete plans, leaving students frustrated.

The demand for student union elections gained momentum after the July uprising, which reignited calls for democratic representation on campuses.

However, the process has been

delayed due to bureaucratic inertia and unresolved student grievances.

Though the student union election is supposed to take place every year, DU last held it in 2019 after a gap of 29 years since 1990; Jahangirnagar University in 1992; Rajshahi University in 1989 and Chittagong University in 1990.

Currently, seven public

DHAKA UNIVERSITY

In December last year, DU authorities initiated the process of holding the DUCSU polls.

They formed a 10-member Election Commission on June 16 and approved a revised constitution.

As part of preparations, returning officials held discussions with student representatives from

**DU last held election in 2019 after a gap of 29 years; JU in 1992; RU in 1989 and CU in 1990. BUET last held polls in 2001, BAU in 1998, and SUST in 1997.**

universities -- DU, RU, JU, CU, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), and Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) -- have provisions in their ordinances that allow student union elections.

BUET last held polls in 2001, BAU in

1998, and SUST in 1997.

various departments and institutes

earlier this month.

DUCSU CEC Prof Jasim yesterday said that to ensure transparency and fairness, voting will be conducted at six centralised neutral centres.

These centres will accommodate

voters from all residential halls

across the university.

Addressing concerns over voter

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

**GOPALGANJ VIOLENCE AFTERMATH  
Murder cases filed against 5,400 people**

**Police raids continue in district; fearing arrest, many go into hiding**

SUZIT KUMAR DAS, Faridpur

Police on Saturday night filed four more cases, bringing murder charges against 5,400 unnamed individuals in connection with the Gopalganj violence last week.

This takes the number of accused in the eight cases filed so far to over 8,400.

The fresh cases have been filed over the deaths of four people, Dipto Saha, Ramzan Kazi, Imon Talukdar, and Sohel Mollah, who died of gunshot wounds while undergoing treatment at Gopalganj Medical College Hospital on Wednesday -- the day of the incident.

All four victims were buried and cremated without post-mortem examinations or any police inquest report.

Earlier, family members of the victims expressed their reluctance to file cases, fearing they would not get justice.

Meanwhile, Gopalganj hospital authorities have denied the allegations of deliberately handing over the bodies without autopsies and claimed that agitated relatives misbehaved with hospital staff and forcibly took the bodies of the victims away before post-mortem examinations could be conducted, according to a press release issued yesterday signed by Dr Jibitesh Biswas, superintendent of Gopalganj General Hospital.

Another person, Ramzan Munshi, shot during the violence, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital early Friday. His body was buried after an autopsy.

Till Friday, four cases were filed over attacks on law enforcement, vandalism and arson, and alleged anti-state activities.

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## Govt to import 7 lakh tonnes of US wheat yearly

Move aimed at lowering Trump tariffs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has decided to import 7 lakh tonnes of wheat annually from the US worth about \$200 million as part of the government efforts to secure a lower tariff from the Trump administration on its exports.

The wheat will be imported over the next five years, according to the memorandum of understanding signed yesterday between the food ministry and the US Wheat Associates at the ministry's office.

The deal comes as the government continues negotiations with the US administration to reduce the 35 percent tariff on Bangladeshi goods, which is set to take effect from August 1 this year.

Currently, the government imports about 6 to 7 lakh tonnes of wheat annually from various countries to support its social safety net programmes and ration systems.

The government has allocated budget for 6 lakh tonnes of wheat imports this fiscal year. Last fiscal year, the government imported around 4.6 lakh tonnes.

Beyond public procurement, the private sector also imports a significant amount of wheat.

Last fiscal year, private imports amounted to 57.7 lakh tonnes, meaning the government will likely need to involve the private sector to meet the increased import target.



Palestinians gather in Beit Lahia, in northern Gaza, as they seek aid supplies that entered through Israel amid a worsening hunger crisis yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

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## Indonesia ferry fire kills five as hundreds rescued

AFP, Jakarta

An Indonesian ferry fire killed at least five people yesterday, the country's coast guard said, while more than 200 others were saved with many jumping overboard to flee the huge blaze.

The KM Barcelona 5 ferry was engulfed in flames off the coast of Sulawesi island, Indonesia's Maritime Security Agency said, just weeks after at least 19 people were killed when a ferry sank off the popular resort island of Bali.

"Five people were reported dead, two of whom have yet to be identified. Meanwhile, 284 people have been evacuated safely," the agency, also known as Bakamla, said in a statement.

The fire broke out at the ferry's stern as it was on its way to Manado, the capital of North Sulawesi province, with some passengers jumping overboard with life jackets, the statement said.

Fishermen also helped evacuate the victims to nearby islands, the statement added. Those injured were taken to the nearest health facility, Bakamla added.

The accident happened about one hour away from the resort town of Likupang, in the northern tip of Sulawesi, Manado search and rescue agency head, George Leo Mercy Randang, told AFP.

A video released by the Manado agency showed a Bakamla vessel spraying water on the ferry, which was still emitting thin black smoke.

"What is important is that we are prioritising rescue before nightfall," George told AFP, without confirming the total number of people who were on board the ferry.

Neither he nor Bakamla gave a cause for the fire.

## ON THIS DAY LAST YEAR

### 2nd day of curfew, clashes continue

FROM PAGE 1

also confirmed that six others, who had been wounded in earlier violence, succumbed to their injuries. With these deaths, the total toll rose to at least 140 since July 16.

Most fatalities were caused by gunshot wounds. The previous night, the government extended the nationwide curfew until further notice in an attempt to curb the ongoing unrest over the quota reform protests.

In the capital, clashes erupted in Signboard, Chittagong Road, Shanarpur, and Dhania areas when law enforcers attempted to clear the Dhaka-Chittagong highway. Witnesses said police and Rab personnel opened fire indiscriminately. By 5:00pm, joint forces managed to clear the roadblocks and reopen the highway. DMCH confirmed the arrival of five bodies and admitted over 70 injured from the affected areas -- many with bullet wounds.

In Bashundhara, confrontations occurred throughout the day between police and several hundred protesters at the main gate on Pragati Sarani.

In Mirpur, a group of agitators vandalised four Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited vehicles near the Metro Rail Station at Mirpur-10 around 3:30pm. Around 15 attackers targeted the vehicles during an inspection by officials.

Elsewhere, two were killed and at least 22 injured in Narayanganj and Narsingdi.

In Narayanganj, an unidentified youth was brought dead to the 300-bed hospital in the morning. Eleven more with bullet wounds were admitted. Seven others, including a critically injured 16-year-old, were taken to a private facility in the Signboard area.

In Narsingdi, an unidentified 18-year-old was brought dead to the Sadar Hospital in the afternoon. Doctors suspected rubber bullets as the cause.



A father wailing in agony as he rushes his bullet-hit son to a hospital in Matuail, Dhaka, on the afternoon of July 21, 2024.

FILE PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Throughout the day, agitators tried to block the Dhaka-Aricha highway between Radio Colony and Genda, but police foiled their efforts.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court curtailed the quota in public service to 7 percent, down from 56 percent. The court ordered that 93 percent of civil service positions be filled based on merit. It also overturned a previous High Court judgement reinstating quotas. The law minister said a circular would be issued soon.

Later in the day, three coordinators, Nahid Islam, Sarjis Alam, and Hasnat Abdullah, suspended the shutdown programme for 48 hours, demanding withdrawal of the curfew, reopening of universities, restoration of internet services, and safety for protest coordinators.

However, other coordinators rejected the decision and reaffirmed their commitment to a nine-point demand. Allegations emerged that Nahid had

been abducted and tortured and that the suspension announcement was made under duress. Nahid later confirmed he was picked up by plainclothes men, tortured into unconsciousness, and dumped under a bridge in Purbachal.

The US State Department issued a travel advisory, warning against travel to Bangladesh due to the unrest and allowing voluntary departure of non-essential embassy staff and families.

Political reactions also poured in. Jatiya Party Chairperson GM Quader claimed the Supreme Court verdict reflected the government's will, not the students'. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir urged the government to resign, alleging it was using state media to defame the movement.

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk expressed grave concern, condemned the attacks on students, and called for an impartial investigation.

## Five-member search panel proposed

FROM PAGE 1  
of the Opposition, the Speaker, the deputy speaker from the opposition bench, and a representative from the third largest party in parliament.

Most parties have agreed to various aspects of the proposal, said Riaz, but some reservations remain.

The BNP, for instance, said it would decide after internal discussions.

The Jamaat-e-Islami accepted the size of the committee but insisted that the chief adviser must be selected through consensus, not ranked-choice voting.

The National Citizen Party supported the framework but argued the chief adviser should not come from the judiciary.

According to the commission, the Speaker will supervise the search committee. Within 24 hours of its formation, the committee must invite nominations for chief adviser from registered political parties, parliamentary parties, and independent MPs. Each party or independent MP may nominate one individual.

The Parliament Secretariat will receive nominations for the next 24 hours. Within 72 hours, the committee will meet to review all proposed and eligible names, and select one individual to be appointed by the president.

If the committee fails to decide within 120 hours, the ruling alliance and the main opposition will each propose three names, and the third largest party will submit two. All names will be made public by the Speaker.

Each major bloc will choose one nominee from the other's list, and one from the smaller parties' list. The nominee receiving the most selections

will become chief adviser.

As a last resort, the committee will use a ranked choice vote, with the president appointing the final candidate based on that result.

This is the fourth proposal from the commission on how to appoint the chief adviser, amid persistent deadlock. On July 13, it had proposed a 13-member search committee. Earlier suggestions included a seven-member panel and an 11-member parliamentary committee, and even a return to the retired chief justice model under the 13th amendment.

Speaking to reporters, BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed said, "A consensus has already formed that the judiciary should remain outside the caretaker system."

On the issue of holding multiple top positions, he said, "There is near unanimity that the prime minister and Leader of the House can be the same person, as their roles are closely linked. But debate continues on whether that person should also be party chief."

He added, "To illustrate, in the UK, the cradle of democracy, the party chief often becomes the prime minister.... But the opposite must also be allowed."

Salahuddin reiterated BNP's openness to dialogue and urged all parties to balance global norms with local realities.

Jamaat-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher said his party could support a five- or seven-member search committee, but only if the chief adviser is chosen unanimously.

He warned that ranked choice voting "would open the door to negative political practices" and proposed appointing the outgoing chief justice if

the committee fails to reach consensus.

Taher supported allowing the same person to serve as prime minister and Leader of the House but not party chief, saying that would "ensure a better balance of power and allow the emergence of alternative leadership."

Ariful Islam Adib, senior joint convener of the National Citizen Party, echoed that concern. "One of the main reasons we fail to develop alternative leadership is that a single individual holds three critical roles," he said. "This not only blurs the line between state and party but extends party loyalty into institutions like the judiciary."

Regarding the caretaker system, he said his party earlier proposed a five-, seven-, or 11-member selection committee that would take nominations from the ruling, opposition, and third-largest parties. He also stressed that the judiciary must remain out of the selection process.

Prof Riaz said the commission has been discussing the formation of an upper house in parliament for several days. While there is no disagreement on establishing it, there are two differing views on the process of forming it.

"Political parties have entrusted the commission to decide on how the upper house should be formed," he noted.

A decision regarding the matter will be finalised soon, he added.

For the upper house, some parties, including the Jamaat and NCP, want a proportional representation system, in which parties gain seats in proportion to the number of votes cast for them.

Others, including the BNP and its allies, want the upper house seats to be distributed as per the proportion of seats in the lower house of parliament.

Student organisations at JU appear divided over timing of the polls.

Chhatra Dal and Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsads insist that the Chhatra League activists involved in attacks on July protesters must be brought to justice before polls are held.

Zahir Uddin Babor, convener of JCD unit at JU, said, "The university administration has yet to bring to

## DU, JU set for Sept polls

FROM PAGE 1  
eligibility, the commission clarified that students from the 2018-19 academic session whose master's results have already been published will not be eligible to vote or contest in the DUCSU or hall union elections.

Others who will not be included in the voter list are 385 of the named DU students, among 500, in a case filed with Shahabag Police Station over an attack on July 15 during the uprising last year. Around 126 others who were suspended based on a university probe will also not be allowed to vote.

### JAHANGIRNAGAR UNIVERSITY

JU authorities recently announced a fresh election date -- September 11 -- after deferring the polls previously scheduled for July 31.

Seeking anonymity, a JU faculty member said final decisions on disciplinary actions against the students involved in attacks on July protesters last year will be made by August 4, and the election schedule will be announced the same day.

A JU committee is supposed to complete its probe into July mass uprising-related allegations against faculty members and staffers by August 31. The investigation report will be sent to the International Crimes Tribunal in early September.

The polls date was set, considering all these issues, said the faculty member.

Student organisations at JU appear divided over timing of the polls.

Chhatra Dal and Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsads insist that the Chhatra League activists involved in attacks on July protesters must be brought to justice before polls are held.

Roman Rahman, member secretary of Student Rights Council, said, "We held meetings [with university authorities] and heard promises but there is still no election roadmap."

Sudipto Chakma, president of CU Chhatra Union, said the

book the BCL activists involved in the attacks. They still occupy seats in dormitories, and many teachers and staffers who backed them hold key posts. A fair and acceptable election is not possible under such circumstances."

On the other hand, Amartya Roy, president of JU Chhatra Union, said,

"We view the deferral of polls as a calculated move. It suggests that the administration and certain student bodies don't want the election at this time. If the polls are postponed again, it will be seen as a repetition of past tactics."

### CHITTAGONG UNIVERSITY

Following students' demands, the administration formed a committee on January 4 to draft guidelines for Chittagong University Central Students Union (CUCSU) election.

The committee was supposed to submit its report by January 26 but failed.

On February 17, the authorities held a meeting with student groups and pledged to prepare a CUCSU constitution based on their observations. The draft constitution now awaits Syndicate's approval.

CU Pro-VC Prof Kamal Uddin said election guidelines will be presented at a Syndicate meeting on July 24. "We aim to hold the polls by September and are moving forward with that target in mind."

Roman Rahman, member secretary of Student Rights Council, said, "We held meetings [with university authorities] and heard promises but there is still no election roadmap."

Asked about student union polls in BUET, VC Prof Abu Borhan Mohammad Badruzzaman said in a WhatsApp message that there have been no discussions on the matter yet.

(Our correspondents from DU, JU and RU, and a reporter from CU contributed to this report.)

## Govt to import

FROM PAGE 1

The government will procure high-quality grain at competitive prices, according to the statement.

In recent government purchases, wheat was priced at \$270 per tonne. As per this rate, the planned imports would cost about \$200 million.

The agreement will enhance trust and trade cooperation between the two countries, ultimately benefiting both nations, said Food Adviser Ali Imam Majumder.

Bangladesh currently exports over \$8 billion worth of goods annually to the US, its single largest export market, while imports from the US stand at just over \$2 billion.

Subsequently, US President Donald Trump imposed a 35 percent tariff on Bangladeshi goods -- significantly higher than the rates applied to Vietnam (20 percent) and Indonesia (19 percent), the country's main competitors on apparel export to the American market.

To help narrow the trade deficit, Bangladesh is also planning to purchase 14 Boeing aircraft from the US.

The negotiations with Boeing are at an advanced stage, although the delivery timeline depends on the company's production capacity, said Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman last week.

The total value of the aircraft deal has not been disclosed yet.

"We are trying to reduce the trade gap between Bangladesh and the US by increasing imports from America," Rahman said, adding that his ministry has been consulting with business leaders from the crucial garment and pharmaceutical sectors as well as trade experts ahead of the negotiations.

Bangladeshi officials are preparing for a third round of talks in Washington next week with the view to sealing a reciprocal tariff agreement before the new rates take effect.

The government also plans to include private sector representatives in the upcoming talks, a move business has recently advocated for.

In addition to government-led purchases, private sector importers are being encouraged to source more goods such as soybeans from the US.

In April, Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus wrote to Trump offering to increase imports of US cotton, wheat, LNG and soybeans.

A similar offer was made by Commerce Adviser SK Bashir Uddin, who is leading the Bangladeshi delegation in the talks, to United States Trade Representative Jameson Greer.

The MoU for wheat import was signed by Md Abul Hasanuzzaman Kabir, director general of the Directorate General of Food, and Joseph K Sowers, regional vice president of the US Wheat Associates.

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Tracey Ann Jacobson, Rahman, and other senior officials from both sides were present during the signing.

## Audits expose hidden bad loans

FROM PAGE 1  
Islamic Bank, and Exim Bank. The findings suggest that these banks have been submitting questionable data to regulators for years.

The forensic audits, which examined the banks' financial statements up to September of last year, paint a starkly different picture from the official records. While Bangladesh Bank's reports indicated the six lenders held a combined Tk 35,044 crore in NPLs, the international auditors' assessment places the figure at a staggering Tk 147,595 crore.

The discrepancy is particularly glaring for three banks. First Security Islami Bank's NPL ratio was found to be 96.37 percent, a dramatic increase from the 21.48 percent it reported. Similarly, Union Bank's NPL ratio stands at 97.80 percent, compared to the previously stated 44 percent, and Global Islami Bank's is 95 percent, up from 27 percent.

The reviews also uncovered a significant capital shortfall. The combined provision shortfall for all six banks has reached Tk 115,672 crore until September of last year, according to the AQR reports.

These revelations have spurred the central bank to take decisive action. Under the newly enacted Bank Resolution Ordinance 2025, a framework established following the political transition last year, five of the six banks were slated for merger. The new ordinance grants the central bank expanded authority to resolve distressed financial institutions.

ICB Islamic Bank has been excluded from the merger plans due to the presence of foreign investment.

As of September last year, the six banks held investments or loans worth Tk 1,93,537 crore against deposits of Tk 1,60,030 crore, underscoring the pressure on their balance sheets, according to the AQRs.

A senior BB official alleged that these banks had been "providing false and fabricated data to the central bank for years during the previous government regime".

Banking expert Md Arfan Ali, former managing director of Bank Asia, said the AQRs were a much-needed move to expose the true health of the Islamic banks.

"This will help determine whether the banks can continue independently or the government needs to take them

Promote  
apolitical,  
capable  
officers

CA tells army board

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday urged members of the Army Headquarters Selection Board to promote officers who have demonstrated capable leadership throughout their military careers while remaining above political ideology.

Yunus made the remarks while formally inaugurating the "Army Headquarters Selection Board-2025" at the Army Headquarters in the capital.

He said officers who are honest, ethical and professional, and who possess leadership qualities, deserve higher promotions. He emphasised professional

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## Hospitals to set up 'fever, flu corners'

Dengue spike triggers new health directives

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

With the number of dengue cases and deaths on the rise, the health authorities have issued fresh directives to all hospitals, including setting up fever/

- DGHS issues 16 new directives for dengue, 10 for Covid
- 62 dengue deaths, 17,218 hospitalised since Jan
- Dedicated dengue beds, IV fluids, test kits to be ensured
- 701 Covid cases, 27 deaths recorded since Jan

flu corners in outdoor departments and keeping dedicated beds for dengue patients.

A total of 62 people has died and 17,218 have been hospitalised since January this year till yesterday -- both figures significantly higher than during the same period last year. Experts have

warned that the numbers may rise further in the coming days.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) has also issued separate directives to hospitals for the treatment of Covid-19 patients, as the viral disease saw a sharp spike last month but is now on a downward trend.

A total of 27 people has died of Covid-19 and 701 have been infected since January, with 22 deaths and 532 cases reported in June alone.

The fresh directives came as the country faced a simultaneous outbreak of three viral diseases -- Covid-19, dengue and chikungunya -- last month. Health experts warned that the three may overwhelm the country's healthcare system unless the authorities take swift and coordinated action.

Abu Hussain Md Moinul Ahsan, director (hospital) of DGHS, who signed the directives on July 16, said while Covid cases are showing a downward trend, dengue cases are on the rise.

The directives were made public yesterday.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the inauguration of "Army Headquarters Selection Board-2025" at the Dhaka cantonment yesterday. Upon his arrival, the chief adviser was welcomed by Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman.

PHOTO: PID

'Only offenders being arrested'

Home adviser denies mass arrest allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday dismissed mass arrest allegations following the recent Gopalganj unrest.

"Those who committed crimes are the ones being arrested," Adviser Jahangir said while responding to a journalist's

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

'Stop wholesale case filing, arbitrary arrests'

University Teachers' Network urges govt on Gopalganj violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The University Teachers' Network (UTN) yesterday urged the government to stop wholesale case filing, arbitrary arrests, and political harassment in the name of investigating the recent Gopalganj incident.

In a statement to the media, the UTN strongly condemned the attack carried out by Awami League men during the National Citizen Party's (NCP) rally on Wednesday and the subsequent loss of lives in the clashes.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

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Two more buses torched in Dhaka

STAR REPORT

Arsonists yesterday torched two more buses in Dhaka centring a hartal called by the Awami League's four affiliated organisations, including the banned Chhatra League.

They called the hartal, protesting the killing of five people in the recent Gopalganj violence.

Meanwhile, law enforcers foiled an attempt to torch a bus in Azimpur and arrested a BCL activist while he was trying to set fire to another bus in Shyampur, said police.

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Use forest resources in planned way

Says Wahiduddin Mahmud

UNB, Dhaka

resources to ensure sustainability.

"We have to extract resources from the forests in a planned way," he said while addressing a workshop on the protection of forest-dependent people from forest destruction, plantation economy,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



**NexusPay অ্যাম-এ**

**ডাচ-বাংলা ব্যাংক-এর**

ডেবিট, ক্রেডিট ও প্লিমেইড কার্ড, কোর ব্যাংকিং, রকেট ও এজেন্ট ব্যাংকিং

একাউন্ট অ্যাড করে যে কোন ধরনের লেনদেন ও পেমেন্ট করা যায়

যখন তখন সম্পূর্ণ নিরামদ

এসকল লেনদেন একদম



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আপনার বিশ্বস্ত সহযোগী

ডাচ-বাংলা ব্যাংক-এর  
শক্তিশালী মোবাইল অ্যাম

## JULY UPRISING Teen discharged from case filed over cop killing

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court has discharged a teenager from a case filed over killing a police constable during quota reform movement in Dhaka's Jatrabari on July 19 last year.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate GM Farhan Ishtiaque passed the order on July 15 after Mollah Md Khalid Hossain, inspector of Detective Branch of Police (Wari Division) and also the case's investigation officer, submitted a probe report under Section 173(A) of the recently amended Code of Criminal Procedure.

In his order, the magistrate said the teenager, who was 17 years old at the time of his detention last year, was discharged as the IO did not find his involvement in the murder.

The decision came just five days after the promulgation of the amended ordinance on July 10. This is the first time that anyone has been discharged from a pending investigation case under the new law, said a court staffer.

On July 13, Inspector Mollah submitted an interim investigation report to the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, seeking the teenager's discharge from the case filed with the Jatrabari Police Station.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

## CJ nominates 2 judges for SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed has nominated two judges of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court as its chamber judges for quick hearing and disposal of urgent cases.

Justice Md Rezaul Haque has been assigned as chamber judge 1 and Justice Farah Mahbub as chamber judge 2, said a notification issued by Registrar Muhammad Hasanuzzaman yesterday.

Both the chamber judges started functions from yesterday.

This is for the first time, two chamber benches of the Appellate Division have been constituted to quickly settle the urgent matters, said SC spokesman Md Muajjem Hussain.

## Crackdown on outdated vehicles starts

### 20 dumped on first day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 20 outdated vehicles were dumped yesterday, marking the beginning of a countrywide drive against vehicles that have exceeded their economic lifespan.

Mobile courts filed 495 cases across the country and realised fines amounting to Tk 11.64 lakh for various traffic law violations, according to a press release issued by the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

The drive was carried out by mobile courts of the BRTA and different district administrations as over 80,000 commercial vehicles have already passed their economic life.

The move comes about a month after the government fixed the economic lifespan of buses and minibuses at 20 years, and that of goods-laden vehicles -- such as trucks and covered vans -- at 25 years.

As of May, a total of 299,643 commercial vehicles were registered with the BRTA, including 85,198 buses and minibuses and 214,445 trucks, covered vans, and tankers.

## Use forest resources in planned

FROM PAGE 3  
climate change and land grabbing at the capital's CIRDAP auditorium.

He said relying solely on forest resources for livelihood is not a sustainable option. "This is not right -- by this, they will remain under the poverty line," he said, adding that education and broader economic participation were key to improving the lives of forest dependent communities.

Wahiduddin also criticised the proliferation of resource grabbers in the country. "The varieties of dacoits in Bangladesh are very rare in the world -- river grabber, land grabber, forest grabber, hill grabber, and so many," he said.

Reflecting on past missteps, he said the country had undertaken several unplanned projects in forest areas based on foreign advice and funding.

He reaffirmed his commitment to preserving the cultural and linguistic diversity of ethnic communities. "After this, we have to provide them education and bring them to the mainstream of society for employment," he said.

He said arrangements have been made to approve several umbrella projects in the hill tracts to address

water scarcity and improve access to education in remote areas.

representatives from two regions shared their perspectives during the main session of the workshop.

The event was organised by the Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD), with Executive Chairman of the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) Hossain Zillur Rahman presiding over the session.

Speakers at the event included Michal Krejza, head of cooperation at the Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh; Khush Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori and country coordinator of One Billion Rising; Md Amir Hossain Chowdhury, chief conservator of forests; Md Yunus Ali, former chief conservator of forests; and Prashanta Tripura, country director of The Hunger Project and former university professor.

Community

Community

## Promote apolitical

FROM PAGE 3  
skills, leadership qualities, discipline, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, and above all, suitability for employment as key criteria for promotion.

In this first phase of the selection board, eligible officers of the rank of colonel and lieutenant colonel in the Bangladesh Army will be considered for promotion, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR).

Prof Yunus praised the army for its continued service beyond safeguarding national independence and sovereignty, particularly in disaster response, maintaining internal security and assisting the civil administration.

At the beginning of his speech, the chief adviser paid tribute to the martyrs, war-wounded, and freedom fighters of the Liberation War,

particularly those from the armed forces, whose sacrifices he said the nation will remember with deep gratitude.

He also paid respects to all injured and martyred army personnel during their duties in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, as well as to the martyrs and injured of the July 2024 uprising.

Upon his arrival at the venue, the chief adviser was received by Chief of Army Staff General Waker Uz-Zaman.

At the end of the event, the chief adviser signed the visitors' book.

## PRAYER TIMING

JULY 21

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-15 12-45 5-00 6-54 8-15

JAMAAT 4-50 1-15 5-15 6-54 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A child swims home through the village canal, clutching freshly plucked kadam flowers. His face lights up with the happiness of a successful little adventure. The photo was taken in Jhalakathi recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

## Battered Tangail road takes toll on locals

from Kachua Bazar to Araipara.

The Sakhipur-Sagardighi road is a crucial route. It connects Sakhipur, Mirzapur, Basail, Kalihati and Ghatail upazilas in Tangail with Fulbaria, Bhaluka, Gafraoan and Trishal upazilas in Mymensingh. It also facilitates the



import and export of goods to and from these areas.

Numerous students also commute on this road to attend coaching centres and educational institutions, including Government Mujib College, Women's

Honours College and BAF Shaheen College. The poor road conditions prevent many from reaching on time.

Md Moniruzzaman of Sakhipur said, "The ditches are filled with rainwater and cannot be seen from a distance, leading to accidents. We urge the authorities to repair the road quickly."

Former upazila parishad vice-chairman SM Sabur Reza echoed the sentiment.

According to sources at the Roads and Highways Department, although the road is designed to support vehicles weighing up to 15 tonnes, it is currently being used by trucks carrying more than 30 tonnes, loaded with bricks, stones, soil and rods. This is accelerating the road's deterioration.

Contacted, Sintia Azmiri Khan, executive engineer of the RHD in Tangail, said departmental repairs are already underway.

## MILITARY ENGINEER SERVICES

DIRECTOR OF WORKS &amp; CHIEF ENGINEER (ARMY)

### INVITATION FOR TENDERS

Dated 13 July 2025

Ref No 03 of 2025-2026/E-6			
1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Defence		
2. Agency	Military Engineer Services		
3. Procuring Entity Name	DW & CE (Army) Dhaka Cantt		
4. Tender Name	Different B & R Works of Bangladesh Army for the financial year 2025-2026 (As per Ser No. 15)		
5. Invitation for Tender No	03 of 2025-2026/E-6 Dated 13 July 2025		
6. Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)		
7. Source of Funds	GOB		
8. Tender Publication Date	22 July 2025		
9. Tender Last Selling Date	17 August 2025 upto 1430 hours.		
10. Tender Submission Date & Time	18 August 2025, 1200 hours.		
11. Tender Opening Date & Time	18 August 2025, 1230 hours.		
12. Name & Address of the office (s)	Selling Tender Documents Receiving Tender Document Opening Tender Document		
13. Place/Date/Time of Pre-Tender Meeting	17 August 2025, 1000-1100 hours.		
14. Eligibility of Tenderer	For Serial No. 15 (a to c): Contractors enlisted in MES Class 'A' & 'B' For Serial No. 15 (d to f): Contractors enlisted in MES Class 'B' & 'C' For Serial No. 15 (g & h): Contractors enlisted in MES Class 'C' in other Govt/Semi-Govt/autonomous organizations in similar capacity having necessary security clearance from DGFI.		
15. Description of works	Location	Price of Tender Document (Non refundable)	Amount of Tender Security (Taka) (In the shape of Bank Draft/ Pay order/Bank Guarantee in favor of DW & CE (Army))
a Construction of 1 x SM BK (6 storey with 6 storied fdn, store in ground floor) and CH/DH with Recreation room (2 storey with 2 storied fdn) including ancillary works for 10 NCO & 200 Nos Troops of Regiment Artillery at Jahangirabad Cantt, Bogura (Last Phase).	Jahangirabad Cantt, Bogura	Tk. 9,000.00	Tk. 15,10,000.00
b Construction of 1 x SM BK (6 storey with 6 storied fdn, store in ground floor) and CH/DH with Recreation room (2 storey with 2 storied fdn) including ancillary works for 10 NCO & 200 Nos Troops of 40 Field Regiment Artillery at Jahangirabad Cantt (Last Phase).	Jahangirabad Cantt, Bogura	Tk. 9,000.00	Tk. 16,40,000.00
c Construction of 1 x SM BK (6 storey with 6 storied fdn) and CH/DH with Recreation room (2 storey with 2 storied fdn) including ancillary works for 10 NCO & 200 Nos Troops of 25 Bir Support Battalion at Rangpur Cantt (Last Phase).	Rangpur Cantt	Tk. 11,000.00	Tk. 20,70,000.00
d Construction of DS Office Complex (5 Storey with 8 storied foundation, ground floor open) including ancillary works and furniture of Commando Training Ground Area for SI&T at Jalalabad Cantt (2nd Phase).	Jalalabad Cantt	Tk. 6,000.00	Tk. 9,35,000.00
e Construction of Hanger type (Steel structure) Repair shed including ancillary works at 123 field workshop Company EME Area, Shaheed Salauddin Cantt, Ghatail (Last Phase).	Shaheed Salauddin Cantt, Ghatail	Tk. 7,000.00	Tk. 13,00,000.00
f Construction of 1 x 44 Followers Qtr-01 (6 story with 6 storied foundation, 8 unit in each floor) including ancillary works at Ramu Cantt.	Ramu Cantt	Tk. 7,000.00	Tk. 12,65,000.00
g Construction of 1 x 56 Married OR's Qtr (15 Storey with 15 storied foundation, other facilities in ground floor) including internal/external Svcs for Artillery Centre & School of Halishahar, Chattogram (Last Phases).	Artillery Centre & School, Halishahar, Chattogram	Tk. 5,000.00	Tk. 9,00,000.00
h Remaining works for construction of 1 x Multipurpose complex including ancillary works for SI&T at Jalalabad Cantt (Last Phase).	Jalalabad Cantt	Tk. 5,000.00	Tk. 7,25,000.00
16. Contact details	Phone : 9832678, Mili: 2678, Fax : (02) 9833284 Web Site : <a href="http://www.army.mil.bd">www.army.mil.bd</a>		
17. Special Instructions	a. Tenderer shall submit copy of letter of valid enlistment & security clearance with application when purchasing tender. b. Detailed requirements are mentioned in Tender Data sheet of Tender documents. c. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.		

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GD-1613

## SHISHU HOSPITAL

### Appointment of 65 doctors cancelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The management board of Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute has cancelled the appointment of 65 doctors who were recruited on an ad-hoc basis without any official circular.

Prof Md Mahbubul Hoque, director of the hospital, confirmed the development to The Daily Star yesterday.

The move came days after the health ministry launched an investigation into the appointments, following reports published in several newspapers.

According to media reports, the hospital authorities appointed 65 doctors on a six-month ad-hoc basis without issuing any recruitment circular. All of them had already been working at the hospital.

Mahbubul said the doctors were appointed on an ad-hoc basis due to a shortage of manpower. However, the management board on Saturday cancelled the appointments as it sparked controversy.

"The health ministry's probe committee also recommended cancelling the appointments," he said.

The board has also directed the authorities to initiate a recruitment process following due procedures as soon as possible, he added.

## SOHAG MURDER

### Prime accused gives confessional statement

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The main accused, Mahmudul Hasan Mohin, yesterday gave confessional statements in connection with the case filed over killing of scrap metal trader Lal Chand alias Sohag near Mitford Hospital in Old Dhaka.

With this, five accused gave confessional statements to magistrates in Dhaka.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mahbubur Rahman recorded his statement.

On July 9, Sohag, 39, was dragged from his shop in Old Dhaka in broad daylight and beaten to death near the gate of Mitford Hospital. His body was then crushed with large chunks of concrete and left on the street as onlookers watched in horror.

The next day, the victim's elder sister filed a murder case with Kotwali Police Station, accusing 19 persons and 15 to 20 unnamed individuals.

Police have so far arrested nine accused.

# INTERNATIONAL

## US races to build migrant tent camps

Says WSJ after \$45bn funding boost

REUTERS

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement is racing to build migrant tent camps nationwide after receiving \$45 billion in new funding, aiming to expand detention capacity from 40,000 to 100,000 beds by year-end, The Wall Street Journal reported on Saturday.

The agency is prioritising large-scale tent facilities at military bases and ICE jails, including a 5,000-bed site at Fort Bliss in Texas and others in Colorado, Indiana, and New Jersey, the report added, citing documents seen by WSJ.

"ICE is pursuing all available options to expand bedspace capacity," a senior ICE official told Reuters, adding that the "process does include housing detainees at certain military bases."

## Iran replaces air defence systems

AFP, Tehran

Iran has replaced the air defence systems damaged during its 12-day war with Israel last month, a senior army general said yesterday according to state media.

Israel launched an unprecedented surprise bombing campaign against Iran in mid-June, prompting Tehran to respond with drone and missile attacks.

Israel's strikes dealt a significant blow to the Islamic republic's air defences, which were repeatedly activated in the capital Tehran and across the country.

"The Zionist enemy sought to destroy Iran's defense capabilities, and some of our defense systems were damaged in that war," army operations chief Mahmoud Mousavi was quoted as saying.

"The damaged defence systems have now been replaced," he added. Iran's air defence network includes systems like the domestically built Bavar-373 and Khordad-15, designed to counter missiles and aircraft.



The mother of Yahya Fadi al-Najjar, an infant who died of malnourishment, mourns as she holds his body during the funeral at Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Israeli strikes kill 88 Palestinians in Gaza

67 of them aid seekers; IDF issues new evacuation orders before ops in Deir al-Balah

AGENCIES

Gaza's health ministry said yesterday that the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli strikes across the enclave had risen to 88, while the death toll from Israeli fire on civilians waiting for UN aid trucks in northern Gaza climbed to 67.

Two more Palestinians, including a 35-day-old infant, have died of malnutrition at Gaza City's al-Shifa Hospital.

The Israeli military issued evacuation orders in areas of central Gaza packed with displaced Palestinians where it hasn't operated so far in its offensive.

The military evacuation demand, which could signal an imminent attack on neighbourhoods in Deir al-Balah, alarmed the families of Israeli hostages, who fear their relatives are being held there.

Much of Gaza has been reduced to a wasteland during more than 21 months of offensive and there are fears of accelerating starvation.

Palestinian health officials said hundreds of people could soon die as hospitals were inundated with patients suffering from dizziness and exhaustion due to the scarcity of food and a collapse in aid deliveries, reports Reuters.

"We warn that hundreds of people whose bodies have wasted away are at risk of imminent death due to hunger," the health ministry, which is controlled by Hamas, said.

The United Nations also said yesterday that civilians were starving and needed an urgent influx of aid, reports Reuters.

The Israeli military dropped leaflets from the sky ordering people in several districts in southwest Deir al-Balah, where hundreds of thousands of displaced Gazans have been sheltering, to leave their homes and head further south.

- Two more Palestinians, including an infant, died of malnutrition
- Hundreds could soon die due to scarcity of food: health officials
- Civilians need an urgent influx of aid: UN

"The (Israeli) Defense Forces continues to operate with great force to destroy the enemy's capabilities and terrorist infrastructure in the area," the military said, adding that it had not entered these districts during the current conflict.

Israeli sources have said the reason the army has so far stayed out is because they suspect Hamas might be holding hostages there. At least 20 of the remaining 50 hostages in captivity in Gaza are believed to still be alive.

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## Is a woman's death worth less?

Study on female death registration brings out painful reality

We are alarmed to learn of the persistence of a silent injustice that few people still seem to know or care about: the neglect of women when it comes to recording their deaths in Bangladesh. While death registration regardless of gender has yet to catch on in the country, despite efforts to popularise it, women seem to be particularly excluded from this process. A study by the BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health has now revealed how widespread this problem is.

Conducted in Rangpur division, where only 32 percent of all deaths recorded in 2023-24 were of women, the study shows how societal perceptions and systemic hurdles continue to erase them from public records. Some districts are in worse conditions than others. In Panchagarh, for example, just four percent of female deaths were registered. Clearly, the problem is more acute in rural and low-income areas. The BRAC study has identified multiple barriers to registration, including lack of female property ownership. In most families, a woman's death is deemed unworthy of registration unless she owned land or financial assets or had a pension or savings account that could be claimed. As one respondent bluntly put it, "My mother didn't have any land-related matters... that's why I didn't do it." The perception that a woman must leave behind something "useful" to justify her death being recorded is deeply troubling.

Other barriers include low public awareness, limited digital literacy, lack of essential documents such as digital birth certificates, and inefficiencies or coordination failures among relevant government agencies. These social and institutional problems reinforce one another, creating an environment where countless women die without being counted, thus reinforcing the marginalisation they often experience in life. While the lack of death registration is not unique to Bangladesh, with nearly 69 lakh deaths going unregistered every year across Asia and the Pacific, we surely rank among the worst performers. As experts have pointed out, when a death is not recorded, the public health system loses crucial data on causes of death, compromising our ability to respond to health crises.

We, therefore, must ensure that every death—of both men and women—is registered without exception. To that effect, experts have made a number of recommendations that should be taken seriously. First of all, we must raise awareness about the importance of death registration, with specific focus on gender-sensitive messaging. The registration process itself must be simplified and made free of cost, especially for low-income and rural communities. Registration offices should also be better equipped to improve service delivery. Health professionals, who are often the first point of contact when a death occurs, also have vital role to play as they can inform families about the importance of registration and help them navigate the required procedures.

## Track down the prison escapees

Recover the arms looted during Narsingdi jailbreak

It is deeply concerning that even after a year has passed since the Narsingdi jailbreak on July 19, 2024, the authorities have yet to capture 177 of the 826 inmates who escaped during the incident. Moreover, 28 firearms and over 5,000 rounds of ammunition that were looted at that time have yet to be recovered. Particularly alarming is the fact that there were nine convicted militants among the fugitives. That these hardened criminals, with a large quantity of arms and ammunition in their possession, remain traceless to this day exposes the failure of our intelligence agencies and law enforcement forces, while posing serious security threats to citizens. In fact, it is more than likely that the fugitives have been involved in criminal activities ever since their escape.

Reportedly, on July 19 last year, a group of attackers stormed Narsingdi prison, stole 85 guns and over 8,000 rounds of ammunition from the armoury, set fire to key buildings inside the prison complex, and destroyed thousands of legal documents. After appeals from the local authorities, 649 inmates surrendered voluntarily. Later, law enforcers recovered 57 weapons and 3,000 rounds of ammunition through joint operations, but 177 escapees still remain at large. One may recall that around that time, multiple jailbreaks took place in the country. For instance, just a few days after the Narsingdi incident, 209 inmates escaped from Kashimpur High Security Jail and 94 fled the Kushtia jail, both on the same day. After the Narsingdi incident, three investigation committees were reportedly formed by the inspector general of prisons, the Security Services Division, and the district administration. We would like to know what these committees have found and what steps have been taken so far to trace the fugitive criminals and to avoid such incidents in the future.

The importance of tracking down the escapees cannot be stressed enough. We urge the government to also prioritise the recovery of the stolen arms and ammunition, particularly given their security implications ahead of the next election. Equally important is reforming our prison system. Overcrowding, which is a long-standing issue in our jails, including the Narsingdi jail, should be urgently addressed. Moreover, hardened criminals should never be kept in the same wards as general inmates as it increases security risks as well as the threat of radicalisation of ordinary prisoners.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY



### World gets first woman PM

On this day in 1960, politician Sirimavo Bandaranaike became the world's first woman prime minister when she took office in Ceylon (later Sri Lanka).

## BANGLADESH IN TRANSITION: A FORESIGHT OUTLOOK

# A unique approach to looking at the future

This is the first instalment of a three-part series based on a foresight analysis centred on Bangladesh's transition, outlining the context and approach to 'foreseeing' Bangladesh's future a few months ahead.

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*"It is better to be roughly right than to be precisely wrong."*

A year after the July uprising, the above-mentioned insight by John Maynard Keynes resonates deeply as Bangladesh faces growing restlessness for reforms, political consensus, and national elections amid volatile social, political and economic circumstances. It is maintained that the real risk lies not in being wrong but in acting too late. Anticipating what lies ahead, even if imperfectly,

**The current foresight analysis discusses the possibility of articulating a minimum working consensus for reforms, not their delivery, in the upcoming months. As such, the aim is to anticipate potential developments that may underpin successful articulation of a minimum (working) consensus for reforms ahead of the national elections. It also aims to help identify the potential strategic moves of relevant key actors to realise their respective 'desirable' outcomes.**

articulation of a minimum (working) consensus on reforms look like in the next few months, in the run-up to the national elections? What would be the defining economic, social and political conditions in such a future? What will the roles of key actors be in enabling a pathway to a minimum (working) consensus on reforms?

The current foresight analysis discusses the possibility of articulating a minimum working

this analysis focuses on the period leading up to the national elections. As such, to adapt to "foreseeing" in the short term, the future scenarios are built around social, political and economic factors that are both critical to the country's context and certain in their implications in the coming months. Moreover, given the accelerated pace of national, regional and global change, scenarios may become outdated. To mitigate this,

economic one, scoring particularly higher in the areas of "criticality" and "relevance." This was perhaps a reflection of the uncertain and fragmented sociopolitical landscape at the time of the workshop.

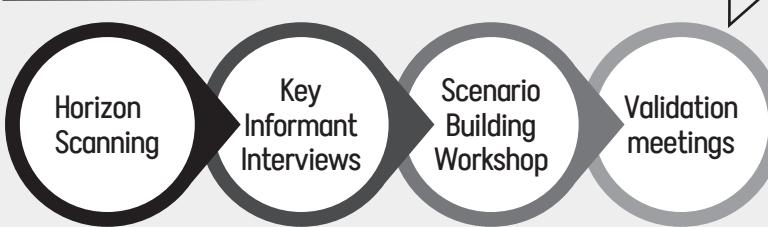
More importantly, the close scores of many drivers suggested there was no clear front-runner. In light of this, the experts consolidated the closely scored drivers into two composite drivers: one for economic (horizontal or x-axis) and one for sociopolitical (vertical or y-axis) factors (Figure 2). This approach did not exclude the remaining important drivers; instead, they were incorporated as cross-cutting dynamics shaping each of the plausible future scenarios.

The resulting 4x4 scenario matrix is defined by these two composite drivers. The horizontal axis, Economic Conditions, captures three interrelated elements: the cost of living in Bangladesh; the availability of meaningful jobs; and the extent of labour discontent across the country. It was first debated whether there should be emphasis on the availability of decent jobs. While "decent" jobs typically entail employment that offers minimum wages, job security, and standard worker safety, it is considered not to fully capture the realities of the current job market in Bangladesh. Many of the available jobs are considered not to match the qualifications, skills or expectations of new labour market entrants. As such, many of them experience underemployment or prolonged periods of unemployment due to a lack of meaningful jobs.

The vertical axis, Political Alignment, represents the agreement on scope, sequencing and speed of reforms; a consensus on the timeline for national elections; and the level of inclusivity in electoral processes. Here, "inclusivity" does not only refer to the participation of the immediate past ruling party in the upcoming national elections, but the participation of all political parties to compete and all citizens to vote without fear of repercussions or intimidation.

The scenarios emerging from this exercise offer a lens through which to understand the rapidly shifting sociopolitical landscape within Bangladesh and the future of reforms. The synthesis of economic and sociopolitical drivers into two composite drivers of change—Economic Conditions and Political Alignment—has set the ground for developing four distinct future scenarios. As the country edges closer to the national elections, examining potential future trajectories and recognising the related weak

**FIGURE 1: Integrated Foresight Approach**



consensus for reforms, not their delivery, in the upcoming months. As such, the aim is to anticipate potential developments that may underpin successful articulation of a minimum (working) consensus for reforms ahead of the national elections. It also aims to help identify the potential strategic moves of relevant key actors to realise their respective "desirable" outcomes.

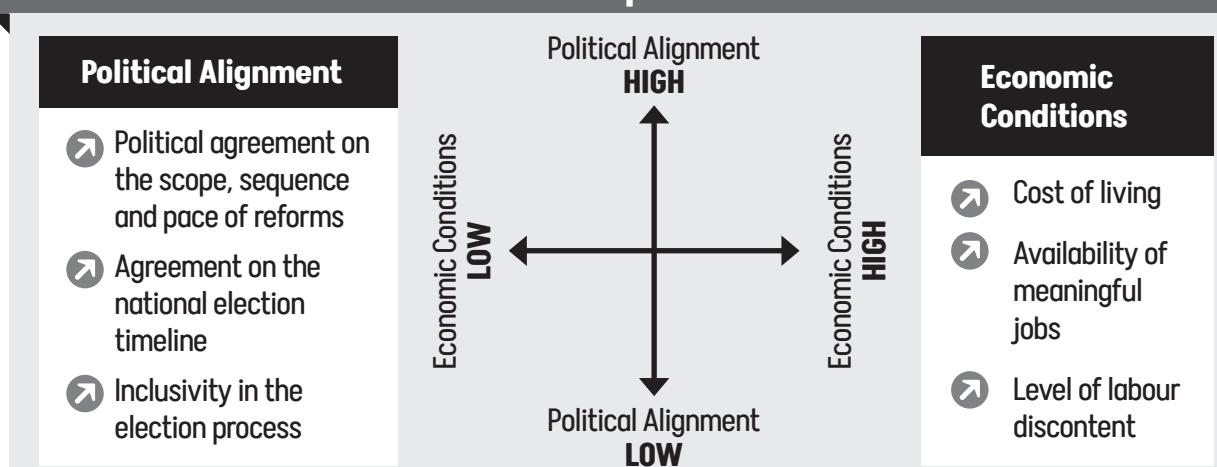
The critical questions are guided by the assumption that a country's political space and the stability of its economic circumstances are mutually reinforcing—engaged in a dialectical relationship, where each shapes and is shaped by the other. However, in a country where reliable and relevant data and information are scarce, waiting for facts and figures that adequately reflect economic realities risks missing crucial opportunities for timely intervention. Instead of

the future scenarios are continuously validated for relevance through continuous stakeholder engagement and feedback.

The first step, "horizon scanning," involved desk research to identify emerging trends, issues, and "drivers of change"—the underlying domestic or external forces potentially shaping Bangladesh's prospects of articulating a minimum (working) consensus on reforms. Drivers can be said to be the root causes of trends, while a "weak signal" is the early indicator of a trend that has disruptive potential to grow in scale and geographic distribution.

Second, "key informant interviews" were held with experts in the field of politics and governance to supplement horizon scanning. The third step was a "scenario building workshop," which was held in April 2025. This workshop, where we employed the Delphi method, brought together 16

**FIGURE 2: Composite Drivers**



is a better choice than waiting for the "correct" answer in times of high uncertainty. Unprecedented times require an unprecedented approach to "foreseeing" the near future.

The uprising in July-August 2024, sparked by the reinstatement of government job quotas amid dismal job prospects, ended a 15-year authoritarian regime. The country's transition has been uneven since then. On the one hand, several economic indicators have shown improvement, with robust growth in remittance inflows, resilient export growth, and consolidation in foreign exchange reserves. Concurrently, economic performance continued to falter in terms of high inflation, stagnant private investment and sluggish employment. Moreover, law and order concerns persist with frequent episodes of mob violence. Intensifying geostrategic tensions in the region and disruptive developments across the globe (including the new tariff policy US and the war in the Middle East) are amplifying domestic economic uncertainties. Meanwhile, public expectations for national elections are growing, while political fragmentation—if not outright chaos—has only deepened since then.

Nevertheless, with national elections expected in early 2026, there is now a narrow window of opportunity for all state and non-state actors to act on the nation's reform aspirations. The country is confronted with several critical questions: What might the

traditional forecasting, a method that relies on extensive historical data, this analysis uses "foresight." This approach systematically leverages expert and non-expert knowledge and experiences to build potential "futures" and is better suited for data-scarce and volatile environments. There are many foresight approaches, such as horizon scanning, stakeholder analyses, and the Delphi method, which help develop multiple potential futures and explore the various opportunities and challenges that could occur in unpredictable circumstances.

Foresight offers advantages in situations with limited or absent relevant data and evidence, but it also has its fair share of critics. First, it has been criticised for its reliance on subjective judgements and the perceived lack of a coherent theoretical foundation. Second, communicating and engaging stakeholders and decision-makers with findings from a foresight exercise can present challenges. Third, the approach's heavy reliance on qualitative methods has raised concerns about the potential for foresight scenarios to be influenced by biases or specific perspectives.

To tackle these inherent challenges, we employed an "integrated" foresight approach, combining horizon scanning, Delphi survey, and a scenario building workshop (Figure 1). Typically, foresight is used for building future scenarios at least 10-30 years into the future; however,

(multidisciplinary) experts spanning economists, political analysts and politicians, and representatives from the private sector as well as civil society and NGOs. These experts came together to develop multiple plausible (future) scenarios, along with associated opportunities, challenges and strategic options. However, it is worth noting that the scenarios developed reflect the information and context available at the time of their development.

Finally, a set of dedicated "validation meetings" began with a session with a broad group of international development partners, followed by separate meetings with three groups of leading political parties. These meetings provided the final inputs for fine-tuning the scenarios obtained.

From extensive horizon scanning, key informant interviews, and expert feedback during the scenario-building workshop, 34 drivers—13 economic and 21 sociopolitical drivers—were identified. Experts scored each driver in two rounds across three dimensions: i) how "certain" is this driver to produce an outcome within the next 6 months?; ii) how "critical" is this driver in the context of Bangladesh's current sociopolitical and economic landscape?; and iii) how relevant is this driver to influence or shape the articulation of a minimum working reform consensus?

Curiously, the higher-ranked drivers were mostly from the sociopolitical group rather than the

signals may help key actors not only anticipate the future but also act in time to shape it. The second instalment will unpack four different future scenarios that may emerge, along with the early signs of change—or weak signals—that may suggest the future trajectory we may be headed towards. Some scenarios may emerge as the most desirable future, marked by stability, while others may be completely improbable. Others may be closer to reality than they appear.

*Views expressed in this article are those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect the views of CPD or any other organisations with which the authors are associated.*

# EDITORIAL

# Enforced disappearances and the onus of accountability



STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING

Brig Gen Shahedul Anam Khan, ndc, psc (retd)  
is a former associate editor of *The Daily Star*.

SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN

There are more reasons than one to feel happy about two news reports appearing weeks apart, though interrelated. And they have to do with enforced disappearance over the 15-plus years of the reviled Hasina regime.

The first I refer to is a statement from an ISPR representative at a press briefing on July 3, assuring the nation that the army would take legal action against any of its members if found to have been involved in enforced disappearances. The second I refer to are comments made a couple of weeks prior to the first referred news, at a press briefing of the United Nations Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances (UNWGIED) in June, as a part of the working group's final day of a four-day visit to Bangladesh.

The July assurance may be a reaction, appropriate by all means, to a very direct comment of the vice-chairperson of the UNWGIED, made at the June briefing, that if perpetrators remain in positions of authority, there can be no victim-centred prosecution. A related comment that also merits mention was made by a military rep in that briefing to the effect that the army was not involved in enforced disappearances—only a handful of individuals on deputation to the DGFI and Rab were to blame.

The issue of enforced and involuntary disappearances (EID) strikes a very painful

chord among all but the most cold hearted among us. There are two in the cabinet of the present administration who have personally suffered the consequences of enforced disappearances. Reportedly, a total of 629 persons were victims of enforced disappearance from 2007 to 2023. Since then, the bodies of 78 were recovered and 59 persons were released after abduction. And 73 were later shown to be arrested. The rest remains untraced.

What merits mention too is that a senior BNP leader has been a victim of EID. He disappeared from Dhaka and was found one fine morning in March 2015, loitering aimlessly in the vicinity of a police station in Shillong, in the Indian state of Assam. His case is shrouded in mystery.

It also merits repeating that EID tops the list of the worst forms of human rights violations alongside extrajudicial killings—something that the Hasina regime developed a penchant for. This issue has been highlighted regularly in reports emanating from various national and international rights bodies. Yet, more than hundreds have been victims of EID during the Awami League regime—consequence of acts perpetrated by government agencies.

Why the issue must be investigated thoroughly also is because of the likely

involvement of forces outside of Bangladesh in the disappearances of Bangladeshis who suddenly materialised across the border in 2012, like one Sukhoranjan Bali. In fact, the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearance publicly announced that the Indian authority's involvement in Bangladesh's system of enforced disappearances is a matter of public record, as reported by this daily.

issue. How can one expect proper justice if the perpetrators continue to remain in positions of authority?

And this is the core issue that the interim government has not been able to address fully yet. I believe there are other elements that are standing in the way of the interim government's efforts to "sanitise" the administration and cleanse it of the Awami League ghost.

inhuman system as the "Aynagar" and enforced disappearances, which became a norm of the Hasina regime to deal with the dissenters and recalcitrants. Also, how did the leadership allow a serving officer to remain "disappeared" in violation of the relevant military acts and prevalent laws of the land? While one accepts that there might be grounds for military officers to be turned over to the law, justice demands that they be given the chance to defend themselves.

I believe that loyalty demanded of the superior officers up and down the line to call out for those who reposed their trust and faith in them. It is surprising that some of those directly responsible for EID and running Aynagar are absconding, and no valid reason has come forth from the relevant authorities. In holding those responsible for EID, I believe that everyone up the chain of command should be asked to account for their action related to the disappearance of serving officers.

What one must also address is the need to redefine the tasks of the forces intelligence, a matter I have flagged several times, particularly in my article in *The Daily Star* on February 9, 2012, titled "DGFI's Lakshman Rekha." Making political use of the DGFI started very soon after the liberation. That practice has continued ever since, and it has now been accused of acts that compare with the acts of SAVAK, Cheka or the NKVD (secret police or intelligence agencies of a former Iranian regime and Soviet Russian, respectively).

One of the urgent tasks of the interim government is to identify the alleged culprits and the enablers of EIDs and "Aynagar," dismantle their network, and ultimately bring them to justice. Until that is done, all talks about justice will turn out to be exactly that—all talks.



FILE ILLUSTRATION: BIPOB CHAKROBORTY

Thus, in the process of holding to account the main *dramatis personae* of this horrendous act, one of the points that should be considered with due diligence is the one that has been articulated by the UNWGIED vice-chairperson, which is the nub of the

But a far more sensitive yet important issue that should occupy our mind is the responsibility, culpability, and complicity of the top brasses of the civil and defence institutions in the operation and perpetuation of a despicable and

## When cinema reflects a nation's unsettled soul

Irfan Chowdhury  
is a public sector policy analyst and adviser.

## IRFAN CHOWDHURY

The birth of a nation, particularly one forged in the crucible of war, often necessitates a foundational narrative—a simplified, heroic account that binds a disparate populace. For Bangladesh, that narrative is inextricably linked to its bloody liberation from Pakistan in 1971. Yet, as the decades have passed, the once unquestionable contours of this origin story have softened, blurred and, at times, been fiercely contested.

Perhaps like other war histories, our tumultuously toxic debate over our own past, including its many revisions, has been recounted in numerous books and literary works, particularly in Bangla. A range of authors, including those who fought in the Liberation War, contributed to it. In fact, this arduous, maybe even unresolvable, and certainly unfinished debate over our political history has shaped the nation's pernicious political journey in many ways. It reached another crimson crescendo merely 12 months ago.

But this piece is not about those debates. Rather, it reflects on a rare lens through which to view our war history: cinema, more specifically, through an essay by film-maker and researcher Naeem Mohaiemen. In a recent long form essay for the academic journal *BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies*, titled "A Looking Glass War: Bangladesh's Pendulum-swing Liberation War Cinema," Mohaiemen examines two films on the Liberation War, created 40 years apart. The essay highlights our societal understanding, shifting evaluations, and public responses.

Why does this matter, especially as a new generation of political leaders and power brokers prepare to assert their own versions of history? George Orwell's timeless warning from 1949 still resonates, "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past."

For my generation, growing up during the 1980s under the Ershad regime, local cinema largely failed to appeal to the urban middle class, who turned to Bollywood instead. Bangladeshi films primarily catered to rural and labouring audiences, offering a brief respite from daily hardship. Yet, Mohaiemen's

essay reveals that our cinema has served as far more than mere entertainment. It has been a remarkably sensitive barometer of the nation's shifting self-perception, charting what he calls a "pendulum swing" in national identity that oscillates between secular, linguistic aspirations and a complex, resurgent religious piety.

Mohaiemen's astute reflections on Bangladeshi war films offer a compelling lens through which to examine this deep, often painful, negotiation of history, memory, and the very soul of a people. It is no surprise

but can now discover.

**Naeem Mohaiemen's cinematic pendulum**  
In the immediate aftermath of independence, the newly sovereign Bangladeshi state embarked on a state-sponsored cultural endeavour, crucial for consolidating national identity, and found a powerful ally in cinema. Films from this era, such as Chashi Nazrul Islam's remarkably swift 1972 release *Ora Egaro Jon* (They Are Eleven), served as artistic tools of ideological reinforcement.

The narrative was clear: the Pakistani

nationalism as the bedrock of Bangladeshi identity. The events leading to the 1947 Partition, when Bangalee Muslims had championed a separate homeland based on shared faith, were quietly erased or sidelined.

The two decades of East Pakistan's existence, in which Bangalee Muslims struggled for recognition within a broader "Pakistani" framework, were omitted from these simplified cinematic retellings. Instead, the Bangla language emerged as the singular authentic marker of national belonging. Political actors of the time might argue that such simplification was necessary for a fledgling nation attempting to define itself in opposition to a traumatic past. But this narrative inevitably papered over deeper and more complex social undercurrents.

Women's portrayals in these early war films conformed to rigid, problematic templates. The Biranganas, brave women who endured sexual violence during the war, were valorised in state rhetoric, yet cinematically reduced to two archetypes: the endangered victim or the tragic martyr. In *Ora Egaro Jon*, scenes of sexual assault, while intended to shock, occasionally edged towards a voyeuristic gaze, reducing these women to their suffering.

The cinema, in such instances, reflected a society's discomfort with the moral injuries inflicted upon women to fully integrate their experiences into a triumphant national narrative without imposing a patriarchal resolution. While the war may have liberated the nation, its women were often left doubly shackled—first by violence, then by stigma.

**A new millennium, a shifting lens**  
As Bangladesh entered the 21st century, a discernible shift occurred. The once-inviolable secular narrative began to fray—challenged by a global Islamist resurgence, waves of conservative rule at home, and an increasingly complex internal debate about national character. These ideological shifts inevitably found expression on screen.

In 2011, Rubaiyat Hossain's *Meherjaan* became a cinematic lightning rod, sparking fierce public debate and leading to its rapid removal from big screens. Its central premise, a consensual romance between a Bangalee woman and a Pakistani soldier, was an unthinkable betrayal of the national narrative, at least for many. Yet, as Mohaiemen compellingly argues, this controversial storyline was also a vehicle for a deeper re-evaluation of women's honour and agency in

the aftermath of wartime violence.

Neela, one of *Meherjaan*'s protagonists and a rape survivor, stands in sharp contrast to her cinematic forebears. She does not succumb to suicide or silence. Instead, she refuses shame and actively seeks retribution, even joining female guerrillas. This shift was not spontaneous artistic invention but the product of decades of tireless feminist organising in Bangladesh—a slow but persistent dismantling of the patriarchal assumptions that long shaped how women's trauma was narrated.

The film captured a growing societal maturity, a readiness to see women not just as victims but as agents of resistance, with their own voices and choices. It signalled a society inching towards a more honest reckoning with the psychological and social aftermath of war, moving beyond binary portrayals of victimhood and valour.

**Unresolved contradictions**  
The cinematic pendulum is not purely artistic, it reflects broader political and economic shifts. While early war films were often state-funded and ideologically guided, later productions like *Meherjaan* came from more independent, sometimes internationally oriented, creative spaces. Yet, even with increased public and private support for war films in recent decades, core contradictions remain unresolved: the role of religion in public life, the complexities of female experience in conflict, and the limits of acceptable narrative.

Bangladesh's progress since its birth, especially economically, is impressive. Yet, its path has also been marked by persistent debates over its foundational principles. As Mohaiemen's essay shows, the cinematic lens offers a uniquely intimate view into this ongoing struggle. It reveals a country that, while fiercely proud of its liberation, is still grappling with the full spectrum of its identity, shifting from simplified heroes and villains towards a more complex—at times uncomfortable—reckoning with the diverse forces that shaped its past and continue to define its present.

As the nation continues to evolve, so too will its cinema. It will remain a contradictory and contested "looking glass," reflecting the evolving contours of a nation still finding its true self, perpetually caught in the oscillation between memory, identity, and the relentless march of the contemporary.



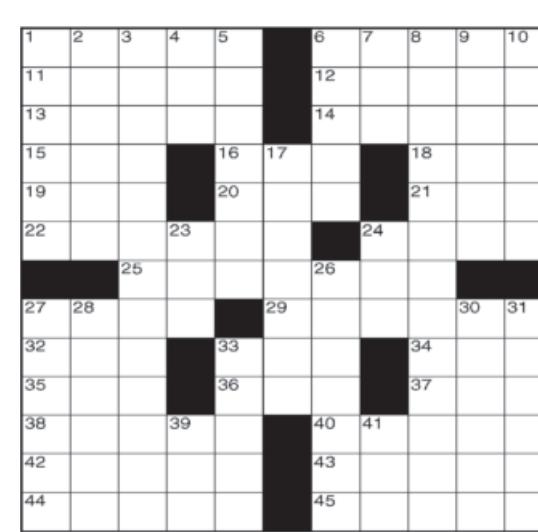
FILE VISUAL: SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON

that Mohaiemen, who explored the idea of "correct history" in a 2014 book and through numerous essays over the years, would return once again to re-examine the past, this time through the lens of our Liberation War films, comparing them with post-1947 cinematic treatments in India and Pakistan.

In his characteristic diligence and style, Mohaiemen delves deeply into a subject that may have been explored before, including by other South Asian scholars, but rarely through our own big screens. He references films and artworks that many ordinary people, myself included, may not have seen

military and their local collaborators, the rajakars, were unequivocally evil. Their depravity was often underscored by a caricatured depiction of piety. Characters adorned with prayer caps and pious exclamations became visual shorthand for treachery, their faith inextricably linked to forces seen as "primitive, anti-modern, annihilating, and anti-nationalist."

This cinematic framing served an explicit political purpose. By associating religious conservatism with the enemy, the post-war state sought to cement secular, linguistic



## BLACK SABBATH'S final concert film to hit screens in 2026

A film capturing the star-studded concert that Ozzy Osbourne and Black Sabbath declared as their final performance is set for release early next year.



The farewell show took place on July 5 at Birmingham's Villa Park, where they performed before 40,000 fans, joined by iconic rock acts such as Metallica, Guns N' Roses, and Slayer, along with special appearances by Ronnie Wood, Steven Tyler, and Jack Black.

Titled *Back To The Beginning: Ozzy's Final Bow*, the film will present a condensed version of the day-long event, featuring exclusive behind-the-scenes footage and interviews, according to a post on Osbourne's X account.

The concert film will honor the 76-year-old rocker and Black Sabbath's legacy, capturing "the raw power and emotional weight of Ozzy's final bow in his hometown."

## NEWS

### The sculptor

FROM PAGE 12  
after Asr prayers at the Dhaka University Central Mosque.

Born on March 16, 1946, in Sahashram village of Kishoreganj, Hamiduzzaman graduated in 1967 from the then Bangladesh College of Arts and Crafts, now the Faculty of Fine Arts. He joined the institution as a teacher in 1970, nurturing generations of artists while developing a vast body of work across sculpture, watercolour, oil, acrylic, and ink.

Notably, it is his monumental public sculptures that immortalised him.

Deeply influenced by the 1971 war, Hamiduzzaman's works stand across the country as testaments to courage, resistance, and remembrance.

Among them, "Jagrotobangla" at the Fertiliser Factory in Ashuganj, "Sangaptak" at Jahangirnagar University, and "Bijoy Keton" at Dhaka Cantonment are among his most iconic. His other notable pieces include "Unity" at Bangladesh Bank in Motijheel, "Freedom" at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh, "Swadhinata Chironton" at Bangladesh Open University, "Mrityunjayee" at the Public Service Commission, and "Ebarer Sangram Mukti Sangram" in Madaripur.

Each of these works carries the weight of history—rendering sacrifice, defiance, and national spirit in steel, bronze, and stone. Hamiduzzaman held 47 solo exhibitions throughout his prolific career and earned some of the country's highest recognitions. In 2006, he was awarded the Ekushey Padak for his contributions to the arts. In 2022, he was elected a Fellow of the Bangla Academy.

Beyond formal accolades, his legacy lies in shaping how a nation sees itself.

### ICT overrules prosecutor

FROM PAGE 12

Inu stood up in the dock and claimed that in June, officials from the Detective Branch of Police entered Kashimpur Central Jail, to conduct a "voice examination" on him without any court order or his lawyer present.

"They acted with an ulterior motive. This was part of a conspiracy against me," said Inu, president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) of the Awami League-led 14-party alliance.

The tribunal asked him to sit and advised that any such concerns be submitted through a written application via his lawyer.

Tajul responded that investigators had collected the voice samples legally, saying, "Forensic examination required voice samples, and they have the legal authority to collect them from any person at any place as part of the investigation."

Inu, dressed in white panjabi and trousers, stood up again, insisting that no court permission was shown and no lawyer was present at the time.

Tajul objected once again, accusing Inu of delivering a political speech. "Today's hearing is for a prosecution plea to extend time to complete investigation of the case. He is trying to waste the court's time and disrupt proceedings."

Visibly displeased, Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder said, "We will decide what is necessary. If required, we will hear from the accused, their lawyers, even their family members for the sake of a fair trial. We have no problem hearing them."

Several elderly accused, including AL leaders Amir

His comment prompted several accused in the dock to shout "Right! Right!" in agreement.

Tajul then said, "We have nothing further to say if the tribunal allows it," and returned to his seat.

Later in the proceedings, the court noted that an earlier order had been passed allowing the voice examinations. Inu is among 45 individuals accused of crimes against humanity during the July uprising. The prosecution told the tribunal that 17 of the accused have so far been arrested, with 16 produced before the court.

Former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, who is also accused, was not produced. The prosecution told the court that charges had already been framed against him in a similar case alongside co-accused former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan.

Speaking to reporters after the hearing, prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim said they had verbally sought a court order to discharge former IGP Mamun from this case. The tribunal chair responded that a written application would be required.

Earlier in the morning, high-profile accused -- including former ministers, state ministers, and senior Awami League and 14-party alliance leaders -- were brought to the court premises in prison vans.

Several elderly accused, including AL leaders Amir

Hossain Amu, Faruk Khan, Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury and Kamal Ahmed Majumder, needed support from policemen as they walked to the courtroom. Faruk also required a crutch.

Qamrul Islam, Dipu Moni, Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, and Kamal Ahmed Majumder were not seen in cuffs or helmets but the rest were.

The tribunal set October 15 for submission of the probe report in the case.

It also set September 23 for submitting investigation reports on crimes against humanity in Dhaka's Uttara and Sylhet during the uprising, and October 5 for reports in similar cases in Dhaka's Mohakhali and Narsingdi.

Also yesterday, the ICT sent former AL lawmaker Abdur Rahman Bodi to jail after showing him arrested in the case over the killing of Teknaf municipality councillor Ekramul Haque.

Previously arrested in another case, Bodi was produced before the tribunal yesterday in connection with Ekram's murder.

Earlier, Ekram's family filed a complaint with the chief prosecutor's office, implicating several individuals, including Bodи.

Ekramul, a three-time councillor and former president of Teknaf Jubo League, was killed allegedly in an extrajudicial encounter with members of the Rapid Action Battalion at Noakhalipara on Cox's Bazar's Teknaf Marine Drive Road on the night of May 26, 2018.



## Korean Embassy and IUB host K-Pop World Festival contest in Dhaka

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea, in partnership with Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), hosted the 2025 K-Pop World Festival's contest in Dhaka last Saturday.

This year's competition received 105 performance video submissions, from which 15 groups were selected to perform live at IUB's auditorium. The performers included Rudhin, HHISBD, Hridita Maitra, A-Maze, OMADA, and others.

Five standout teams were awarded for their exceptional stage performances. The winners will be recommended to the organisers of the 2025 K-Pop World Festival in Changwon, South Korea. If selected, they will compete in the grand event in October.

Notably, this event is part of the Korean Embassy's active role in fostering Korea-Bangladesh relations through cultural initiatives.

## Billie Eilish teases upcoming 3D project with James Cameron

Billie Eilish has teased an upcoming 3D collaboration with legendary filmmaker James Cameron.

During the first night of her sold-out concert in Manchester on Saturday, Eilish addressed the crowd, noting the unusually high number of cameras and hinting at a special project in the works.

"I can't say much, but I'm working on something very, very special with somebody named James Cameron, and it's going to be in 3D," she said. "These four shows here in Manchester—you and I are part of a thing I'm making with him."

Eilish's previous film ventures include

the 2021 documentary *The World's a Little Blurry* and the concert film *Happier Than Ever: A Love Letter to Los Angeles*. She's currently on tour promoting her third album, *Hit Me Hard and Soft*.



'It was unfair to him': Gunn opens up about letting Cavill go

*Superman* director James Gunn recently spoke about the difficult conversation he had with Henry Cavill regarding the actor's exit from the role of Superman in his reimagined DC Universe.

When he appeared on Josh Horowitz's *Happy Sad Confused* podcast, Gunn revisited the events that led to Cavill announcing his return as Superman, only for plans to change weeks later.

Gunn admitted the



situation was unfair to Cavill, calling it "a huge letdown." He explained that external pressures were pushing alternative visions at DC, but those ideas were never officially part of the studio's direction.

Gunn and DC co-head Peter Safran felt it was important to speak to Cavill directly. "He was an absolute gentleman," Gunn said, adding that Cavill's only request was to announce his dismissal himself.

Gunn also addressed whether casting Cavill in another DC role would confuse fans, adding, "I'd love to find a role for Henry in our DC."

## DIFF calls for screenplay submissions for 2026

The 24th Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF) is all set to return from January 10 to 18, 2026.

A key highlight of the upcoming edition by Rainbow Film Society is the opening of submissions for the fourth "West Meets East Screenplay Lab".

Asian filmmakers can apply to the lab, where 10 selected finalists will receive guidance on their screenplays from global industry professionals. The top three scripts will also receive development funding.

The 2026 edition of DIFF will include the annual "Women in Cinema" conference, along with screenings, discussions, and cultural programmes.



### WHAT'S THE HAPS?

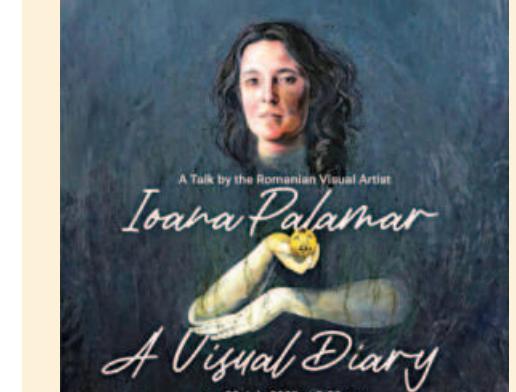
#### 'A Visual Diary'

Romanian visual artist Ioana Palamar, currently in residency with Uronto Artist Community, presents *A Visual Diary*. In this 40-minute talk, she will explore the evolution of her creative process, from early paintings to recent works, highlighting the concepts and techniques that define her artistic journey.

Date: Tuesday | July 22

Time: 5:30pm onwards

Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dhanmondi



## We bid farewell to a giant of art and an even greater human being...



Professor Hamiduzzaman Khan  
Sculptor (1946-2025), standing in front of 'Srom o Sristi'- the longest mural in Bangladesh.

Professor Hamiduzzaman Khan, a sculptor whose hands shaped not only steel, bronze and stone but also generations of minds and hearts. A teacher who led with gentleness, generosity, and unshakeable integrity. A humanitarian who gave more than he took. A patriot, who carried Bangladesh in his soul and gifted her monuments of memory and identity such as the "Hamiduzzaman Sculptor Park" located at Summit Gazipur Power Plant, Kodda.

Ekushey Padak laureate, global artist, mentor, and dear friend - Hamiduzzaman Bhai's passing leaves a silence that no sculpture can fill. But his legacy stands tall, in public squares and private lives alike.

May his soul rest in peace in Sha Allah in Jannatul Ferdous and may his art continue to whisper his wisdom of hard work and soft mind to the world. We will miss you deeply, dear friend.



www.summitpowerinternational.com

f summitpowerintl

X summitpowerintl

in Summit Power International



www.hamiduzzamansculpturepark.com

YouTube Summit Power International

## Two more buses

FROM PAGE 3

Additionally, a human-haulier was set on fire in Chattogram's New Market area in the evening.

The government, in May, banned all political activities of the AL and its associated and affiliated organisations over allegations of killings, genocide, crimes against humanity, and other grave offences during the July uprising. The BCL was also banned under the same allegations.

Yesterday, some group of people also brought out flash processions in parts of the country, chanting slogans in favour of the Awami League.

In Shariatpur, a group of people set fire to trees and other flammable materials on a road in the Noshason Majhirhat area on Saturday night.

The incident occurred around 11:45pm. They shouted slogans in favour of the AL, said police, quoting locals and witnesses.

Police went to the spot and cleared the highway. No one was arrested, said OC Aslam Uddin Mollah of Naria Police Station.

In Narayanganj, some people brought out two flash processions in the Bhuijhar and Kashipur areas early yesterday and chanted slogans in support of the banned AL, according to police and locals.

In a separate incident, police arrested two individuals early yesterday in the Masdair area of Narayanganj city for allegedly planning acts of sabotage, said OC Shariful Islam of Fatullah Model Police Station.

**ARSON IN DHAKA**

Meanwhile, in Dhaka's Baridhara, a college bus was set on fire around 1:15am. A fire engine

rushed to the spot and doused the blaze, said OC Hiron Mia of Fire Service Control Room.

In Keraniganj, a bus of Taranga Paribahan was torched by unknown persons around 3:40am.

Both buses were parked, no casualties were reported, the fire official said.

Earlier on Saturday night, two buses were set on fire on Ceramic Road in Dhaka's Mirpur 12 area and Faridpur Sadar upazila.

In Shyampur, police detained a 22-year-old BCL activist, Siam Sarker, from Khondokar Road area near Dhaka Mawa highway, said a press release of DMP media wing. A case was filed with Shyampur Police Station.

In Azimpur, police foiled an attempted arson attack on a VIP Paribahan bus after two youths on a motorcycle arrived and poured petrol on a seat, said Saifuzzaman, inspector (investigation) of Lalbagh Police Station.

Police are trying to identify and arrest the suspects, he said.

In Chattogram, a human-haulier was set on fire in the New Market area around 6:45pm, said Alamgir Hossain, deputy commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

He said police primarily suspect that a youth torched the vehicle by pouring petrol after the passengers had disembarked at the last stop.

The incident occurred while a rally of the National Citizen Party was underway at the port city's Biplob Udyan.

Police detained the vehicle's driver and helper for questioning, he added.

## Stop wholesale case

FROM PAGE 3

The group said the primary responsibility of the interim government is to restore normalcy in the area and warned that a prolonged abnormal situation in Gopalganj could negatively affect other parts of the country.

Even days after the incident, innocent people in Gopalganj have been living in fear of being arrested by government forces, which the UTN described as deeply concerning.

Referring to media reports, the statement said ordinary citizens were being harassed wholesale in the name of "arrest-trade" and "litigation-trade". So far, 277 people have been arrested in four cases filed over the incident, out of a total of 3,008 accused. Among those arrested are nine children under the age of 18, which, the UTN said, calls the rule of law into question.

The teachers' platform also criticised the failure of law enforcement agencies to prevent the violence, despite the government, as later admitted by the home adviser, having intelligence reports about possible unrest centring the NCP rally in Gopalganj, a known AL stronghold.

Despite the warnings, no effective preventive measures were taken by the law enforcement agencies or joint forces on the ground.

The UTN said the state had failed in its primary responsibility of protecting citizens' lives and called the Gopalganj incident a clear example of such failure.

"We are shocked by the horror of the events of that day and the human rights violations. We are concerned that such irresponsible behaviour by the government could jeopardise the future path of democracy," the statement read.

It said any investigation must examine whether

there had been excessive use of force by law enforcement agencies to suppress the violence. In addition to identifying those responsible for the attack, the government must ensure accountability for any negligence by the authorities responsible for security.

It also called upon political parties, including NCP and the AL, whose political activities have been banned recently, to behave responsibly instead of creating unnecessary tension. Besides, it called for providing all levels of administration and law enforcement agencies with training on human rights and democratic behaviour.

The UTN said those who killed civilians using deadly weapons must be identified and brought to justice. The government must also ensure the constitutional right to medical treatment for the injured, provide compensation for the families of the dead and injured, and guarantee legal support and access to justice.

It is necessary to ensure that no innocent people are subjected to harassment or violence in such violent situations in the future and that no new examples of human rights violations are created, it added.

### Teen discharged

FROM PAGE 4

Since completing the full investigation will take time, the report was submitted under Section 173(A) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

According to the case statement, a violent incident took place at Rayerbag in Jatrabari on July 19 last year where a police constable, Gias Uddin, was killed during a clash between police and demonstrators during the quota reform movement.

Asked whether the current law enforcement agencies can ensure a free and fair election, he responded confidently and said, "Why not? There's still time. Preparations are underway, training is ongoing, and we are equipping them to ensure a peaceful election."

**Hospitals to set up**

FROM PAGE 3

"So, we have given the fresh directives for efficient hospital management to treat the patients hospitalised with the diseases," he told The Daily Star.

#### DENGUE CASES

At least 17,218 dengue cases have been reported since January, and around 40 percent of them were recorded in the first 20 days of this month, according to DGHS data.

Around 40 percent of the total cases were reported in Barishal division, with Barguna emerging as a hotspot with 4,130 hospital admissions since January.

Out of the 62 deaths from dengue this year, 20 occurred in July.

The number of daily hospital admissions rose to 429 on July 20 from 124 on June 1. A total of 1,262 patients were receiving treatment at hospitals yesterday.

In this context, DGHS issued 16 directives to all government and private hospitals.

All hospitals must set up a flu/fever corner at their outpatient departments, reads the directive.

Confirmed dengue cases must be categorised into A, B, and C groups based on disease severity, and treatment must be provided according to the national guidelines, it said.

Government hospitals must ensure laboratory facilities for dengue testing along with an adequate stock of dengue diagnostic kits. Depending on disease severity, dengue patients should be admitted to hospital or referred to higher-level facilities as necessary.

Each hospital must have a trained and designated medical team for the treatment of dengue patients.

Hospitals must ensure the availability of necessary intravenous (IV) fluids for dengue treatment and, if needed, arrange procurement as per

## Only offenders

FROM PAGE 3

question after the meetings of the "Core Committee on Law and Order" and the "Special Law and Order Meeting on Dhaka and Its Adjacent Areas", held at the Secretariat.

Replying to another query that army was seen firing, the adviser said, "In certain situations, they had to respond accordingly. They [army] acted in line with the prevailing circumstances."

The adviser explained that the first meeting yesterday was the regular weekly coordination meeting where inter-ministerial cooperation is discussed to resolve minor but urgent issues.

The second meeting focused on law and order in Dhaka and involved DCs, Rab officials, and military personnel.

On the Gopalganj violence, he acknowledged the gravity of the situation but said political activities often come with such events.

"We've also faced similar incidents before. The important thing is whether actions are being taken afterward, and we are taking action," he said.

Responding to concerns about attacks during yesterday's hartal, Jahangir said, "Yes, two vehicles were set on fire. But compared to previous hartals, this time there has been a noticeable reduction in sabotage..."

Regarding the absence of a case over the Gopalganj deaths, he said, "A probe committee has been formed. The matter is under investigation. You have seen the situation; the actions taken are also visible."

Asked whether the current law enforcement agencies can ensure a free and fair election, he responded confidently and said, "Why not? There's still time. Preparations are underway, training is ongoing, and we are equipping them to ensure a peaceful election."



**Saidul, a vendor from Bogura, walks across Dhaka every day selling baskets and handicrafts made from palm fibre. Crafted by village artisans, these eco-friendly items are quite popular among city dwellers. The photo was taken near the Dhaka University campus yesterday.**

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

**রূপালী ব্যাংক সিএলসি**  
RUPALI BANK PLC  
উত্তর মেদের নিয়ন্ত্রণ

রেজিস্টার্ড অফিসিয়াল ইউনিস ট্রেড সেন্টার  
৫২-৫৩, দিল্লুশা বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা  
ঢাকা-১০০০

১০ম বিশেষ সাধারণ সভার বিজ্ঞপ্তি

তৎক্ষন্তর সাম্মানিত শেয়ারহোল্ডারগণকে জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, রূপালী ব্যাংক সিএলসি এর ১০ম বিশেষ সাধারণ সভা আগামী ২৭.০৮.২০২৫ বৃহদৰার, সকাল ১০.৩০ থার্কিয়া "Hybrid System" এ জৰুরী ব্যাংক সিএলসি মিলনায়তন (৪৪ তলা), রূপালী ভবন, ৩৪, দিল্লুশা বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। সভায় নির্মাণিত কাৰ্যালয়ৰ সম্পূর্ণ কৰা হবে।

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As dengue is a vector-borne disease, geo-location tracing is crucial. Therefore, the mobile number and full address of every dengue patient must be accurately recorded and preserved, the directives added.

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গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

প্রধান প্রকৌশলীর কাৰ্যালয়

ৰাষ্ট্ৰ প্ৰকৌশল অধিদলৰ (এইচইডি)

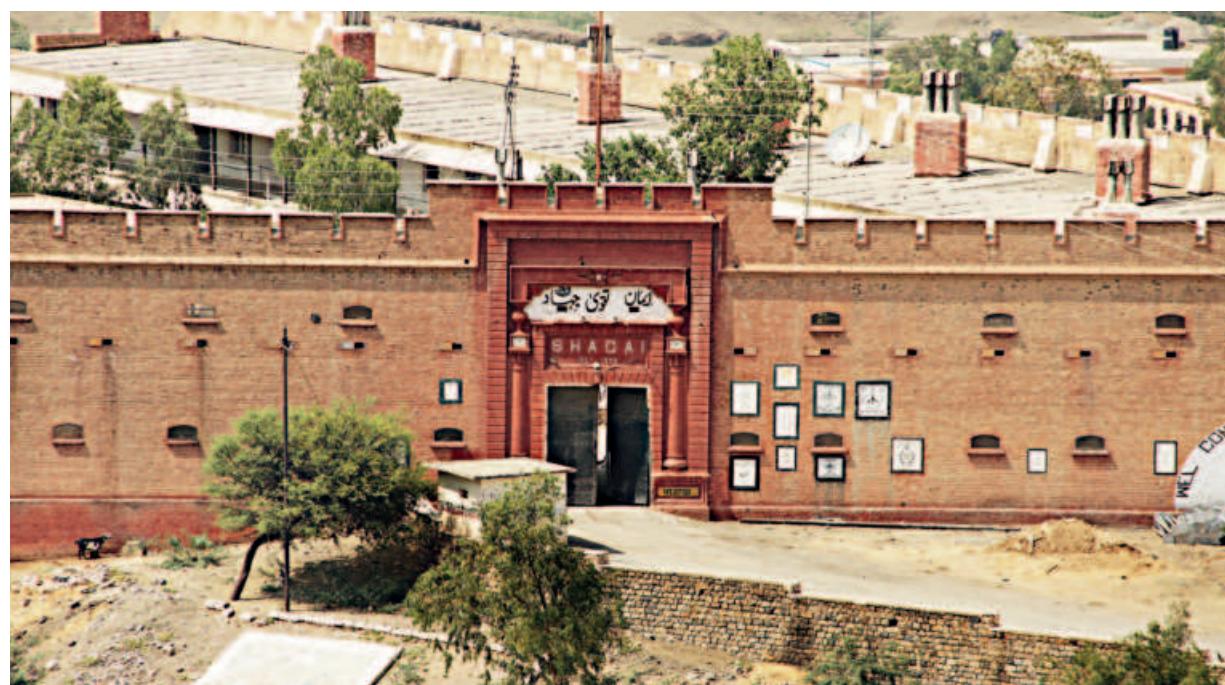
ৰাষ্ট্ৰ পৰিবাৰ কল্যাণ মন্ত্ৰণালয়

১০৫-১০৬, মতিলিল বাঁ/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০

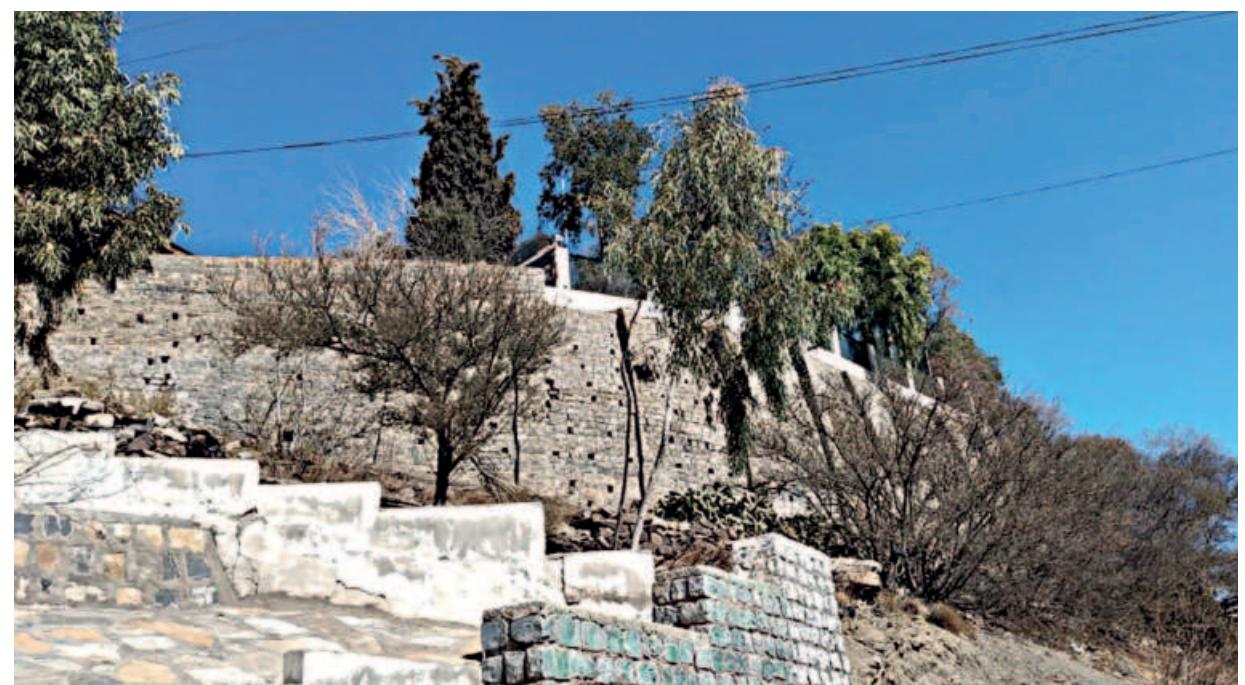
নথি নং- ৪৫.০২.০০০০.০০১.১৪.০২.২৫-১৪২২  
তাৰিখঃ ২০/০৭/২০২৫ শ্ৰিঃ

এইচইডি'র ঠিকাদাৰ তালিকাভুক্তি নথায়ন বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১। স্বাস্থ পৰিবাৰে নথায়ন কৰিবলৈ সময়ীয় মুল্লিখি চিকিৎসা প্ৰতিবেদন কৰা যাচ্ছে।  
২। দৰগত সিউলো কৰে নথায়ন কৰা যাবে।  
৩। প্ৰতিবেদন কৰা যাবে।  
৪। স্বাস্থ পৰিবাৰে নথায়ন কৰা যাবে।  
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৯। স্বাস্থ পৰিবাৰে নথায়ন কৰা যাবে।  
১০। স্বাস্থ পৰিবাৰে নথায়ন কৰা যাবে।  
১১। স্বাস্থ পৰিবাৰে নথায়ন কৰা যাবে।  
১২। স্বাস্থ পৰিবাৰে নথায়ন কৰা যাবে।  
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১৫। স্বাস্থ পৰিবাৰে নথায়ন কৰা যাবে।  
১৬। স্বাস্থ পৰিবাৰে নথায়ন কৰা যাবে।  
১৭। স্বাস্থ পৰিবাৰে নথায়ন কৰা যাবে।  
১৮। স্বাস্থ পৰিবাৰে নথায়ন কৰা যাবে।  
১৯। স্বাস্থ পৰিবা



Shagai Fort Camp



Sandeman Fort Camp

# THE CRIME OF BEING BENGALI

## The Untold Story of Bengali Internment in Pakistan

**Their crime? Being Bengali in a state that had disavowed their existence. An estimated 81,000 Bengalis were detained. These were soldiers held—not as combatants, but as hostages. They were civil servants, army officers, and government employees stationed in West Pakistan, part of the same state machinery they had earnestly served. Their lives were used as a grotesque currency in trilateral negotiations between Islamabad, New Delhi, and the nascent government in Dhaka.**

ILYAS CHATTHA

In the immediate aftermath of the Bangladesh Liberation War, as world attention fixated on the harrowing human toll of conflict and the fate of 93,000 Pakistani POWs in Indian custody, a darker, largely buried chapter was quietly unfolding in Pakistan. Thousands of Bengalis—military officers, civil servants, and civilians—were interned in Pakistan. Once loyal to the Pakistani state, these men and their families were recast overnight as *ghaddar* (traitors) and interned in about fifty camps across the country, pawns in a political standoff between Islamabad, Dhaka, and New Delhi, flung into a bureaucratic abyss of internment, and erosion.

Their crime? Being Bengali in a state that had disavowed their existence. An estimated 81,000 Bengalis were detained. These were soldiers held—not as combatants, but as hostages. They were civil servants, army officers, and government employees stationed in West Pakistan, part of the same state machinery they had earnestly served. Their lives were used as a grotesque currency in trilateral negotiations between Islamabad, New Delhi, and the nascent government in Dhaka.

Passports were seized, bank accounts frozen, and people rounded up and transported to remote internment camps. Held in makeshift prisons—ranging from British colonial forts to abandoned schools and military barracks—these Bengali internees were subjected to harsh and often inhumane conditions. By early 1973, more than fifty camps had been established, some of which were termed 'collection camp', 'transit camp', 'general repatriation centre', 'married camp' or 'bachelor camp', and some of which were transitory in nature.

### Shagai Fort: A Forgotten Hellhole of Internment

Nestled near the Afghan border, Shagai Fort—once a British outpost guarding the Khyber Pass—became one of Pakistan's most notorious internment sites following the 1971 war. From 1971 to 1973, thousands of Bengali detainees were confined here under horrific conditions that many described as 'subhuman'. Twenty men crammed into a single room. No beds, no sanitation, no medical care. Disease swept through the overcrowded facility, with outbreaks of influenza, fever, and chickenpox taking a deadly toll. 'They were living in subhuman conditions', recalled one



A newspaper advertisement depicting a Bengali child pleading with President Bhutto to free his father, who was interned in one of Pakistan's 'concentration camps'.

BBC New Delhi aired interviews of some escapees from Shagai Fort: 'They were held there for almost a year and were not allowed to go out or to have visitors. They were denied all basic facilities necessary even for criminals lodged in jails.'

But not all were so lucky. Many who attempted escape were caught and subjected to solitary confinement, with some driven to mental breakdowns. As escapes increased, 'local armed tribal militia' were deployed to guard the fort, with the authority to 'shoot anyone trying to escape. They did shoot one officer when he jumped outside from the rooftop'. Despite the hardships they faced, the internees demonstrated remarkable resilience through various means—drawing strength from religious observance, participating in sports and cultural activities.

Today, the grim legacy of Shagai Fort remains largely unacknowledged—a silent witness to the suffering of those forgotten by both history and politics.

### Sandeman Fort: Where Captivity Meant Dehumanisation

Located about 280 miles northeast of the city of Quetta, Fort Sandeman in Baluchistan, once a colonial outpost, became one of the largest internment sites for Bengalis detained in Pakistan after the 1971 war. At its peak, the camp held nearly 10,000 people—including soldiers, doctors, engineers, and their families. The conditions were grim. In cramped 20-by-20-foot barracks, entire families were forced to live behind makeshift partitions made from torn sarees and blankets. A dismal sight reminiscent of a refugee camp, one Bengali officer wrote in a letter smuggled out of the facility in April 1972.

Class and rank shaped daily life behind the barbed wire. Officers and their families received better medical care, while enlisted soldiers—referred to as 'other ranks'—suffered from a lack of even basic medicines. The fort was divided into five segregated 'wings' based on rank, family status, and arbitrary moral judgments. Some rules bordered on the absurd. Adult men without family accompaniment—whether bachelors or married soldiers—were prohibited from living near their loved ones. Colonel Chowdhury's young son, placed in a 'bachelor wing', was forbidden even to speak with his mother. The restrictions, internees argued, were less about discipline and more about humiliation.

Escape attempts were rare but serious. Those caught were subjected to harsh punishment. 'Deaths were few', a survivor recalled, 'but every escape attempt caused widespread panic'. Despite the hardships, the

traitorous, carrying a Pakistani 'mentality' incompatible with the spirit of Bangladesh's liberation. Yet, after Mujib's assassination in 1975, many repatriated officers found new footing under the regimes of Generals Ziaur Rahman and H.M. Ershad. Tabarak Hussain, for instance, unexpectedly rose to become Bangladesh's Foreign Secretary from 1975 to 1978. Certainly, the internment in Pakistan had provided a framework for a community of servicing classes to establish bureaucratic links and kinship ties. The post-internment experience too belongs to the 'hidden history(s)' of 1971, obfuscated by reductive nationalist histories and one-dimensional war memoirs and sacrifices.

Still, the political, psychological and social scars of internment remained. Many repatriates avoided discussing their pasts, fearful of surveillance or political reprisals. Some went as far as to erase traces of their captivity from personal histories. For their children, growing up with a 'repatriated father' often meant enduring whispers, doubts, and an inherited stigma. Their stories remain largely absent from official accounts and popular narratives of 1971. These men and women are not celebrated in nationalist histories. They occupy what Haitian historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot famously called 'silences within silences'—those stories deemed too inconvenient for national myths.

Half a century has passed since Bangladesh's birth, but the moral reckoning for what happened to these people is far from complete. Will their suffering ever be formally acknowledged? Will they ever discover the sites of power where internment methods were designed to justify their encampment? Will reparations or apologies be offered? Will their children learn that their parents were not cowards, but casualties of diplomacy and betrayal? Lastly, will the story of their internment ever be common knowledge in Pakistan and Bangladesh?

Until these questions are answered, the internment of Bengalis will remain a moral wound—unhealed, unspoken, and unseen by those who choose not to look.

**Dr. Ilyas Chattha** is a Fellow at Oxford University and Professor of History at LUMS. He is the author of *Citizens to Traitors: Bengali Internment in Pakistan, 1971–1974* (Cambridge, 2025).



Bengalis being repatriated to Bangladesh.

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in Dhaka, Pakistan used them as leverage to negotiate the return of its soldiers from Indian captivity. This was also tied to precluding the POWs from being tried for war crimes and to recognising Bangladesh as a sovereign state. What followed was not merely state retribution, but the calculated dehumanisation of a people rendered stateless and expendable.

### Citizens Turned Traitors

Denationalized, depersoned, and dispossessed, these individuals were transformed from citizens into an internal other through the labelling of *ghaddar*, whose bodies had to be marked out both legally and socially as that of a traitor, after which they could be interned without any consequences. Their incarceration was not an aberration but in fact a deliberate state strategy: a moral betrayal disguised as political pragmatism.

Just days after the war ended, a petition by Punjabi bureaucrats demanded the expulsion and incarceration of Bengalis in West Pakistan. The state acted swiftly.

escaped Bengali soldier. 'There were no latrines, no medical aid—and for months, no beds'.

The fort, originally designed to house a much smaller contingent, quickly became overwhelmed as more detainees arrived. Despite attempts to expand the infrastructure, it remained drastically insufficient for the swelling numbers. A report by the International Committee of the Red Cross confirmed the dire situation: 'the diet was inadequate, medical facilities were non-existent, and hygiene conditions were appalling'.

These conditions inevitably led to several desperate attempts to escape from the camp and reach the neighbouring Afghan borderland, with few successes. The daring escape by five Bengali officers—Captain Nazimuddin, Lieutenant Mohammed Ali, Lieutenant Syed Ali Mahmood, Flying Officer Rafiqul Haq, and Cadet Mohiuddin Khondkar—briefly thrust the camp into the spotlight. They fled on foot across treacherous terrain toward the Afghan border.

internees made efforts to preserve some sense of normalcy—especially for their children. Over 100 children were housed in the camp, and internees formed a school. Women took up teaching roles, showcasing resilience in the face of uncertainty and confinement.

A diplomatic breakthrough came in late August 1973 when India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh signed a tripartite agreement. Under its terms, Pakistan consented to repatriate all interned Bengalis—including those in prisons and psychiatric institutions—in exchange for the release of its POWs held in Indian custody. By mid-1974, nearly 120,000 were returned to Bangladesh. But the ordeal didn't end there.

### 'bastard repatriate(s)': Stigma After Return

When the detained Bengalis in Pakistan were finally repatriated to Bangladesh in 1974, their return was met not with relief or celebration, but with suspicion, scorn, and silence. Branded as collaborators

# Star SPORT

DHAKA MONDAY JULY 21, 2025, SRABAN 6, 1432 BS

## Pitch debate brews as Mustafizur shines

SPORTS REPORTER

Mustafizur Rahman came up with his most economical spell ever in T20Is on his return to the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur, setting the stage for a seven-wicket win for Bangladesh over Pakistan in the first of three T20Is. However, after the game, varying opinions on the pitch grabbed more attention.

Mustafizur gave away just six runs for two wickets, outdoing his previous most economical spell of 3-7 against Nepal in the 2024 ICC T20 World Cup, as Bangladesh bundled out Pakistan for 110 in 19.3 overs.

Pakistan definitely had a hand in their own demise with poor and hurried shot selection on a pitch that demanded more caution.

When Mustafizur came into the attack in the last Powerplay over, Pakistan were 40 for 3. He soon made it 41-4 by getting Hasan Nawaz caught at third man.

Mustafizur conceded just two in the 12th over before returning to the attack for the 17th and 18th, where he gave away just three runs in 12 balls and claimed the wicket of Khushdil Shah, getting him caught at mid-off for a 23-ball 17, ensuring the visitors did not get the acceleration they desperately needed.

Before the series, Bangladesh skipper Litton Das had expressed concerns over the wickets in Mirpur during the July with rain around and after the match, Pakistan coach Mike Hesson lamented that the pitch was "not up to international standards".

But in reality, the pitch was not one of those low and slow quagmires that Mirpur produces every now and then as there was some bounce on offer which Mustafizur used to his advantage, using angles and cutters very effectively along with length deliveries that hurried batters.

The pressure Mustafizur put on the batters

helped the other bowlers, especially Taskin Ahmed, the most successful bowler with three wickets, who struck twice in the final over after Mustafizur had given away only a single in the penultimate one.

Pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib also had a very good day, barring his fourth over which went for 14, finishing with 1-20.

The pace trio left an effect on a pitch where variations mattered and Mustafizur's spells handed Bangladesh the edge.

**We scored 110 runs in 16 overs, and had we played 20 overs, we could have scored 160. Maybe they could not adjust, but that's what we tried to do.**

Bangladesh's Parvez Hossain Emon debates Pakistan coach Mike Hesson's criticism about Mirpur pitch

"We all know how Mustafizur can execute in Mirpur. He was a threat to the batsmen. Sakib bowled really well in the middle. Taskin also bowled really well in the death overs," skipper Litton said after the match.

Bangladesh's chase had an early hiccup, losing two wickets for just seven, before Parvez Hossain Emon and Tawhid Hridoy's 73 run stand off 61 balls dispelled the jitters.

Hridoy departed for a 37-ball 36 but Emon stayed unbeaten on 56 off 39 as the Tigers chased down the target in 16.3 overs to take a 1-0 lead.

Emon, who was adjudged player-of-the-match, credited Mustafizur and Co for their efforts, saying, "Mustafizur bhai bowled really well. Obviously other bowlers also did well which is why we could keep them to a low score."



## What to WATCH

**SPORTS**  
SAFF U20 Women's C'ship  
Bhutan vs Sri Lanka  
Live from 3:00 pm  
Bangladesh vs Nepal

Live from 7:00 pm  
Australia vs West Indies  
1st T20I  
Live from 6:00 am

## Nasima adopts Urmi's mantra to dethrone her

ANISUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh's top two female shuttlers -- Urmi Akhter and Nasima Khatun -- have long been teammates, representing the Bangladesh Army. Both learned the sport in Pabna, yet over the years, a quiet rivalry has developed between them, especially in the finals of national and summer badminton championships.

Until recently, Urmi had dominated this rivalry, winning three consecutive finals -- the National Badminton Championships in 2022 and 2023, and the Summer Ranking Championship in 2024. But this time in the 39th National Badminton Championship, it was Nasima who came out on top, ending Urmi's streak and claiming her maiden women's singles title.

Interestingly, Nasima adopted the very strategy Urmi had successfully used against her in the past three finals. The shift in approach proved decisive.

"I suffered defeats to Urmi in three straight finals, but this time I was confident and well-prepared to dethrone her," Nasima told The Daily Star yesterday. "I'm really happy that all my hard work finally paid off."

"Previously, I lost because of wrong decisions and losing my temper, unlike Urmi, who always stayed calm and composed. This time, even after losing the first game, I kept my cool, and I think that was the key to my victory," said the 19-year-old shuttler. She also credited her improved fitness and a focused training regimen under senior teammate Tanvir Morsalin for the turnaround.

Although Urmi hails from Khulna and Nasima from Pabna, both were groomed in Pabna during their early years. Interestingly, they never faced each other in local competitions during their youth but are now showcasing their talent on the

### SCORES IN BRIEF

#### PAKISTAN

110 all out in 19.3 overs (Fakhar 44, Afridi 22; Mahedi 1-37, Taskin 3-22, Sakib 1-20, Mustafizur 2-6)

#### BANGLADESH

112-3 in 15.3 overs (Emon 56 not out, Hridoy 36, Jaker 15 not out; Salman 2-23, Afridi 1-16)

#### RESULT

Bangladesh won by seven wickets

#### PLAYER-OF-THE-MATCH

Parvez Hossain Emon



England to host next three WTC finals

STAR SPORTS DESK

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has named England as hosts for the ICC World Test Championship final for the next three editions after its annual conference in Singapore held on Sunday.

The ICC has awarded the 2027, 2029, and 2031 WTC finals to England, citing their successful hosting of recent finals.

England have hosted the finals for the first three cycles of the Test Championship. The final of the inaugural edition was held at The Rose Bowl in Southampton in 2021, where New Zealand beat India.

The final of the second cycle took place at the Oval in London in 2023, with India once again ending up on the losing side and Australia emerging as champions.

The finale of the third cycle took place at the Lord's in last June, with South Africa beating Australia. In the conference, the ICC also received an update on progress relating to the support for displaced women cricketers of Afghan descent.

Nasima began playing badminton in 2018, when she was in Grade 7. Her physical education teacher, Rashida Parvin, introduced her to a talent hunt programme run by the National Sports Council. Selected for a one-month training camp, she went on to participate in her first youth championship in 2019.

"I was always involved in sports at the school level, and my love for it led me to attend the badminton trial," said Nasima, who is now a 12th grade student at the Open University in Bogura. "There was no restriction from my family, although my mother was sometimes against it. But my expatriate father supported me a lot and provided the expensive gear I needed."

Since 2019, Nasima has represented Bangladesh at both junior and senior international levels. However, she has never had the opportunity to train under a foreign coach -- something she believes is holding back her development.

"Players abroad train year-round under foreign coaches. We don't have that kind of long-term training here," she said. "I haven't worked with a foreign coach since I started competing internationally. If we want to perform better on the global stage, we must have access to such training."

Nasima hopes that the newly formed badminton committee will take steps to address these issues by appointing foreign coaches and organising more domestic competitions to enhance players' exposure and experience.

## Experiment over, Butler ready for title fight

SPORTS REPORTER

Having experimented quite a bit with his playing XI throughout the campaign, Bangladesh coach Peter Butler is expected to field a strong starting XI against Nepal in the title-deciding last match of the SAFF U20 Women's Championship, scheduled to kick off at 7:00pm today at the Bashundhara Kings Arena.

Butler has said time and again that results in this tournament mattered little to him as he wanted to give exposure to his players for bigger platforms. Speaking after the win against Sri Lanka in their penultimate fixture on Saturday, Butler said: "The title means nothing to me. I'm just here to develop players. If the title means something to certain people's egos, etc, that's fine. But I'm here to develop players and build a team for AFC (U-20 Asian Cup Qualifiers in August) and onwards and upwards for the future."

Butler has given all 23 of his players some game time during the first five matches of this four-team competition, all of which his charges have won.

However, it was the first match against Nepal which gave the Englishman plenty of food for thought as Bangladesh eked out a hard-fought 3-2 win, thanks to a stoppage-time goal from Trishna Rani Sarkar.

In fact, it was the only match of the



competition that Butler had fielded a first-choice starting XI, allowing the team to take a 2-0 lead in the first half. He took off some of his key players after the break and the mountaineers made a match out of it.

That victory has put the hosts in an advantageous position as Butler's charges will need only a draw to retain the title, coming hot on the heels of a historic Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers campaign. Nepal, on the other hand, have been the most prolific side in the tournament so far, enjoying a positive goal difference of 30 compared to Bangladesh's 24. This statistic means Nepal will win the title if they can beat Bangladesh by any margin as the overall points of the two sides will become equal on 15 and both sides will have one win each against the other.

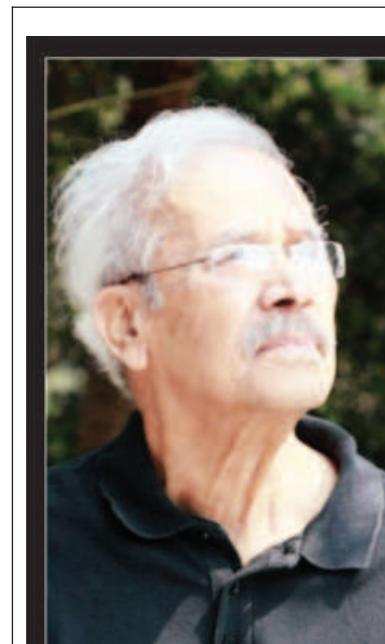
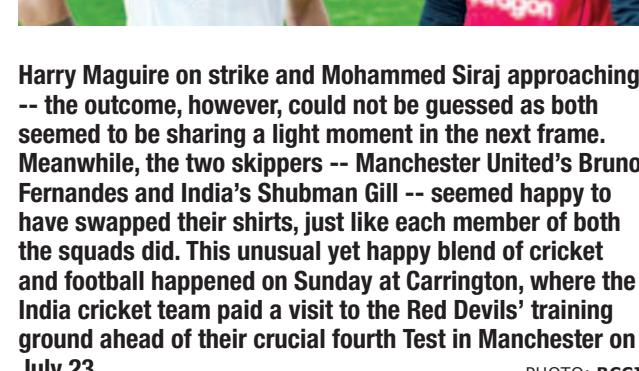
The Bangladesh coach is wary of the threat from this high-scoring Nepal side ahead of the title-decider. "Nepal are a good side. They're higher ranked than us in the women's rankings... They've got good players. They've shown they can score goals. I've got the utmost respects for them," Butler said after the Sri Lanka win.

"If some of those girls in that dressing room of mine think they're in for an easy ride, they're in for the shock of their lives," warned the 58-year-old coach, who would be relieved to have Mosammat Sagarika, his first-choice striker, back in the side following a three-match suspension.



Harry Maguire on strike and Mohammed Siraj approaching -- the outcome, however, could not be guessed as both seemed to be sharing a light moment in the next frame. Meanwhile, the two skippers -- Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes and India's Shubman Gill -- seemed happy to have swapped their shirts, just like each member of both the squads did. This unusual yet happy blend of cricket and football happened on Sunday at Carrington, where the India cricket team paid a visit to the Red Devils' training ground ahead of their crucial fourth Test in Manchester on July 23.

PHOTO: BCCI



Brigadier General (Retd)  
Quazi Muhammad Shahjahan Hafiz  
1928 - 2025

## In Loving Memory

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of our dear Grand Father Brig Gen (Retd) Quazi Muhammad Shahjahan Hafiz, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather, who left this world peacefully on July 20, 2025. He has left behind his loving family, who will forever cherish his wisdom, kindness, and unconditional support for those he loved. Shahjahan Hafiz lived a life full of love and joy. He was a man of great integrity, known for his generosity, humor, and unwavering love for Rabindra Sangeet. Whether through his career in the military, his devotion to family, he touched countless lives with his warmth and wisdom.

He has left behind three children, Bakhtiar Hafiz, Rudaba Akhter and Ihtesham Bin Shahjahan, seven grandchildren and three great granddaughters, who will carry forward his values, his gentleness, and the songs he left in our hearts. His stories will continue to live on in our voices, and his music will echo in our memories.

We will miss him deeply; his voice, his presence, his melodies. But we thank Allah for the gift of his long, meaningful life.

His Doa Mehfil will be held on July 21, 2025 at Gulshan Society Masjid, Baad Asr. May Allah grant him Jannatul Ferdous.

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## ICT overrules prosecutor, lets Inu speak Bodi shown arrested in Ekramul murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The chairman of the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday expressed dismay when Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam objected to former minister Hasanul Haq Inu speaking in court despite the tribunal chair granting him permission.

Inu was produced before the court with 15 other high-profile accused in a case filed over crimes against humanity during the July 2024 uprising.

Initially, Inu's counsel had sought permission from the two-member tribunal, saying his client wished to make a statement. Chief Prosecutor Tajul objected immediately, saying that at this stage of the proceedings, an accused person should not be allowed to speak.

However, tribunal chair Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder overruled the objection, saying, "Let's hear him."

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**Hamiduzzaman Khan  
(1946-2025)**

## The sculptor who etched the nation's spirit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Renowned sculptor and painter Hamiduzzaman Khan, whose work etched the spirit of Bangladesh's Liberation War into the nation's public memory, is no more. He was 79.

The legendary personality passed away at 10:07am today while receiving treatment at Dhaka's United Hospital, his wife, painter Ivy Zaman, confirmed.

Hamiduzzaman had been admitted on July 15 and remained in intensive care for three days, battling a severe case of dengue and pneumonia. A medical board was overseeing his treatment, and doctors had initially been hopeful.

But despite medical efforts, he could not be saved.

His body was kept in front of the Fine Arts Faculty of Dhaka University at 2:30 pm to allow people to pay their last respects. Later, a namaz-e-janaza was held

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## Astronomers detect massive black hole collision

CNN ONLINE

A collision observed between two black holes, each more massive than a hundred suns, is the largest merger of its kind ever recorded, according to new research.

A team of astronomers discovered the event, dubbed GW231123, when the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) — a pair of identical instruments located in Livingston, Louisiana, and Hanford, Washington — detected faint ripples in space-time produced by two black holes slamming into each other. Physicists call such ripples gravitational waves.

Gravitational waves were predicted by Albert Einstein in 1915 as part of his theory of relativity, but he thought they were too weak to ever be discovered by human technology. In 2016, however, LIGO detected them for the very first time when black holes collided, proving Einstein right (once again). The following year, three scientists received awards for their key contributions to the development of what has been colloquially called a "black hole telescope."



Pedestrian movement is severely hindered as hawkers occupy the entrances to the footbridge and pavements in the capital's busy Farmgate area. Many are forced to walk on the street amid fast-moving traffic. The photo was taken yesterday.

## Hasina can never be forgiven Says Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Stating that Sheikh Hasina can never be forgiven for the killings and brutalities during the July mass uprising, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said his party's first priority would be to bring her and her associates back to face trial.

He hopes that the interim government will hold the election by mid-February next year as per its earlier commitment.

The BNP leader said that his party wants to build a "rainbow state" taking everybody on board.

"We believe there will be differences of opinion. Some will believe in democracy, some in socialism, and others in a welfare state. Bringing all these together, we want to build a "rainbow state" — just like a rainbow rises with many colours. Our leader Begum Khaleda Zia dreamt of such a state long ago," Fakhrul told a tree plantation event, organised by Krishib Dal and Amra BNP Paribar, in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar yesterday.

He said, "Through the election, we will be able to form a people's government — one that will honour our martyrs,

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

## From a broken past to a bright future

How 8 girls of ActionAid's Happy Home found strength in SSC success

TANGILA TASnim

Imagine a room full of eight teenage girls huddled around a computer, hands trembling, hearts racing — all waiting for their SSC results.

In Happy Home, a shelter for homeless girls in Mohammadpur run by ActionAid Bangladesh, this scene played out just a week ago when this year's results were published. With a 16-year low in overall results, their fear was real.

But then: 4.93. 4.79. 4.57...

Tears poured, smiles followed, and rare kind of pride filled the air.

These are not your average SSC examinees. They are survivors — of abandonment, abuse, and poverty. And each of them carries a dream stitched into her story.

Biti, 16, scored GPA 4.79. She came to Happy Home at age three, after her mother left her drug-addicted, abusive father. "If I hadn't come here, I'd probably be married by now," she said. "I didn't even get regular meals before. Here, I have books. I can dream."

Her father was often in jail and her mother constantly had to borrow money to bail him out. "I was raised without any affection. Even my aunt and grandmother would beat me."



**"This isn't a job for me; it's a moral duty. When I place a pen in a girl's hand, I'm helping her fight for a future where she won't have to beg, bow down, or break."**

**Hasina Parven,**  
education in-charge  
at Happy Home

Now, Biti speaks of sewing and dancing with quiet passion. "The life that could have been — it frightens me. I got a second chance."

Shikha, 17, who scored 4.57, was brought in by her uncle at age five after surviving sexual abuse by her stepfather. "When my mother remarried, she didn't want me around. She'd tell people I was her niece."

After getting her results, Shikha called her mother. "She never picked up. I asked someone else to let her know."

Still, she beams. "I cried and danced at the same time when I saw my results!"

She dreams of owning a business, but fears linger. "I don't know who will support me after this. That keeps me up at night."

Every girl at Happy Home has similar story to share.

Also 17, Rozy scored 4.50 despite battling health issues, including an abdominal cyst, during the exams. "My stepfather and brother-in-law used to sexually harass me. No one believed me when I told them. Then, my aunt brought me here in 2016."

Now she wants to be a fashion designer. "And I want to help girls like me."

Mitu, 16, came to the shelter from

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

## NCP facing heat after lifting lid in Cox's Bazar Says Nahid; SAD, Juboshakti clash after NCP rally in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CTG

National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam said their party leader Nasiruddin Patwary revealed the truth in Cox's Bazar, which led to attacks on the party in various places.

"In Banskhali, one of our organisers was attacked, and our banners were set on fire. If they try to silence us, we will resist and we must win this struggle," he told a rally in the Chattogram city's Biplob Udayan last night.

"Chattogram is the lifeline of Bangladesh's economy, yet conspiracies are being hatched against it. Evil forces are eyeing this city. If there's any plot against Chattogram, the entire country will rise up in resistance."

Speaking at the rally, held as part of the party's ongoing "July March to Build the Nation", NCP Member Secretary Akhtar Hossain said people were divided in Bangladesh in the past. But there can be no more division between Bangalees and non-Bangalees, Sunnis, and non-Sunnis.

Hasnat Abdullah, chief organiser (south) of NCP, said, "Together, we were successful in ousting autocracy. But we failed to build the state properly. Now, we must focus on nation-building."

Among other party leaders, Chief Organiser (north) Sarjis Alam and Senior Joint Member Secretary Tasnim Jara were present there.

Meanwhile, a scuffle broke out between the activists of Students Against Discrimination (SAD) and Jatiya Juboshakti, NCP's youth wing, following the party's rally around 9:00pm.



## MARITIME SECURITY US helping Bangladesh develop UAS

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US is working with Bangladesh's army and navy to develop an Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) capability for Bangladesh, said the US Embassy in Dhaka in a statement yesterday.

"A Bangladesh regiment comprised of army and navy personnel will operate the new RQ-21 Blackjack system. This joint effort will enable Bangladesh to monitor its maritime domain, secure its borders, and conduct peacekeeping missions," it said.

The statement added that the US and Bangladesh will be conducting three joint military exercises this summer to continue their longstanding partnership and the delivery of a new capability that will reinforce common security interests.

The efforts by the Armed Forces of Bangladesh and

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