



"There are no fundamental conflicts of interest or geopolitical contradictions between China and the EU."

Chinese President Xi Jinping tells EU officials

YOUR RIGHT
TO KNOW

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'Shoot directly': Hasina's order and deadly aftermath

Star findings indicate state forces increased deployment of lethal weapons after the ousted PM authorised their use

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL and MARTIN SWAPAN PANDEY

On the morning of July 27, 2024, Sheikh Hasina stood silently at the podium at the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedic Rehabilitation (NITOR), also known as Pongu hospital, in Dhaka.

For nearly 14 seconds of the eight-minute emotional speech, the deposed prime minister said nothing. Bitter pain etched onto her face, as if weighed down by the enormity of the bloodshed since July 16, the day police killed Abu Sayed in Rangpur using lethal weapons. Five more lives were lost that day in violence in Dhaka and Chattogram.

By the time Hasina

"I don't want any mothers to lose their children like this. I've lost my parents, I know the pain.... So many lives have been lost, so many families have been destroyed. Who is responsible for all this?.... I just watch all this and..."

Sheikh Hasina
July 27, 2024. NITOR, Dhaka.

stood at the NITOR podium, at least 162 people had been killed over the last two weeks, many of them gunned down with military-grade lethal weapons by state forces, according to The Daily

Star's findings.

"I seek justice from my fellow citizens. What crimes have I committed to deserve this?" Hasina, 77, said, after visiting some injured victims at the hospital.

"I don't want any mothers to lose their children like this. I've lost

my parents, I know the pain.... So many lives have been lost, so many families have been destroyed. Who is responsible for all this?.... I just watch all this and..." she said, and left the stage in tears without completing the sentence.

This moving public speech stands in stark contrast to what was unfolding behind the scenes. An investigation by The Daily Star now indicates that a state-sponsored massacre machine had already been set in motion.

Just nine days earlier, on the late evening of July 18, 2024, a phone rings inside the ousted prime minister's residence, Gonobhaban, and Sheikh Hasina answers. On the other end was Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, the then Dhaka South City mayor. What followed was a revelation of a deadly plan.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

ADVISORY COUNCIL DECISIONS

New pay panel formed for govt staff

Family must be notified within 12hrs of arrest; no party symbols in local polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government yesterday formed a new pay commission for public officials and employees under the National Pay Scale, marking a key move towards adjusting salaries in line with inflation.

At a meeting chaired by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at his Tejgaon office, the council of advisers also gave in principle approval to a set of significant legal and electoral reforms, including an amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and changes to local government election laws.

The "Code of Criminal Procedure (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 2025" makes it mandatory for law enforcers to notify an arrested individual's family, lawyer, or close associates within 12 hours of arrest.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



List killings by the AL, its affiliates, state forces: Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has asked the relevant authorities to prepare a list of victims killed in attacks by Awami League and its affiliated groups and state forces acting on the then government orders in the 15 years leading up to the July 24 mass uprising.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

MILESTONE TRAGEDY
5 bodies identified thru DNA testing
Says CID; 2 slain teachers to get state honour

Former chief justice Khairul arrested, sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent former chief justice ABM Khairul Haque to jail in connection with a case filed over the killing of Jubo Dal activist Abdul Kaiyum Ahad in the capital's Jatrabari area on July 18 last year.

Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Sanaullah passed the order after police produced him before the court, asking he be sent to jail, said a sub-inspector working at the court.

Amid tight security, 81-year-old Justice Khairul was taken to a packed courtroom at 8:15pm. One minute later,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five bodies that were charred beyond recognition in the BAF fighter jet crash at Milestone School and College have been identified through DNA testing, the Criminal Investigation Department said yesterday.

The victims were identified as Okia Ferdous Nidhi, Lamia Akter Sonia, Afsana Akter Priya, Raisa Moni, and Mariam Umme Afia.

Nidhi, Raisa, and Mariam were third-grade students, while Lamia and Priya were guardians, the school's head teacher Khadija Azhar told The Daily Star.

Raisa Moni, who suffered 80 percent burns, was initially identified by her father at Combined Military Hospital (CMH) a day after the incident. The DNA tests yesterday confirmed her identity.

Raisa's family was able to complete formalities and bury her after her body was handed over around 11:00pm yesterday. She was taken back to her ancestral home in Bajra village in Faridpur's Alfordanga upazila.

She is to be laid to rest at the family graveyard this morning after a Namaz-e-Janaza at the Shamsul Ulum Mosque and Madrasa ground.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Tamima Umme, held by her brother, waited in front of Milestone School and College to find her daughter Mariam Umme Afia even yesterday -- three days since a fighter jet crashed into the school. She cried, "Give me anything -- her body part, bits of her skin, her belongings, just give me any thing that belonged to my daughter." They left the area with nothing but Afia's schoolbag.

PHOTO: STAR

Thailand, Cambodia clash with jets, rockets, ground forces

At least 12 killed, 35 hurt

REUTERS, Phanom Dong Rak

Thailand and Cambodia fought their bloodiest military clashes in more than a decade yesterday, with at least 12 people killed as the two sides battled with tanks, artillery, and ground forces over a disputed border zone.

The fighting marks a dramatic escalation in a long-running spat between the two neighbours -- both popular destinations for millions of foreign tourists -- over an area known as the Emerald Triangle,



where the borders of both countries and Laos meet.

The decades-old squabble flared into bloody clashes more than 15

years ago and again in May, when a Cambodian soldier was killed in a firefight.

In yesterday's clashes, Cambodia fired rockets and artillery shells into Thailand and the Thai military scrambled F-16 jets to carry out air strikes.

The Thai public health ministry said one soldier and at least 11 civilians were killed, most of them in a rocket strike near a petrol station in Sisaket province.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

WE MOURN
Mrs. Rakhi Das Gupta
(1949-2025)

We express our deepest compassion on the passing of Mrs. Rakhi Das Gupta, Director and Sponsor of Dhaka Bank PLC., on 24th July, 2025.

Mrs. Gupta was a highly respected member of the Bank's Board of Directors, first appointed in 1995 and again in 2009, before her most recent appointment in 2020. She also served as Chairman of Uniroyal Securities Limited, a brokerage house founded by her late husband Mr. Asoke Das Gupta.

Born into a distinguished Hindu family in Cumilla, Mrs. Gupta led a life devoted to education, enterprise, and social responsibility. With a distinguished 46-year career in teaching and 18 years of experience in the capital market, she leaves behind a legacy of wisdom, integrity, and service.

Dhaka Bank Family extends heartfelt condolences to her bereaved family and prays for strength, peace, and solace in this moment of profound loss.



DHAKABANK
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EXCELLENCE IN BANKING

A nation in grief and defiance

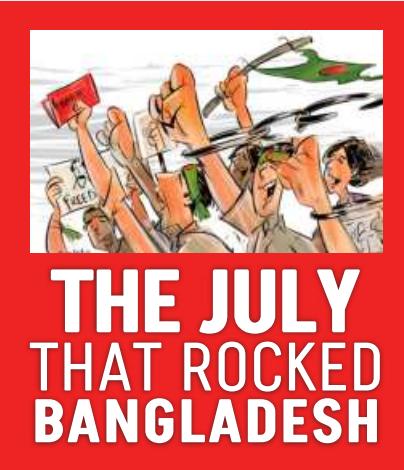
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

On July 25, 2024, two more individuals - Zaman Mia, 19, a garment worker from Narsingdi, and Zakir Hossain, 29, a tailor shop employee from Rayerbagh - succumbed to their bullet wounds at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, according to hospital sources and their families. Their deaths brought the official death toll since July 16 to at least 156, including three members of the police force. Thousands more had been injured in clashes that pitted protesters against state forces, often backed by ruling party activists.

Public hospitals struggled to cope with the flood of casualties. At the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (Nitor), the human cost of the violence was etched into every bed. Md Rifat, a 10th-grade student from Badda Alatunnessa Higher Secondary School, lay staring at the absence of his right leg. He was shot in Rampura on July 19 while drinking sherbet and watching events unfold. "I just wanted to see what was going on. I wasn't protesting," he said, choking back tears. After two surgeries, doctors were forced to amputate his leg from the knee. "I don't know whether I'll be able to go to school again," he whispered.

In the same ward, Imran Sarkar, a fourth-year philosophy student at Dhaka College, was trying to adjust to life without his left leg. He was shot in Rayerbazar on July 19 while returning home from Juma prayers. "All of a sudden, a bullet hit my left leg and I passed out," he recounted.

Amid this mounting human toll, the



THE JULY THAT ROCKED BANGLADESH

JULY 25, 2024



FILE PHOTO: PALASH KHAN
A man reaching out to speak to a detainee inside a prison van at the CMM court in Dhaka on July 25, 2024, amid mass arrests during the uprising.

state's crackdown intensified. Over the past six days, at least 4,784 people had been arrested across the country. The BNP claimed that its joint secretary general, Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anne, was picked up by the Detective Branch from Elephant Road around 4:30pm.

Meanwhile, digital silence prevailed. Social media platforms remained blocked, enforced by international internet gateway (IIG) operators on orders from the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission. Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp, TikTok, and others were inaccessible. The previous day, state minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak had accused companies like Facebook and YouTube of failing to comply with Bangladeshi laws, prompting the

government's clampdown on digital platforms.

The international community responded with growing concern. The United Nations and Amnesty International issued strong statements calling for an end to the violent repression of protesters and the restoration of communication channels. UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk demanded that the government disclose the names of those killed, injured, or detained, and offered UN support for investigating the alleged human rights violations.

Back home, then-prime minister Sheikh Hasina visited the vandalised Mirpur-10 metro rail station and urged citizens to hold the perpetrators accountable. "They [the people] have to try the culprits. I am seeking justice

from them," she said. Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader added that the prime minister would personally take responsibility for supporting the families of the deceased.

The government declared that the ongoing nationwide curfew would continue until further notice. Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir demanded an international investigation into the protest-related casualties, dismissing the government's proposed judicial inquiry as a cover-up. He also called for compensation for the families of all those killed, including police and Ansar members.

Transport disruptions persisted. Bangladesh Railway announced that all passenger and freight train services would remain suspended until the situation stabilised.

Despite these challenges, the protesters vowed to continue their movement. A statement issued by Abdul Hannan Masud, a protest coordinator, announced that prayer gatherings would be held in mosques and temples to mourn the dead. Emergency medical teams would also be formed to support the roughly 15,000 injured demonstrators nationwide.

As July 25 came to a close, Bangladesh stood at a painful crossroads. A movement born from frustration had now become a national reckoning. In the face of death, disability, repression, and silence, the call for justice remained unrelenting. The people were not only mourning the dead - they were refusing to forget them.

List killings by the AL, its affiliates, state forces: Yunus

FROM PAGE 1

PAY COMMISSION
Briefing reporters at the Foreign Service Academy, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said the new pay commission will be headed by Zakir Ahmed Khan, a former finance secretary and current chairman of the Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation.

The commission has been tasked with submitting its report within six months.

Shafiqul said the commission was formed in response to the sustained inflationary pressures since the last pay scale revision in 2015.

Under the Eighth National Pay Scale introduced that year, government salaries saw significant hikes. In the highest of 20 grades, the basic salary was raised by 95 percent to a fixed rate of Tk 78,000, while the lowest grade saw a 101 percent hike to Tk 8,250.

The scale also introduced annual increments and a festival bonus for Bangla New Year, though time scale and selection grade provisions were discontinued.

Currently, the government employs around 15 lakh officials and staff across the country.

NO ARBITRARY ARREST

Addressing the changes to the CrPC, Law Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul told reporters, "After arresting someone and taking them to the police station, their family must be informed. Under

no circumstances can it take more than 12 hours. If the arrested person feels unwell, arrangements for their treatment must be made."

The new provisions also require police officers to carry identity cards and display nameplates. If asked, they must reveal their identity during an arrest.

The amendment significantly alters section 54 of the CrPC, which governs arrests on suspicion. Now, an arresting officer must have witnessed the offence or have reasonable grounds to believe the person committed it. A written explanation detailing the reasons for arrest must be provided, applicable to both cognisable and non-cognisable offences.

Furthermore, the officer must be convinced the person may abscond if not arrested. Both these conditions must be fulfilled before an arrest under section 54 is deemed lawful.

The amendment also allows submission of bail bonds online and the issuance of digital summons.

"If properly implemented, this law will play a transformative role in preventing arbitrary arrests, denial of arrest, and enforced disappearances," said Asif Nazrul.

Both the constitution and the CrPC require any arrested individual to be presented before a magistrate within 24 hours. The High Court has also instructed that families be notified

immediately upon arrest.

LOCAL POLLS

In a major change to the local electoral landscape, the advisory council decided to remove political party symbols from elections to union parishads, municipalities, upazila parishads, and city corporations.

At the briefing, LGRD Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyian said the council approved, in principle, the following ordinances to implement this change: the Local Government (City Corporation) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025; Upazila Parishad (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025; Local Government (Municipality) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025; and Local Government (Union Parishad) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025.

Law Adviser Asif Nazrul noted that the provision for party-based local polls had been introduced by the previous government. "We are returning to the previous system (when local elections were held without party symbols)," he said.

LABOUR RIGHTS

The council also approved a proposal to ratify three International Labour Organization conventions: Convention 155 and Convention 187 on occupational safety and health, and Convention 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment in the workplace.

arrested

may be held under the caretaker government, then removing that portion from the long judgment constitutes judicial misconduct."

Justice Khairul, who served as the 19th chief justice from September 2010 to May 2011, delivered several high-profile judgments.

Allegations against the former chief justice extend beyond judicial conduct.

The Anti-Corruption Commission has launched an inquiry into the allegations that he received a plot from Rajdhani Unnayan Kartirpakkha (Rajuk) in breach of existing rules, with alleged assistance from government officials.

Justice Khairul also faced criticism for administering oaths to High Court judges in disputed circumstances, and for ordering the eviction of BNP chief Khaleda from her cantonment residence.

Justice Khairul, who was appointed Law Commission chairman in 2013 by the Awami League government, resigned from the commission on August 13 last year.

Justice Khairul upheld a lower court verdict that had sentenced 15 accused killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members.

An HC division bench led by him ruled that it was Bangabandhu who had at first declared the independence of the republic on March 26, 1971.

The bench of Justice Khairul delivered verdicts declaring the 5th amendment to the constitution illegal.

The fifth amendment had legitimised the takeover of state power by Khandker Mushtaque Ahmed, Abu Sadaq Mohammad Sayem, and Major General Ziaur Rahman from August 15, 1975, to April 9, 1979.

"If in the short order it was stated that the next two general elections

GOPALGANJ VIOLENCE

Govt forms 6-member probe body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday formed a six-member inquiry commission to investigate the violence centring the pre-scheduled rally of National Citizen Party in Gopalganj on July 16.

The commission would look into the deterioration of law and order, attacks on the district jail and other government establishments, disruption of public safety, and other related incidents, the Chief Adviser's Press Wing said in a statement.

The commission, headed by former justice Md Abu Tariq of the Supreme Court, has been asked to submit its report along with specific opinions and recommendations to the relevant ministry within three weeks.

Other members are Khandaker Md Mahabubur Rahman, additional secretary of Public Security Division; Md Saiful Islam, additional secretary (Senior District and Sessions Judge); Brig Gen Shahidur Rahman Osmani, commander of the 21st Infantry Brigade; Additional Inspector General of Police Sardar Nurul Amin, director, Central Police Hospital in Dhaka; and Sajjad Siddiqi, chairman of Department of Peace and Conflict Studies at Dhaka University.

The commission was constituted under section 3 of the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1956 with the aim of conducting a comprehensive investigation into the said incidents. It was formed following the recommendations of the investigation committee constituted after the incident.

The commission's mandate includes unearthing the underlying causes of the incident, identifying the individuals or organisations responsible for the attack on the NCP rally, recommending legal actions against those responsible, analysing the attacks on the district jail and other government establishments as well as the disruption of public safety during the incident, and providing recommendations on preventing such untoward incidents in the future.

The commission may, if necessary, include any appropriate person as a member.

New pay panel formed for govt staff

FROM PAGE 1

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5 bodies identified

FROM PAGE 1

The five had previously been listed as missing in a list published by Milestone authorities yesterday morning.

Four days after the crash, confusion persists over the death toll.

Around 9:00pm yesterday, the health ministry put the count at 31, including two more students who succumbed to their injuries at the burn institute yesterday.

Of the two, Mahtab Uddin Bhuiyan, 13, a seventh grader with 85 percent burns, died around 1:50pm, while eighth grader Mahin passed away with 50 percent burns around 4:30pm.

In a press release on Tuesday, the ISPR had said the fatalities stood at 31. Around 12:15am on Wednesday, another person undergoing treatment at the burn institute died, prompting media outlets to report the death toll as 32.

According to the health ministry, 51 people, mostly children, remain admitted at three hospitals in the capital.

Meanwhile, six victims are currently at the burn institute in critical condition and receiving specialised care. The cases of 13 others have been categorised as severe, while the rest are in stable condition as of yesterday.

Eight patients are now receiving treatment at the intensive care unit, Prof Nasir Uddin, director of the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery.

STATE HONOUR

The interim government has decided to confer state honours on two Milestone teachers who died after reportedly saving several students during the incident.

The decision was made at a regular meeting of the advisory council at the Chief Adviser's Office yesterday morning.

Details on the nature and timing of the honours will be announced soon, the council said.

Thailand, Cambodia clash

FROM PAGE 1

Footage from the scene showed smoke pouring from a convenience store attached to the petrol station. Provincial officials said most of the dead were students inside the shop when the attack happened.

"I heard a loud noise three or four times, and when I looked over, there was a gigantic cloud of smoke," Praphas Intaracheun, a 53-year-old gardener from Sisaket, told AFP.

He was refuelling at another petrol station around 300 metres (984 feet) from the one that was hit.

"I'm scared it might escalate during the night when you can't see anything. I don't even dare sleep," he said.

Thailand said 35 people have been wounded, and accused Cambodia of targeting civilian buildings.

A 30-bed hospital in the town of Phnom Dong Rak in Surin province, just 15 kilometres (nine miles) from the border, was hit by shells which shattered windows and collapsed part of a roof.

The facility, which was also struck in the last major clashes between the

two countries in 2011, was partially evacuated on Wednesday night as a precaution.

"We got a tip that there would be an attack from Cambodia," a soldier stationed at the entrance told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity for security reasons.

"There is no telling when it will be safe enough for patients to return."

'MY HOUSE WAS SHAKING'

Fighting was focused on six locations, the Thai army said, with ground troops and tanks battling Cambodian forces for control of territory.

Six Thai air force jets were deployed, hitting two "Cambodian military targets on the ground", according to Thai military deputy spokesperson Ritcha Suksuwanon.

Cambodia has not yet commented on casualties on its side. Defence ministry spokeswoman Maly Socheata refused to answer when asked about the issue at a news conference.

DHAKA

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

Invisible in data, ignored in policy

Speakers call for concrete action, inclusive data, and gender-focused disability policies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite women outnumbering men in Bangladesh according to the 2022 Population and Housing Census, their

Women with disabilities in Bangladesh face greater challenges in education. While 55 percent of men with disabilities are illiterate, the illiteracy rate among women with disabilities rises to 72 percent.

There is an urgent need for government and private institutions to guarantee opportunities and facilities for women with disabilities.

SARA HOSSAIN
Executive director of BLAST

Meaningful change at the state level requires following a specific protocol -- something no government has yet implemented in a holistic or strategic way.

FARIDA YESMIN
Executive director of DRRA

representation in disability-related data remains significantly lower than that of men.

This underrepresentation suggests that women with disabilities are not being adequately presented in official surveys and data collection, leading to serious underreporting of their true numbers.

The issue extends beyond statistics.

Participation in vocational training is alarmingly low, at just 0.13 percent, while labour force participation stands at a mere 1.04 percent. Among those employed, only 3.13 percent work in the formal sector, with the vast majority (96.87 percent) engaged in informal work.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Admission to colleges begins July 30

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Admissions for students who recently passed the SSC and equivalent examinations will begin on July 30 and continue until August 11, as per the admission policy for Class XI published yesterday.

Classes for the 11th grade are scheduled to begin on September 15, according to the notice signed by the senior secretary of the Secondary and Higher Education Division under the education ministry.

As per the policy, applications are to be submitted online which would be processed in three phases, based on the SSC results.

Students must pay an application fee of Tk 220 and can choose a minimum of five and a maximum of 10 colleges.

The first phase of the admissions are scheduled to take place from August 12 to 14, with results set to be published on August 20.

Two percent of seats would be reserved for children of officials working at the education ministry and its affiliated offices, provided that they meet the minimum qualifications.

In addition, five percent of seats will be reserved for children of freedom fighters. If no eligible candidates are found under this quota, the seats must be filled from the general merit list. These seats

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

BAHARAM KHAN

If investigations prove allegations such as disrupting government work or disobeying lawful orders from a superior authority, the government will have the power to impose strict punishments within 31 working days.

These punishments may include dismissal, compulsory retirement, salary reduction, or demotion, as outlined in the "Public Service (Second Amendment) Ordinance 2025," issued last Wednesday at midnight.

This ordinance follows a first amendment enacted

PUBLIC SERVICE ORDINANCE

- » Punishment to be imposed if allegations proven
- » A three-member inquiry committee to complete probe in 14 days
- » New law replaces "disobedience" with "lawful order" violation
- » No appeal against president's order; only review permitted
- » Protest by secretariat staff led to ordinance revision

on May 22, which permitted disciplinary actions, including dismissal, without investigation and on just eight days' notice. That earlier amendment sparked strong protests from government secretariat employees, prompting the government to revise the ordinance.

This marks the second amendment to the "Public Service Act 2018" within three months by the interim government. The amendments come in the wake of the July uprising and growing professional disputes among cadre officers, absenteeism, scuffles in secretariat offices, and incidents such as locking secretaries' rooms during protests.

Presidency univ in Kolkata hosts event honouring Abul Mansur Ahmad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Sociology at Presidency University in Kolkata is organising a special event today in memory of noted journalist, political thinker, and writer Abul Mansur Ahmad.



The event titled "Abul Mansur Ahmad's America: A Global Intellectual History of the Language Movement in East Pakistan/Bangladesh," will be held at the university's AK Basak Auditorium from 3:00pm to 5:00pm.

Prof. Rochona Majumdar of the University of Chicago will attend as the keynote speaker, according to a press statement.

In a letter, Presidency University Associate Prof. Upal Chakrabarti invited the writer's family to share personal memories.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Speakers at a seminar titled "Women with Disabilities: Rights and Inclusive Services", organised by Women with Disabilities Development Forum (WDDF) at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

DISRUPTING OFFICE WORK
Now govt can dismiss employees within 31 days

The new measures effectively reinstate the strict provisions of the repealed Government Servants (Special Provisions) Ordinance, 1979, albeit in a modified form.

Under the revised ordinance, any allegation against a government employee requires a show-cause notice within seven working days. If the employee's explanation is unsatisfactory or no response is received within the stipulated time, a three-member inquiry committee must be formed within three working days. The committee is required to complete its investigation and submit a report within 14 working days of receiving the order, though the investigation period can be extended by up to seven working days if necessary.

Failure to submit the report within the specified period may lead to the formation of a new committee, and misconduct proceedings may be initiated against committee members who delay without valid reason. Punishments from such proceedings will be recorded in the officers' Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs).

The initial amendment had included "disobedience" as a ground for disciplinary action, a provision widely criticised by public servants. The second amendment replaces this with "lawful order of the government". It also reduces the number of prescribed punishments from four to three: demotion to a lower post or salary grade, compulsory retirement, and dismissal from service.

The revised ordinance introduces a three-member inquiry committee, mandating at least one female member if the accused is a woman. Unlike the earlier version, the opportunity to appeal against a presidential order has been removed. Clause 37(K) (1) states no appeal can be filed against an order by the president, though review of any penalty order is allowed within 30 working days.

Following the first amendment, secretariat employees protested the law, labelling it a "black law".

A five-member committee of secretaries, led by the land secretary, held several meetings with employee representatives but failed to resolve the issue.

Subsequently, on June 4, a review committee under Law Adviser Asif Nazrul engaged with protesting employees' organisations to gather concerns and began amending the ordinance accordingly.

CLIMATE VICTIMS IN KOYRA

All affected, only 18% got support

Says OKUP study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 99 percent of households in coastal Koyra in Khulna have been affected by climate-related disasters in the past five years, yet only 18 percent have received any form of assistance, a study by Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP) has revealed.

The alarming gap in support underscores major shortcomings in Bangladesh's social protection mechanisms, particularly for disaster-prone communities.

OKUP Research Manager Umi Jahan Tanni and Researcher Sheikh Mohiuddin Shahrujaman jointly presented the findings yesterday at a dissemination event for the action research titled "Social Security Programmes in

Sustainable Adaptation to Climate Change in Coastal Regions of Bangladesh: Scopes, Challenges and Opportunities," held at a hotel in the capital.

The research was conducted under the CARe Project — Rights-Based Model for Creating Sustainable Adaptation and Resilience of Climate-Induced Migrants in Bangladesh.

It was carried out in Koyra upazila, a climate-vulnerable region of Khulna, engaging over 3,200 participants through household surveys, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and community profiling.

The study outlines a complex web of vulnerabilities. Around 79 percent of surveyed families live in kutcha houses, 70 percent use kutcha toilets, and 55 percent lack access to electricity.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



A man passes through a broken section of a road divider in the capital's New Market area to cross the street, with a rickshaw just behind him and vehicles approaching from the opposite direction. Such a risky move could easily lead to an accident. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Fakhrul calls for exemplary punishment of ex-CJ Khairul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir has demanded exemplary punishment for former Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque, holding him directly responsible for the gravest political and constitutional crises in Bangladesh's history.

Thanking the government for detaining him, even if belatedly, Fakhrul said Khairul caused great harm to the country by misusing his position.

"He should be given exemplary punishment so that no one can dare to harm the country being in such a position in the future," Fakhrul told reporters outside the BNP Chairperson's Gulshan office yesterday.

"He was in a position to determine the fate of Bangladesh, and from that position, former Chief Justice Khairul Haque cheated the people, he cheated the state," he added.

Fakhrul said his party hopes a proper investigation will be carried out on all matters and that Khairul Haque's trial will be conducted fairly. Detective Branch officials detained Khairul Haque from a house in Dhaka's Dhanmondi area



SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Presidency univ

FROM PAGE 3

Abul Mansur Ahmad's son journalist Mahfuz Anam will represent the family at the event.

Presidency University said the event will include in-depth discussions on the history of the Language Movement, its global impact, and the ideas of Abul Mansur Ahmad.

It aims to present his political, literary, and intellectual contributions in a new light, the statement reads.

The university also hopes the event will help re-evaluate both the global intellectual context surrounding the Language Movement and the deeper connection between Bengali nationalism and the intersection of literature and politics.

Abul Mansur Ahmad was a respected politician, lawyer, journalist, and writer.

As a literary figure, his satirical works, including Abul Mansur Ahmad's Rochna Somogro, Amar Dekha Rajnitir Ponchash Bochhor, and Bangladesher Culture, remain unique contributions to Bangla literature.

Histhoughts and political role in the Language Movement, democracy, and the preservation of Bengali cultural identity continue to hold relevance today, said the statement.

Over 500

FROM PAGE 5

Sajek after three separate landslides triggered by heavy rainfall blocked the Baghaichhari-Sajek road in Baghaichhari upazila, said Suvarno Dev Barman, president of the Sajek Resort and Cottage Owners' Association.

Atulal Chakma, chairman of Sajek Union Parishad, confirmed that landslides had struck in three locations along the road, halting traffic.

The UNO further said last night's heavy rainfall triggered the landslides. "Movement along the road was suspended. Local residents, the army, and fire service personnel worked together to remove the debris," she added.

Invisible in data, ignored in policy

FROM PAGE 3

These figures were presented at a seminar yesterday titled "Women with Disabilities: Rights and Inclusive Services", organised by Women with Disabilities Development Forum (WDDF) at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka.

Albert Mollah, executive director of Access Bangladesh Foundation, highlighted the severe invisibility of women with disabilities in the labour force. According to the 2021 National Survey on Persons with Disabilities, only 11.34 percent of these women participate in the workforce, with nearly 93 percent lacking any employment, compared to 59 percent of men with disabilities.

He said 37.09 percent are denied essential healthcare due to financial constraints, lack of family support, distant or inaccessible facilities, staff shortages, and privacy issues. Women with disabilities also face disproportionately high rates of mental, physical, and sexual abuse, especially those with intellectual and speech impairments, who are often abused by acquaintances.

A BRAC University study found that 74.3 percent experience mental abuse, 33.2 percent physical abuse, and 10.3 percent sexual violence, largely driven by their vulnerable social and economic status.

Salma Mahbub, founder and general secretary of the Bangladesh Society for The Change and Advocacy Nexus (B-SCAN), said women with disabilities are not truly recognised as women in society.

"A woman becomes a mother, carries a child, and faces reproductive health and WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) needs – yet these realities are absent from laws, policies, and services."

"Even women without disabilities often hesitate to use public toilets; the situation is far worse for women with disabilities. Hospitals also lack accessible toilets, resulting in severe neglect and inhumane conditions."

She said while the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) includes a small clause for women, its application has not been properly integrated with other laws in an intersectional manner. She highlighted that healthcare services addressing the specific needs

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CITY

Highway bends turn fatal in Amtali upazila

At least 12 killed, 500 hurt in last 6 months

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

At least 17 hazardous bends along a 37-kilometre stretch of the Patuakhali-Kuakata highway -- between Shakaria and Bandra in Barguna's Amtali upazila -- have become death traps for commuters, with dozens killed and hundreds injured in recent months.

From January to July 19 this year, at least 12 people were killed and nearly 500 others injured in road crashes at these spots. Over a hundred of the injured have been left with permanent disabilities, according to local sources and hospital records.

Data from the emergency department of Amtali Upazila Health Complex shows that more than 100 accidents occurred along these bends in the first half of 2025, killing at least 10 and injuring 450 others. In just the first 19 days of July, two more deaths and around 40 injuries were reported in 12 accidents.

Locals blame the recurring crashes



An open manhole without any protective barrier lies exposed in the middle of a busy road, posing a serious risk to approaching vehicles and pedestrians. The photo was taken in the Raisaheb Bazar area of Old Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Water crisis hampers jute harvest in Rangpur

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Thousands of farmers across the Rangpur region are unable to harvest their mature jute crops due to a severe water crisis, as a prolonged dry spell and scant rainfall have left local water bodies nearly dry.

With no water available for retting, fully grown jute plants are lying idle in the fields, raising serious concerns among growers and jeopardising the timely transplantation of aman paddy during the peak season.

Jute is one of the major crops in five districts of the region -- Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Rangpur, Gaibandha, and Nilphamari. Traditionally, by early July, rivers, canals, ponds, and other water bodies fill up, providing suitable conditions for retting. But this year's scenario is starkly different.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), jute has been cultivated on 48,457 hectares in the Rangpur region this year -- about 7,000 hectares less than last year. The production target is set at 1,09,000 tonnes of jute fibre.

Subal Chandra Roy, in-charge of the Rajarhat Agricultural Weather Observatory, said rainfall in June this year was only 354 millimetres, compared to 750 millimetres during the same month



last year. From July 1 to July 20, the recorded rainfall was just 65 millimetres -- a sharp drop from 825 millimetres during the same period last year.

"It costs around Tk 2,000 to Tk 2,500 to produce one maund of jute fibre. Any profit comes mainly from the jute sticks. Earlier, we used to ret jute in local ponds and ditches. But this year, there's no water anywhere, so I haven't even started cutting the jute," said Ranjit Chandra Das, 65, a farmer from Phulbari upazila of Kurigram.

Mansur Ali, 60, a farmer from Rajibpur upazila, cultivated jute on 12 bighas of land but has only been able to harvest from two bighas so far. "If I

can't ret the jute within this July, Aman transplantation will be significantly delayed, leading to huge losses," he said.

Agricultural officials say farmers are reluctant to adopt modern retting methods.

"Although the ribbon retting method can be used with less water, most farmers are not interested in it. They rely heavily on the traditional method. Due to insufficient rainfall, water bodies have not filled up this year, and that's why farmers are struggling to ret jute," said Abdullah Al Mamun, deputy director of DAE in Kurigram.

He said, "Because of changing climate and market instability, farmers are gradually losing interest in jute cultivation."

MADHABPUR IN HABIGANJ

Students struggle as school remains waterlogged

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

The echoes of children playing have long fallen silent at Suaboi Government Primary School in Madhabpur upazila of Habiganj, where stagnant water has gripped the premises for nearly six months.

Once a thriving institution that brought home divisional-level football glory, the school now stands marooned in murky water, with students struggling both physically and academically.

The persistent waterlogging has severely disrupted daily activities, including sports and regular movement within the compound. Access to washrooms has become difficult, and slippery conditions have led to several accidents,



this for many years. It feels like we are studying on an island."

"It has been a long time since we could play outside. We are facing many problems," said fourth-grader Somaiya Akther.

Despite its challenges, the school earned district-level honours by winning the Habiganj inter-primary school football championship in 2024 and later became runner-up at the Sylhet divisional level.

Mifta Mia, a guardian, said students and teachers have been facing immense hardship for the past six months due to the waterlogging in front of the school premises.

Locals alleged that Nazrul Mia, a resident of Suaboi village and son of Moider Ali, deliberately blocked the natural drainage system by dumping soil near the school.

Contacted, Madhabpur UNO Zahid Bin Kashem said necessary action will be taken following a proper investigation.

Headteacher Aktar Uddin said Suaboi Government Primary School, established in 1988, was once surrounded by open land with no nearby residential structures. Over time, people began filling in the area with soil to build homes, causing rainwater to accumulate on the school grounds.

"This has been a problem for the past four to five years. Even brief rain leads to flooding. A portion of government land on one side of the school has also been filled in by locals, blocking natural drainage. If that land is cleared and a proper drainage route is built, the problem can be solved," he said.

He said the matter has been formally reported to the UNO of Madhabpur.

Contacted, Madhabpur UNO Zahid Bin Kashem said necessary action will be taken following a proper investigation.

Dengue death toll reaches 70

UNB, Dhaka

One more death was reported from dengue in 24 hours till yesterday morning, raising the number of fatalities from the mosquito-borne disease in Bangladesh to 70 this year.

The death has been reported in the Chattogram division, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

During the period, 280 more patients were hospitalised with viral fever, raising the number of confirmed cases to 18,625 this year.

Besides, Barishal division alone reported 66 new cases, Chattogram division (outside city corporations) recorded 45 cases, Dhaka division (outside city corporations) reported 44, while 30

cases were detected in Dhaka South City Corporation, 24 in Dhaka North City Corporation, 39 in Rajshahi division, 25 in Khulna division, 4 in Rangpur division and three in Mymensingh division.

Currently, 1,308 dengue patients are receiving treatment in hospitals across the country.

Last year, dengue claimed the lives of 575 people.

According to the DGHS, there were 1,01,214 dengue cases and 1,00,040 recoveries in the same year.



3 killed in clash over land dispute in Kurigram

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Three people were killed and at least 20 others injured in a clash between two rival groups over land dispute at Bhundor Char in Rowmari upazila, Kurigram yesterday.

Nurul Amin, 40, Bulu Mia, 55, and Fulbabu Mia, 50, who reportedly belong to the same faction, died on the spot.

Around 12:30pm, a group led by one Shahjahan Mia tried to irrigate the land. Another group, led by Razu Mia, resisted the attempt, triggering the clash, said police and locals.

They used sticks and local weapons in the skirmish.

Ten injured were taken to Mymensingh Medical

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

LANDSLIDES

Over 500 tourists stranded in Sajek for nine hours

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Traffic resumed on the Baghaichhari-Sajek road after over nine hours of disruption that had stranded over 500 tourists in Sajek early yesterday.

Baghaichhari Upazila UNO Shirin Akhtar said the road communication was restored around 1:30pm.

Heavy rainfall triggered the landslides around 4:00am at Nandaram in Sajek, halting all vehicular movement until the road was cleared by a joint effort of locals, the army, and fire service personnel.

More than 500 tourists remained stranded in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

TK 705CR LOAN DEFAULT

Travel ban on ex-NRBC Bank chair, 3 others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court has imposed a travel ban and share transfer restrictions on Mohammad Adnan Imam, former chairman of the executive committee of NRBC Bank, in connection with a Tk 705 crore loan default case involving United Commercial Bank (UCB).

In addition, the court imposed a travel ban on the three Kazi brothers of Gemcon Group in connection with a default loan worth Tk 238 crore from Bank Asia.

The brothers are Kazi Anis Ahmed, Kazi Inam Ahmed, and Kazi Nabil Ahmed, sons of founder

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

খাদ্য মন্ত্রণালয়
(বৈদেশিক সংগ্রহ শাখা)
বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা
www.mofood.gov.bd

তারিখ: ২০.০৭.২০২৫

বেসরকারি পর্যায়ে চাল আমদানির বিজ্ঞপ্তি

উপর্যুক্ত বিষয়ে জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বেসরকারি পর্যায়ে চাল আমদানির জন্য আঞ্চলীয় প্রতিক্রিয়ানের নিকট হতে আবেদন আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

আবেদন মার্কিলের সময়ের মধ্যে ০১ অক্টোবর, ২০২৫। আবেদন অবশ্যই Online-এ করতে হবে। সরান্তর সেন্ট আবেদন প্রাপ্ত করা হবে না।

খাদ্য মন্ত্রণালয়ের ওয়েবসাইটের www.mofood.gov.bd সংগ্রহ ও সরবরাহ পর্যায়ে চাল আমদানির জন্য অনলাইন আবেদন লিঙ্কে প্রাপ্তে ফরম প্রেস করতে হবে অথবা <https://www.mygov.bd/services/info?id=BDGS-1675338584> লিঙ্কে প্রাপ্তে ফরম প্রেস করে আবেদন করা যাবে।

উদ্দেশ্য, বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের পূর্বে যে সকল প্রতিক্রিয়ান চাল আমদানির জন্য আবেদন করেছেন তাদেরকে পুনরায় নতুন করে আবেদন করতে হবে।

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বেসরকারি পর্যায়ে চাল আ

Chinese engines power Russian drones used in Ukraine

REUTERS

Chinese made engines are being covertly shipped via front companies to a state owned drone manufacturer in Russia, labelled as "industrial refrigeration units" to avoid detection in the wake of Western sanctions, according to three European security officials and documents reviewed by Reuters.

The shipments have allowed Russian weapons-maker IEMZ Kupol to increase its production of the Garpia-A1 attack drone, despite the US and EU sanctions imposed in October designed to disrupt its supply chain, according to the sources and documents, which included contracts, invoices and customs paperwork.

An internal Kupol document, reviewed by Reuters, showed it signed a contract with the Russian defence ministry to produce more than 6,000 Garpia this year, up from 2,000 in 2024. The document stated that more than 1,500 drones had already been delivered by April.

The long-range drone is being deployed to attack civilian and military targets deep within Ukrainian territory, with around 500 being used by Russia per month, the Ukrainian military intelligence agency said in a statement to Reuters.

The European security officials asked that neither they nor their organisation be identified due to the sensitivity of the information. They also requested some specific details in the documents be withheld, such as their dates and the cost of contracts.

In September, Reuters reported that Kupol was producing the Garpia using Chinese technology, including L550E engines made by Xiamen Limbach Aviation Engine Co. A month after the Reuters' report, the European Union and the US sanctioned several companies involved in producing the drones, including Xiamen.



Burning cars are seen at the site of a Russian air strike in Kharkiv, Ukraine yesterday. The Russian overnight attack killed three members of a Ukrainian family who had earlier fled their homes to escape Russian advances, authorities said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Ukraine, Russia attack each other's Black Sea coasts

REUTERS

Ukraine and Russia launched air attacks along each other's Black Sea coasts early yesterday, hours after brief direct talks between them failed to make any progress on steps to end nearly three-and-a-half years of war.

Russian forces staged the latest in a series of mass drone attacks on Ukraine's Black Sea port of Odesa, injuring at least four people and causing several fires as well as damage in the historic centre, a Unesco world heritage site.

The famous Pryvoz market in Odesa was among the places hit, Regional Governor Oleh Kiper said. "It is not just a place of trade, it is the living heart of Odesa," he added.

Yesterday morning, some residents were cleaning up shattered glass in the streets

"So what if the (drones) are flying? We will shoot them down; they will not break us," Yevhen, a 20-year old student among those helping with the cleanup, told Reuters.

Emergency officials in Russia's Krasnodar region on the Black Sea

said debris from a falling drone struck and killed a woman in the Adler district near the resort city of Sochi. A second woman was being treated in hospital for serious injuries, they said on the Telegram messaging app.

The administrative head of the Sirius federal district south of Sochi said a drone hit an oil base, giving no further details. Russia's aviation authority said operations were suspended at Sochi airport for about four hours. Russia also attacked the central region of Cherkasy overnight.

“Russia continues its terror and obstructs diplomacy, which is why it deserves full-scale sanctions responses, as well as our strikes on their logistics, their military bases...”

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার সমাজসেবা অধিদফতর সমান্বিত দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম, মানিকগঞ্জ

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১.	মন্ত্রণালয়/ বিভাগ	সমাজসেবা মন্ত্রণালয়।		
২.	এজেন্সি	সমাজসেবা অধিদফতর, ঢাকা।		
৩.	সংগ্রাহক সত্ত্বের নাম	১। রিসোর্স শিক্ষক, সমান্বিত দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম, মানিকগঞ্জ।		
৪.	সংগ্রাহক সত্ত্বের জেলা	মানিকগঞ্জ।		
৫.	যে কাজের জন্য দরপত্র	২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থস্থানে সমাজসেবা অধিদলের পরিচালিত সমান্বিত দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম, মানিকগঞ্জ এর নির্বাচনের খাদ্য ও খাদ্যানুযায়ীক, শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য/প্রসাধনী এবং বিদ্যুৎ মালামাল সরবরাহ।		
৬.	দরপত্র নথির ও তারিখ	৪৫,০১,৫০০,০২,০০০,০৭,০০০,২৫-৩৯ তারিখ: ১৩/০৭/২০২৫।		
৭.	দরপত্র প্রচারের তারিখ	২৩/০৭/২০২৫।		
৮.	সংগ্রহ দরপত্র পক্ষতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পক্ষতি।		
৯.	বাজেট ও তহবিলের উৎস	বাজেট বাজেট (জিপিটি)		
১০.	দরপত্রের প্র্যাকেজ নথির	০২টি। ২০২৫-২০২৬।		
১১.	দরপত্রের প্র্যাকেজের নাম	২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থস্থানে সমাজসেবা অধিদলের পরিচালিত সমান্বিত দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম, মানিকগঞ্জ। "ঘ" প্রপ- খাদ্য- খাদ্যানুযায়ীক অপচান ও পচনশীল, শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য, প্রসাধনী এবং অন্যান্য সরবরাহ এবং 'ঙ' প্রপ- বিদ্যুৎ মালামাল সরবরাহ।		
১২.	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৫/০৮/২০২৫।		
১৩.	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	০৬/০৮/২০২৫।		
১৪.	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	০৬/০৮/২০২৫।		
১৫.	কার্যালয়ের নাম ও ঠিকানা	* রিসোর্স শিক্ষক, সমান্বিত দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম, মানিকগঞ্জ। ক. মূল দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়।		
খ.	দরপত্র দলিল প্রাপ্তি	* উপগ্রহিতালকের কার্যালয়, জেলা সমাজসেবা কার্যালয়, মানিকগঞ্জ।		
গ.	দরপত্র দলিল দাখিল	* জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, মানিকগঞ্জ।		
১৬.	দরদাতার মোগাতা	(১) বৈধ সরবরাহকারী প্রতিক্রিয়া। (২) সিডিউল ক্রয়ের ট্রেজারী চালানের মূলক্রিপ্ট, (৩) পূর্বে অনুরূপ কাজ করার অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্র, (৪) হাজারাগাং প্রেত লাইসেন্স, (৫) বাকি বছলতার সনদ, (৬) আয়কর সনদ এবং ভ্যাট প্রদান (২০২৪-২০২৫) সনদের অধিকারী হতে হবে।		
১৭.	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য ট্রেজারী চালানের মাধ্যমে কোট ১-২৯৩-০০০-২৩৬ (অফেরতযোগী) জমা দিতে হবে।		
গ্রুপ	সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ	সিডিউল মূল্য	ট্রেজারী সিডিউলের পরিমাণ	মন্তব্য
ঘ.	খাদ্য ও খাদ্যানুযায়ীক, শিক্ষা, প্রসাধনী, চিকিৎসা, পোশাক	৫০০/- (পাঁচশত)	সিডিউল মোতাবেক	সমান্বিত দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম, মানিকগঞ্জ এর জন্য প্রযোজ্য।
ঙ.	বিদ্যুৎ মালামাল	৫০০/- (পাঁচশত)	সিডিউল মোতাবেক	সমান্বিত দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম, মানিকগঞ্জ এর জন্য প্রযোজ্য।
১৮.	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম	নিয়াজ মোর্চেন্দি		
১৯.	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী	রিসোর্স শিক্ষক		
২০.	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা	সমান্বিত দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম, মানিকগঞ্জ।		
২১.	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার সাথে যোগাযোগ নথির	মোবাইল: ০১৯১৮০১৭৯১৯।		
২২.	শর্তাবলী:	(ক) পিপিআর ২০০৬ এবং পিপিআর ২০০৮ এ প্রদত্ত ক্ষয় সংক্রান্ত পদ্ধতি যথাব্যবহারে অনুসূরণ করা হবে। (খ) গৃহীত দরদাতার নিকট হাত উন্মুক্ত দরের ১০% প্রারম্ভরমেস সিকিউরিটির অর্থ প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে কার্যালয়ে প্রদান করা হবে। (গ) 'গ' প্রপর ক্রয়ের ব্যাদল প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে কার্যালয়ে প্রদান করা হবে। (ঘ) কর্তৃপক্ষ কার্য দর্শনীয় ব্যাদিতেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিলের ফলত সংরক্ষণ করেন। (ঙ) দরপত্র ক্রয়ের তারিখ হতে দরপত্র দোকানের তারিখের নির্বাচিত সময় পর্যন্ত দরপত্র দাখিল করা যাবে। (চ) বিশেষ নির্দেশনাগুরুত্বে দরপত্র সিডিউলের বর্ণিত আছে।		

(স্বাক্ষরিত)
নিয়াজ মোর্চেন্দি
রিসোর্স শিক্ষক (অ.দ.)
সমান্বিত দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম, মানিকগঞ্জ
মোবাইল নং: ০১৯১৮০১৭৯১৯

GD-1246

INTERNATIONAL

Indian firm shipped explosives to Russia despite US warnings

REUTERS, Washington

An Indian company shipped \$1.4 million worth of an explosive compound with military uses to Russia in December, according to Indian customs data seen by Reuters, despite US threats to impose sanctions on any entity supporting Russia's Ukraine war effort.

One of the Russian companies listed as receiving the compound, known as HMX or octogen, is the explosives manufacturer Promsintez, which an official at Ukraine's SBU security service said has ties to the country's military. The official said that Ukraine launched a drone attack in April against a Promsintez-owned factory.

According to the Pentagon's Defense Technical Information Center and related defense research programs, HMX is widely used in missile and torpedo warheads, rocket motors, exploding projectiles and plastic-bonded explosives for advanced military systems.

The US government has identified HMX as "critical for Russia's war effort" and has warned financial institutions against facilitating any sales of the substance to Moscow.

Myanmar junta claims recapture of gold mining hub

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's junta yesterday claimed to have ousted anti-coup rebels from a gold mining hub after a year-long battle, its second declared recapture of a key town in a week.

A civil war has consumed Myanmar since a 2021 coup deposed the civilian government, with the military battling a myriad of pro-democracy guerillas and ethnic armed organisations.

Scattered anti-coup forces initially struggled to make headway, but won a string of stunning victories -- mostly in the north -- when many banded together for a coordinated offensive starting late 2023. This year, the junta's China- and Russia-backed forces have clawed back ground on the northern front.

Government of The Peoples Republic of Bangladesh Local Government Engineering Department Office of the Executive Engineer District-Rangpur. www.lged.gov.bd					
Memo No. 46.02.8500.000.07.12.25-1889					
Date : 17/07/2025					
Invitation for Re-Tender (Works) e-Tender Notice No. 01/2025-2026 (1st Corrigendum)					
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following works, details are given below -					
Sl No	Tender ID No.	Package No	Description of work	Tender Last Selling (Date & Time)	Tender Closing & Opening (Date & Time)
1	1126075	e-Tender PEDP4/ RNP/SAD/2024-25/ W11.1.1	Construction of 3 (three) Storied Multipurpose Auditorium at Rangpur PTI (Remaining Work) [OTM]	As original 22/07/2025 16:00 PM	As amended 29/07/2025 16:00 PM
As original 23/07/2025 13:00 PM					
As amended 30/07/2025 13:00 PM					
Others conditions will remain unchanged.					
GD-1643					

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH HEADQUARTERS BORDER GUARD BANGLADESH LOGISTIC BRANCH, EME DIRECTORATE, DHAKA					
Ref No : 44.02.1205.010.02.179.25 LP-02					
Dated : 23 July 2025					
e-Tender Notice No. 02/2025-26					
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following goods:					
Sl No	Name of Goods	Tender ID	Package No	Tender/Proposal Publication Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Document last selling / downloading Date and Time
1.	Battery</td				

Trump unveils AI plan aiming for 'global dominance'

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump unveiled an aggressive, low-regulation strategy on Wednesday to boost big tech's race to stay ahead of China on artificial intelligence and cement US dominance in the fast-expanding field.

Trump's 25-page "America's AI Action Plan" outlines three aims: accelerating innovation, building infrastructure, and leading internationally on AI.

The administration frames AI advancement as critical to maintaining economic and military supremacy. Environmental consequences are sidelined in the planning document.

"America is the country that started the AI race, and as president of the United States, I'm here today to declare that America is going to win it," Trump told an AI event in Washington.

Columbia Univ to pay \$200m in clash with Trump

AFP, New York

Columbia University said Wednesday it will pay \$200 million to the US government after President Donald Trump threatened to pull federal funding over what he said was its unwillingness to protect Jewish students.

In a sweeping deal that will restore the prestigious New York institution's federal monies, Columbia has pledged to obey rules that bar it from taking race into consideration in admissions or hiring, among other concessions.

"Columbia University has reached an agreement with the United States government to resolve multiple federal agency investigations into alleged violations of federal anti-discrimination laws," a statement said, adding that the \$200 million would be paid over three years.

The university will also pay \$21 million to settle investigations brought by US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, it said. "Under today's agreement, a vast majority of the federal grants which were terminated or paused in March 2025 will be reinstated and Columbia's access to billions of dollars in current and future grants will be restored," the statement said.

Walking 7,000 steps a day a huge boost to health: research

AFP, Paris

People who walk 7,000 steps a day have a dramatically lower risk of a broad range of serious health problems, the largest review of the evidence yet said yesterday.

The most widely promoted target for people tracking their number of steps is 10,000 -- but that figure reportedly originally came from a 1960s marketing campaign for a Japanese pedometer.

To find a more scientific target, an international team of researchers sifted through 57 previous studies that covered 160,000 people.

The results published in the Lancet Public Health journal found that walking 7,000 steps a day nearly halved people's risk of early death from all causes, compared to 2,000 steps.

The study also looked into health problems not previously covered by research into step counts.

Walking 7,000 steps a day was linked to people's risk of dementia falling by 38 percent, depression dropping 22 percent and diabetes decreasing 14 percent.

It was also associated with lower rates of cancer and falls, though the researchers warned this was based on less evidence. "You don't need to hit 10,000 steps a day to get major health benefits," Paddy Dempsey, a study co-author and medical researcher at Cambridge University, told AFP.

"The biggest gains happen before 7,000 steps, and then benefits tend to level off," he said.

While people's speeds vary widely, 7,000 steps adds up to roughly an hour of walking throughout the day.

Dempsey emphasised that people already managing 10,000 or more steps should keep it up.



Palestinians seeking aid supplies from the US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation travel in an animal-drawn cart near Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Hamas submits Gaza ceasefire response

Israel studies reply, continues air, ground strikes across enclave; 17 Palestinians killed

AGENCIES

Israel is reviewing a revised response from Hamas to a proposed ceasefire and hostage release deal, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said yesterday, as Israeli air and ground strikes continued to pound the Gaza Strip.

Hamas confirmed it had handed over a new proposal, but did not disclose its contents. A previous version, submitted late on Tuesday, was rejected by mediators as insufficient and was not even passed to Israel, sources familiar with the situation said.

Both sides are facing huge pressure at home and abroad to reach a deal, with the humanitarian conditions inside Gaza deteriorating sharply amidst widespread, acute hunger in the Palestinian enclave that has shocked the world.

A senior Israeli official was quoted by local media as saying the new text was something Israel could work with. However, Israel's Channel 12 said a rapid deal was not within reach, with gaps remaining between the two sides, including over where the Israeli military should withdraw to during any truce.

A Palestinian official close to the talks told Reuters the latest Hamas position was "flexible, positive and took into consideration the growing suffering in Gaza and the need to stop the starvation".

Since dawn yesterday, Israeli air and ground offensive across the enclave killed 17 Palestinians, medical sources told Al Jazeera Arabic. Three aid seekers are among the dead.

Dozens of people have starved to death in Gaza in the last few weeks as a wave of hunger crashes on the Palestinian enclave. The World Health Organization said on Wednesday 21 children under the age of five were

among those who died of malnutrition so far this year. Gaza is suffering man-made mass starvation caused by a blockade on aid into the Palestinian enclave, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

Turkey on Wednesday branded the Israeli parliament's vote calling for the annexation of the occupied West Bank an "illegitimate and provocative gesture aimed at undermining peace efforts".

Meanwhile, International news agencies Agence France Presse (AFP), Associated Press (AP) and Reuters as well as the BBC called on Israel yesterday to allow journalists in and out of Gaza which is subject to a strict blockade, reports AFP.

"We are desperately concerned for our journalists in Gaza, who are increasingly unable to feed themselves and their families," the media groups said in a joint statement, adding: "We once again urge the Israeli authorities to allow journalists in and out of Gaza".

Israeli forces yesterday hit the central Gaza towns of Nuseirat, Deir Al-Balah and Bureij.

Health officials at Al-Awda Hospital said three people were killed in an airstrike on a house in Nuseirat, three more died from tank shelling in Deir Al-Balah, and separate airstrikes in Bureij killed a man and a woman and wounded several others.

Washington has been pushing the warring sides towards a deal for a 60-day ceasefire that would free some of the remaining 50 hostages held in Gaza in return for prisoners held by Israel, and allow in aid.

US Middle East peace envoy Steve Witkoff travelled to Europe this week for meetings on the Gaza war and a range of other issues. An Israeli official said Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer would meet Witkoff today if the gaps between Israel and Hamas over the terms of a ceasefire had narrowed sufficiently.

Gaza facing man-made 'mass starvation': WHO

Int'l media groups urge Israel to allow access to Gaza

Israeli vote to annex West Bank 'illegitimate': Turkey



Migrants aboard a fiberglass boat listen to instructions from lifeguards on the NGO Open Arms rescue vessel Astral, in international waters south of Lampedusa in the Mediterranean Sea, yesterday.

SUMMIT WITH EU OFFICIALS

China's Xi calls for 'proper handling of frictions'

REUTERS, Beijing

Chinese President Xi Jinping urged top European Union officials yesterday to "properly handle differences and frictions" as he criticised Brussels's recent trade actions against Beijing at a tense summit dominated by concerns on trade and the Ukraine war.

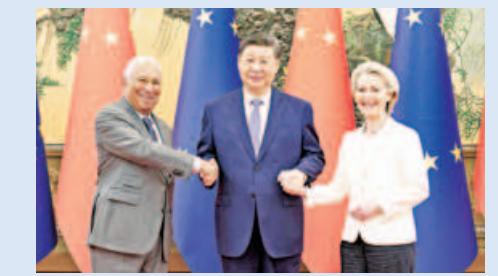
Expectations were low for the summit in the Chinese capital marking 50 years of diplomatic ties after weeks of escalating tension and wrangling over its format, with the duration abruptly halved to a single day at Beijing's request.

"The current challenges facing Europe do not come from China," Xi told visiting European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Antonio Costa, state news agency Xinhua said.

He urged the EU to "adhere to open cooperation and properly handle differences and frictions", after von der Leyen earlier called for a rebalancing of trade ties with the world's second largest economy, saying relations were at an "inflection point".

"Improving competitiveness cannot rely on 'building walls and fortresses', Xi added, according to Xinhua. "Decoupling and breaking chains" will only result in isolation."

"It is hoped that the European side will keep



» Xi warns EU leaders to 'make correct strategic choices'

» Von der Leyen says EU-China ties at 'inflection point'

» Summit to tackle trade imbalance, rare earths, Ukraine

the trade and investment market open and refrain from using restrictive economic and trade tools," Xi said. During the meeting in Beijing's Great Hall of the People, von der Leyen told Xi, "As our cooperation has deepened, so have imbalances," according to a pool report.

"We have reached an inflection point," she added, urging China to "come forward with real solutions". She was referring to the EU's trade deficit with China, which ballooned to a historic 305.8 billion euros (\$360 billion) last year.

EU trade actions in the past year have targeted Chinese exports of EVs among other goods, and its officials have repeatedly complained about Chinese industrial overcapacity.

In a further veiled criticism of Brussels' recent hawkish stance on China, Xi also warned EU leaders to "make correct strategic choices".

The two EU officials are set to meet Chinese Premier Li Qiang later. Both sides hope to reach a modest joint statement on climate, now one of the rare bright spots in their cooperation.

At the start of US President Donald Trump's second term, both sides had more of a consensus in working together to tackle trade challenges from the US, said Cui Hongjian, a foreign policy professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University.

"Recently the situation has changed," Cui said. "The EU has continued to compromise with the United States, which means that there is currently a lack of impetus for EU-China ties to become closer."

TYPHOON CO-MAY Philippines shuts schools, scraps flights

AFP, Manila

The Philippines shut down schools and cancelled flights yesterday as typhoon driven rains pounded the northern island of Luzon, a situation President Ferdinand Marcos called "the new normal".

Typhoon Co-May, upgraded from a tropical storm overnight, follows days of monsoon rains that have killed at least 19 people and left another 11 missing across the archipelago since July 18, according to the national disaster agency.

With maximum sustained winds of 120 kilometres (75 miles) per hour, the typhoon was expected to make landfall on the west coast in either La Union or Ilocos Sur province by this morning, the country's weather service said.

Marcos said yesterday that climate change meant Filipinos needed to be thinking about how to adapt to a "new normal".



ILLUSTRATION: OISHIK JAWAD

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

"It's hard to believe these scenes are now being seen on the streets of Bangladesh," wrote a defiant Shafin Ahmed on July 23, 2024, on social media. "I've witnessed such scenes in our Liberation War. I've often seen Israeli soldiers occupying Palestine doing such things. But to see such a scene in Bangladesh, with our own police force behaving this way with our own people... it's unbelievable!"

Amidst the authoritarian regime's crackdown on protesters, the former Miles frontman was one of the first from the music industry to speak out without any filter whatsoever. He did that a good two weeks before musicians would be mobilised into *Get up, Stand up*, which culminated in a historical musical protest on August 3. Little did we know that we would lose him only three days after that Facebook post. He had lost his life to a heart attack while on a tour with his lineup in North America.

It was an irrevocable and incredibly damaging loss, overshadowed by the flames of revolution. In any other passage of time, he would have received more widespread recognition for his illustrious career.

A lot has been written about Shafin Ahmed's musical prowess. After all – playing complex basslines while singing his trademark tunes like *Firiy Dao, Jala Jala, Dhiki Dhiki*, and *Aaj Jonmodin Tomar* was no small feat; it required prodigious musical talent. However, what the music industry misses more is his defiant, unfiltered, sometimes unhinged voice.

Perhaps the intense desire to change Bangladesh led him to join the realm of politics. With Jatiya Party, his most notable political endeavour was contesting for the mayoral position of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) in 2019, representing the Jatiya Party and using their electoral symbol, the 'plough.' Although he did not win the election, it was arguably impossible for him to win in a rigged system anyway.

I still remember the random mornings he would call me and ask me to publish his side of the story about his public beef with his former band, Miles. "You have to write whatever I say verbatim," he used to say. He ranted for hours about the alleged corruption, issues on royalty splits, and credit-allocation that the members partook in. "Look at what they're doing to the legacy of Miles!"

I knew that I had to go against my better editorial judgment in order to publish those interviews since it'd look like the back of a tabloid without due diligence. Unfortunately, since the band itself did not comment on Shafin's allegations, I could not publish those stories.

Shafin's relationship with Miles was marked by several departures and rejoinings. He left in 2009, rejoined in 2014, left again in 2017, and returned in 2018, before his final departure from the band in 2021.

"Until the problems are resolved, until an agreement is reached, I won't be found with them. From that standpoint, the initiative I took to work with a different lineup, in my own way, is reflected in 'Voice of Miles.' Initially, I didn't use any name; I simply started with 'Shafin Ahmed.' My wish was that if we couldn't work together, it would be better not to use the name 'Miles.' However, the other party didn't refrain from using it," he had said.

All the ego and misunderstandings would dissolve with Shafin's passing. After all, in no way could Hamin, his elder brother and Miles' legend, know that his partner for the better part of four decades would leave so soon. "I feel like I have lost a part of me, please pray for my brother," he had said. Ultimately, Hamin would turn this grief into power when he risked his life to protest against the Awami regime.

This was a regime that had actors, musicians, and artists on its payroll, some of whom manufactured legitimacy for many of its anti-democratic activities – but it could not buy Shafin Ahmed. How could they? Shafin was musical royalty – born to legends Kamal Dasgupta and Feroza Begum, he carried their honesty as an heirloom to his grave.

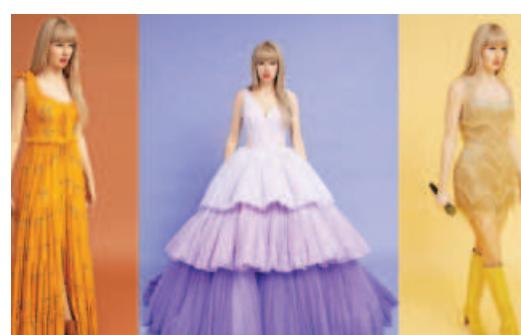
I have no doubts that the overwhelming victory of the Bangladeshi masses would have pleased Shafin Ahmed greatly. And I have even fewer doubts that had he been alive today, he would continue to voice his criticisms against the present government as well. After all, no chains could ever bind Shafin Ahmed, the voice of Miles.

The author is Entertainment Editor at The Daily Star.

Madame Tussauds unveils 13 new Taylor Swift 'Eras Tour' wax figures

Madame Tussauds has unveiled 13 new wax figures of Taylor Swift, styled in outfits inspired by her record-breaking *Eras Tour*. The figures will be displayed in 13 cities across four continents, including Las Vegas, London, Amsterdam, Shanghai, and Sydney. The exhibit took 14 months and 40 artists to complete, making it the most ambitious project in the museum's 250-year history.

Swift now has a total of 14 wax figures, with her first introduced in 2010 at age 20. The previous record was held by Lady Gaga with eight figures in 2011 and Harry Styles with seven in 2023. The new collection is open to the public from July 24.



'No one has the right to tell me what to wear'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Widespread backlash erupted across social media after Bangladesh Bank issued a directive imposing a dress code on its employees, particularly restricting female staff from wearing sleeveless tops, short-length dresses, and leggings at work. The directive, criticised for targeting women's attire, was later withdrawn yesterday following public outrage.

In response, National Film Award-winning actress Azmeri Haque Badhan took to Facebook to express her frustration over the imposition of dress codes and the persistent societal judgment women face regarding their clothing choices.

"I was once a brilliant, kind little girl who always dressed as expected; what my parents preferred, what the community deemed 'decent'. I didn't wear jeans as a teenager, because society believed only 'bad girls' did," she wrote.

Recounting a turning point in her life, Badhan shared how her decision to leave an abusive marriage led her to participate in the "Lux Channel i Superstar" competition in 2006. "That

experience helped me discover myself; not just as a woman, but as a human being."

She further stated, "Even then, I tried to be the kind of woman society approves of. But this time, I wore jeans. I wore clothes that showed my skin, things 'good girls' supposedly don't wear."

Badhan also recalled an incident where she was asked to cover her shoulders during a television interview because she was wearing a sleeveless blouse. "They lectured me on morality. Over the years, I've been told how I should dress, as a mother, a 'sensible woman', or a daughter from a conservative family. But I don't care anymore. I am free. No one has the right to tell me what to wear, say, think, or how to live. That is my decision alone."

She concluded her post by criticising the societal obsession with controlling women. "This is the harsh reality we face daily. Society seems obsessed with 'fixing' women as if that's the ultimate virtue. But let me say this: it is your own actions that determine your path, not your control over others, and certainly not over women."



PHOTO: COLLECTED

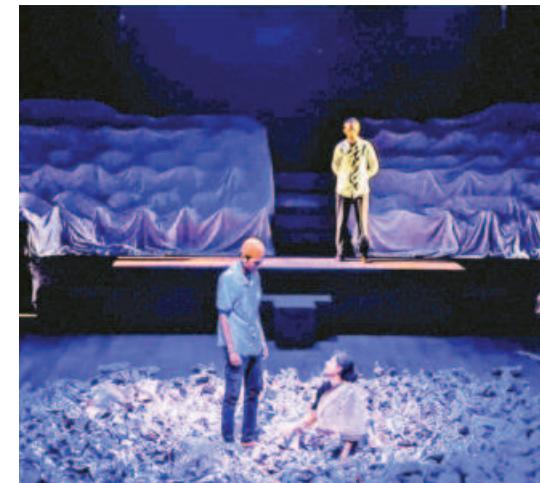
'Mukhomukhi' premieres at Shilpakala Academy today

A new theatrical production titled *Mukhomukhi*, directed and conceptualised by Dhiman Chandra Barman, will premiere today at 7pm at the Experimental Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

Organised by the academy under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and staged by Theatre Web, the performance is open to the public free of charge.

Structured as a series of fragmented scenes, the play explores themes of authoritarian violence, collective trauma, and the inevitability of resistance. Rather than a linear narrative, *Mukhomukhi* unfolds as a political montage echoing the spirit of last year's July movement.

The cast features Al Mamun, Poly Chowdhury, Fauzia Afrin Tili, and others. Mohsina Akter designs costumes, with choreography by Amit Chowdhury and Hasan Ishtiaq Imran.



Netflix renews 'Wednesday' for a third season ahead of Season 2 premiere



Netflix has officially renewed *Wednesday* for a third season, even before the premiere of its highly anticipated second season. Since its debut in 2022, the supernatural comedy – starring Jenna Ortega as the deadpan, gothic teen Wednesday Addams – has become Netflix's most-watched English-language series and has won four Emmy Awards.

The second season is set to release in two parts on August 6 and September 3. The story picks up with Wednesday returning to Nevermore Academy, where she must face a new enemy while protecting her werewolf roommate, Enid.

Returning cast members include Gwendoline Christie, Emma Myers, and Riki Lindhome. The star studded ensemble is further bolstered by the addition of Steve Buscemi, Christina Ricci, Luis Guzman, and Catherine Zeta-Jones.

The show is created by Alfred Gough and Miles Millar, with Tim Burton returning as executive producer.

BOOK REVIEW: POETRY

Kolkata, unplugged

Review of Mitali Chakravarty's 'From Calcutta to Kolkata: A City of Dreams: Poems' (Hawakal Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2025)

AKSHAYA KUMAR

Not many cities can claim to inherit a thickly layered palimpsestic past, which Kolkata has been a witness to over the last 300 years. As the city grows from a tiny geography of three villages, into a megapolis of size and splendour, it acquires a visceral sensibility that seeps into the bloodstream of its residents who, even as they migrate, continue to feel it in their pulses. Once the space turns into an abiding topophilic sentiment, it excites the sensitive residents to break into poetry—poetry of self and space—with one seamlessly coalescing into the other. Writing the city becomes an act of self-witnessing, an inward journey into one's own emotional make-up.

Mitali Chakravarty's latest collection of poems, *From Calcutta to Kolkata: A City of Dreams*, is not an ordinary chronicle of a city, it is a 'sthalpuran'—a sustained act of cultural cartography, never attempted before. Writing more than 75 poems on a city that is perpetually on the move,



PHOTOS/DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

A city which has been infamously described by a range of writers as "a dying city", "a widow in the white sari", "a slow boiled sewer", or as "a Great Black Hole" of urban India, is reclaimed by the poet as a city "that glows with humanity's overflow, never overcrowding". It is with such redeeming equipoise that the poet rediscovers the city and its people—known for their "certain sense of humour/ that stays, acerbic yet friendly". The readers of the poems feel the pulse of the city as they navigate along with the poet.

literally moulting its skin every season, or renewing its feminine energy every Durga Puja cycle, is an act of immersive plunge that redeems both the city and the poet in reciprocal ways.

The poems in the collection are not easy panegyrics, nor are they plaintive requiems. Each poem is a snippet of the city—its animating inner recesses, its informal convivial

addas, its monuments of unaging intellect—traversed, and felt firsthand. The poet travels through the city as much as the city travels through the poet. Local anecdotes, hearsays, micro-histories, literary asides, street murmurs, and familial whispers—all that is usually filtered out of standard, chronicles as unreliable and turns into ready material for poetry which is both persuasive and compelling. The love lorn of heroic Job Charnock with his widowed bride Maria—a Rajput princess rescued from a funeral pyre—recounted in a Jatra performance during a festive night is an occasion enough for Chakravarty to lapse into a poetic ecstasy. Forgoing toxic debates of Orientalism, she approaches the city as a sensuous woman that lures, and is lured. In a telescopic swoop, the poet writes, "Love sprouted the City of Joy", connecting Charnock's legend with Dominique Lapierre's 1985 catchy description of Kolkata as the 'City of Joy'.

Bornaroundromance, Chakravarty's Calcutta grows to acquire its own palpable textuality, its semantic surplus, and its enabling ambivalences that defy explanations: "Google map gets lost/ in narrow by-lanes" (from "Dumdu"). While the garden of

Jorasanko—Tagore's ancestral home—is abuzz with the knotty stories of Bhanu and Kadambari; the lanes on way to this bastion of the 'bhadralok' bear testimony to "neglected lives" ("On the Way to Jorasanko"). Calcutta is a cosmopolis of contradictions—that it raises "a rampart, / a fortress for devi/ but leaves only broken/ roads for Monobina and Jananara" ("Monobina"). Layered with its own set of "opposites and in-betweens", the city smiles like an enigmatic Monalisa ("Monalisa?"). The contradictions are not entropic enough to throw Calcutta out of gear—"Here, poverty does not cloy, / does not destroy. But creates/ kintsugied art that touches heart" ("Kintsugied"). Gastronomically speaking, the Gourmet City "digests all cuisines", which it devours "with devotion and delight" ("Chelow Kebab"). The 250 years old Banyan of the Bengal Presidency "spreads/ its foliage to home diverse/ lives, despite lightnings, storms." ("The Great Banyan").

Mitali's poetic drift is not racy, it is not without punctuations. Her Calcutta celebrates life with "long pauses for siesta and adda" ("Calcasians"). Instead of invoking the idiom of the usual apocalyptic collapse or

irreversible dystopic dystrophies, she remains non-melodramatic—a stoic with a smile. The raging super cyclonic storms—from Amphan to Dana—that rise in the Bay of Bengal do cast their gloomy shadows, but the city evinces resilience: "Ripping old stories for new, / the tornado grows till it/ exhausts unto a steady flow" ("Longings"). Even "seashells that smile at the sea" embody spirit of the city as they "murmur softly, / eternal proof of/ resilience to death" ("Waiting..."). Tagore, Nazrul, Teresa—as conscience keepers of Calcutta culture—keep knocking the poet's inner body sensorium as reminders of a robust past. What informs the self-reflexive poet in moments of such stalemate are the words of wisdom uttered by some unnamed guru: "Time past—one guru had said—is/ contained in time present and future" ("Buddha in Kolkata"). In such a temporal back-and-forth moment, the city turns into an archive in flux, a tale in motion, "a single life trying to/ override the eternal soul"—defying standard logic of linear progression.

The collection is not just about the people of Calcutta, it is also about its geography, its seashore, its ghats, its trees, and even its traffic, which

collectively weave a narrative of belonging. The poet yokes together history and geography of the city into one continuum: "We will never know/ for tied to geographies, histories grow roots/ that defy clouds" ("Buddha in Darjeeling?"). She hears "the hoofbeats of history" in the soil of the land. Mitali Chakravarty does not offer an easy narrative of 'Calcutta versus Kolkata'. She underlines the embeddedness of one into the other: "Kolkata now stays/ embedded with its/ bedrock in Calcutta, / ..." The changes are suggested, but in the form of mild-mannered open-ended questions— "Calcutta was born/ of love, yet Kolkata/ weeps/ lovelorn? Why? / Why does Kolkata cry? ("Why does Kolkata Cry?"). Elsewhere, the same poetic trope is used: "Calcutta was safe—/ women walked tall. / What happened to/ Kolkata of zillion/malls and walls?" ("The City Whispers"). Kolkata frees the poet; it binds her as well.

A city which has been infamously described by a range of writers as "a dying city", "a widow in the white sari", "a slow boiled sewer", or as "a Great Black Hole" of urban India, is reclaimed by the poet as a city "that glows with humanity's overflow, never overcrowding". It is with such redeeming equipoise that the poet rediscovers the city and its people—known for their "certain sense of humour/ that stays, acerbic yet friendly". The readers of the poems feel the pulse of the city as they navigate along with the poet through its bustling bylanes and busy boimelas, museums and mutts, colleges and coffee houses. Some images stay back and reverberate in the mind, and one among them is: "Now, a pigeon sits on her head" ("Bengal Presidency"). It caricatures the Empire, it lends wings to a post-colonial city, no longer reeling under the pressures of a capital of the nation.

Mitali Chakravarty is a serious poet; she would add to her repertoire of emotions if she could harbour the playfulness of the Eden Gardens or Kolkata Derby within her poetic radar.

Prof. Akshaya Kumar is a professor of English at Panjab University, Chandigarh. He received critical attention for his book, Poetry, Politics and Culture (Routledge, 2009) and his co-edited volume, Cultural Studies in India (Routledge, 2016).

REFLECTIONS

'SHE AND HER CAT'

and the quiet power of presence

NAZIBA BASHER

She and Her Cat (first published in 2013), by Makoto Shinkai and Naruki Nagakawa, was a gift to me, someone who has lived with cats for over 20 years—given with a cat-shaped bookmark, no less (my friends know me well).

I had wanted to read it for a while, given it's been 12 years since its publishing, but hadn't bought it guiltily eyeing the unfinished stack of books at home. But once it landed in my hands, I didn't hesitate. "Let the others wait," I thought.

On a work trip to China, I finally opened it because I always spend flights with a book. Midair between Dhaka and Kunming, I began the first chapter.

She and Her Cat is a quiet, slender book. A set of interlinked short stories set in Tokyo, written from both the human and feline perspectives. But don't let the size fool you, there is emotional density here. Not the kind that knocks you over, but the kind that sits beside you quietly and lets you unravel. Just like a cat does.

Each story is rooted in the everyday: a lonely young woman in her first job, a painter trying to find her way, a manga aficionado who lost her best friend and is in need of confidence. And alongside each of them are their cats.

But these aren't just cat companions. They are narrators, observers, quiet sentinels of their humans' inner lives. Chobi, the stray-turned-roommate; Cookie, the shy observer; Blanche, who still remembers being a kitten and watching her mother; Kuro, who dominated his territory but melted whenever another needed help. Each feline voice brings something soft but knowing. A sort of patient watchfulness. Even Jon the dog, with all his wisdom and love for the creatures around him, is portrayed as the all-knowing figure the cats are deeply attached to, especially Chobi.

In one story, Chobi watches his human grow lonelier by the day, unable to help her beyond being present. He muses, "She looked



PHOTO: NAZIBA BASHER

tired. So, I rubbed against her leg." That line carries the entire book's philosophy: that the act of staying, of simply being, is often more powerful than trying to fix.

There is no grand drama here. The biggest events are small heartbreaks, like a job that lingers. Yet, when told through the dual gaze of human and cat, they feel profound. Like

thinking she is completely alone, only to realise her cat is watching, listening and silently loving her.

The cats don't just narrate the present; they carry their own memories too.

In one of the most affecting narratives, the cats of different women are revealed to be connected—littermates, separated early but

about being picked up like a loaf of bread. Another remarks on how little their human understands despite being so "smart" in the human world. These glimpses into feline thought are light and familiar. Anyone who has ever been judged by a cat will recognise the tone.

But the heart of the book is its deep compassion. Not just for cats, but for women.

Each human character is dealing with quiet sorrow, isolation, or uncertainty. They are not broken, just tired. And in a world that doesn't ask them how they are doing, their cats always know. The cats don't always understand the human specifics, but they recognise sadness. They notice routines. And most of all, they stay.

She and Her Cat doesn't try to be loud. And that is its strength.

It lets the emotions trickle in, like sunlight on fur, until you realise you have been softened by it. The final story ties the narrative threads into something quietly beautiful. It is not heat, but it is connected.

The women don't necessarily find happiness, not all of them at least. But they find resilience. They also find love but not the one they perhaps hoped for. Instead, it is unexpected and unconditional.

I didn't cry reading this book. I smiled, a lot, the whole way through my journey. Every flight to, through, and back from China, it was like I had a hanger in my mouth as I flipped through each page.

Because I knew—I recognised the weight of a paw on the chest when the world feels heavy. I knew the look in a cat's eyes when they sense you are falling apart. They pretend not to notice; they just curl closer.

If you have ever loved a cat, or been loved by one, this book won't surprise you. It will just feel like home.

Naziba Basher is a journalist at The Daily Star.

'Shoot directly': Hasina's order and deadly aftermath

FROM PAGE 1

"We are now doing things differently. We are capturing photos with drones, and sending helicopters to several places," Hasina told Taposh, also her nephew.

"Wherever they [state forces] will see gatherings, there from the sky... I am having it done from the sky now, already started in several areas... already started," she said, as Taposh is heard repeatedly insisting on launching a mass arrest campaign.

"I have given instructions, now I have given direct instructions; now they will use lethal weapons. Wherever they [state forces] find them [protesters], they will shoot directly," Hasina said, to which Taposh responded in agreement, "Yes, yes."

This was echoed by Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader the very next day, on July 19, although he did not name Hasina, who fled to India on August 5, 2024.

"The government has issued a circular. So it's definitely a curfew and there is also a 'shoot-at-sight' order," Quader told journalists while announcing the curfew.

The Daily Star obtained a call recording between Hasina and Taposh. The audio is one of many that were leaked on social media since March that involved conversations with Sheikh Hasina and were recorded by the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre (NTMC). Parts of the same leaked audio was examined and reported by the BBC earlier this month.

The call recording has shed new light on the allegations that Hasina was directly involved in the brutal crackdown on the movement -- revealing her explicit orders to use state forces to crush dissent at any cost.

After months of investigation, The Daily Star has uncovered previously unreported evidence, including official data on deployment of helicopters and lethal weapons, verified photos and videos, eyewitness testimonies, newspaper reports and expert analyses, confirming her instructions were carried out on the ground.

The Daily Star's tally during the uprising found that the death toll had risen from six to sixty-six between July 16 and July 19, underscoring the impact of Hasina's instructions.

Our findings are in line with the UN's fact-finding report, released in February 2025, which also found evidence of use of excessive and lethal force by the Awami League government, its political leaders, and security forces.

INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION

The Daily Star conducted its own independent verification, and provided the audio to Tech Global Institute (TGI), a technology nonprofit whose forensic investigations arm has been documenting digital evidence related to the July uprising, for technical analysis.

TGI ran a multi-layered forensic examination and found that the audio is highly unlikely to have been altered. Its analysis of the amplitude, tone, rhythm, intonation and breaths did not find any significant or detectable anomalies typical of synthetically generated media. TGI also conducted voice biometrics of the speakers, mapping the unique voiceprint of each speaker with publicly available audios of suspected individuals, and indicated that the speakers were most likely Sheikh Hasina and Fazle Noor Taposh.

TGI's technical analysis was corroborated by The Daily Star. This paper obtained documents showing that the call took place on July 18 and the receiver's phone number is registered with the Prime Minister's Office. Sheikh Hasina had been using the number since at least 2019, including during her foreign trips.

Taposh's number was verified from official documents, including the PID Telephone Guide 2021, Bangladesh Secretariat Telephone Guide 2023 and Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka, Telephone Guide 2025. Other official documents obtained by The Daily Star also confirm this.

Both numbers were found switched off during the investigation.

Asked about the call recording, Md Amir Hossain, Sheikh Hasina's state-appointed counsel, said the matter is sub judice and the time is not right to offer an explanation.

"This is a matter for the court. If such documents are placed before the court, then let me see. At this moment, I am not interested in making any comment on this issue," he told The Daily Star by phone.

Contacted, Awami League Joint General Secretary AFM Bahauddin Nasim said over the phone, "As long as Sheikh Hasina and Taposh do not acknowledge it, this audio cannot be seen as authentic. It is fabricated and AI-generated."

Nasim, believed to be outside the country, added, "It is misleading and intentional. This has been done with the ill motive of delivering a verdict before the trial."

Taposh is thought to be abroad and could not be reached for comments.

Terror in the sky

One of the earliest signs that Hasina's directives were being carried out came from the sky.

At 2:10pm on July 18, 2024, some of the first helicopters took flight, according to official documents obtained by The Daily Star. This

and 20 amid intense violence. One individual was reportedly hit while on her sixth-floor balcony, two were struck on their fourth-floor balcony in a single incident and two were hit on the rooftop of their 10th floor building.

In each case, victims were struck with 7.62x39mm bullets that can be fired from Type 56-pattern semi-automatic rifles or 7.62x39mm automatic SMGs, according to experts who have seen the photos of the three bullets.

And in each case, surviving victims

none of these bullets came from the ground.

While The Daily Star has seen no direct evidence that bullets fired from helicopters hit these victims, witnesses were consistent about one thing: they all saw low-flying choppers nearby and firing in those fatal hours.

We collected photos of the three bullets involved in these incidents, in addition to videos and still images of the locations and their surroundings to understand the bullets' trajectory and angle of impact. We also

Documents verified by The Daily Star show that between July 19 and 21, Rab helicopters carried SMGs, among other weapons, daily -- four on July 19 and one each over the next two days. Each day, they carried 60 rounds of bullets for the SMGs.

Both in public statements during the uprising and in official documents obtained by The Daily Star, Rab denied firing from helicopters. In official records, it admitted charging 557 stun grenades and 985 tear shells from helicopters from July 19-21.

Previously, a Netra News investigation revealed that the death of a schoolboy on July 19 in Mohammadpur was linked to a stun grenade allegedly charged from a helicopter.

THE MASSACRE MACHINES

Meanwhile, on the streets, lethal weapons were deployed in their thousands.

While law enforcement officers predominantly used non-lethal weapons such as stun grenades and gas guns in the early days of the quota reform movement, things drastically changed from July 19, in line with the instructions that Hasina allegedly gave, and admitted to, in the recording.

The chain of events following the call indicates the presence of necessary authorisation to use lethal weapons to suppress the protests.

The Daily Star's analysis of 20 verified photographs taken between 19 July and 5 August 2024, sourced from photojournalists of this newspaper, as well as open-source investigation involving publicly available footage from TV stations, social media, and eyewitnesses, shows that in almost every instance, law enforcement agencies were equipped with military-grade weapons.

The state forces' arsenal included automatic and semi-automatic rifles, light machine guns, machine guns, Chinese semi-automatic 7.62mm Type 56 assault rifles, and handguns, as identified and confirmed by two weapons experts who have seen the photos.

Such weapons are typically used in violent wars, and with limited to no justification for use against civilian unrest, according to an international military expert who has seen some of the photos and videos.

The nature of injuries and the cause of deaths of dozens of victims also clearly indicate that they were shot with heavy weapons designed for lethal force, not for crowd control.

The use of lethal weapons on key dates corresponds with mounting death toll.

The Daily Star's investigation found that July 19 was the deadliest in that month, with at least 66 killed in a single day. The second deadliest day that month was July 20, with at least 30 people faced with fatal shots. (These counts are based on The Daily Star's real-time tally, which may vary from other subsequent estimates and reports.)

On both days, some of the highest casualties were recorded in Dhaka's Jatrabari, Rampura, Badda, Mohammadpur and Mirpur, where The Daily Star reporters and photographers documented use of lethal weapons by police, Rab, BGB and Armed Police Battalion.

ONE SHOT FOR ONE KILL

Hours after Hasina disclosed to Taposh that she gave shoot-on-sight order, Ramzan stood at the entrance

bullet having pierced his neck, according to geo- and chrono-located video footage that have been forensically analysed by The Daily Star and Tech Global Institute.

The video captured the moments before and after his death. Moments after he was shot, the video shows fellow protesters rushing to drag his body away, leaving a smear of blood on the road.

In the background audio, a woman shrieks, "Allah... he is dead. Why did they do this? Allah, the way they aimed and killed the boy!"

Our joint investigation with the Tech Global Institute of the video footage shows Ramzan was shot from the front, where a contingent of 27 BGB personnel was positioned. At least 18 of them were carrying Chinese-made Type 56 and Type 56-1 assault rifles, none of which has non-lethal cartridges in service in Bangladesh in this calibre.

In other words, these are lethal weapons, and the distance and wound were found to be consistent with a high-velocity shot from rifles like the ones BGB members were carrying.

A closer analysis of the video footage, coupled with analysis from an international weapons expert, signals that the personnel holding and using the weapons received specialised training.

Experts further added that this shooting event was excessively dangerous and irresponsible and there is no justification for the use of lethal firearms during such highly dynamic unrest.

But killings like Ramzan's with lethal weapons were not isolated incidents.

Based on an analysis of the injuries of 204 victims, The Daily Star found that 195 (95 percent) of them were killed by mostly lethal bullets, including live rounds, shotgun pellets and rubber bullets. Of them, 113 were shot by live rounds that struck mostly in the head, chest, stomach and abdomen.

Even a single gunshot to these vital parts of the body can kill in minutes.

Maj Gen (retd) ANM Muniruzzaman said handling lethal weapons, such as those used during the uprising, requires two types of training. One is technical skill, which involves learning how to operate the weapon. The other, more crucial, is ethical training which teaches applying judgement in their use.

"And the hardest part of training someone with such weapons is this: knowing exactly how tightly your finger should rest on the trigger. They must be trained so they don't become trigger-happy," Muniruzzaman, also president of Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies, told The Daily Star.

Referring to the use of such lethal weapons by forces like police and Ansar, the security expert said, "Perhaps they received some basic operational training at the beginning. But they weren't taught to approach it from a position of responsibility. And that's evident from the casualty count."

But the most critical issue here is the Rules of Engagement, he said, adding, "This essentially means that the instruction to use lethal weapons came from higher command. Without such orders, the security and police forces could not have acted the way they did."

The Daily Star could not trace



Sumiya Akter, Siddhirganj, Narayanganj:

Around 5:00pm on July 20, Sumiya Akter, 20, was on her 6th-floor balcony in Notun Mohalla when a bullet pierced a stainless steel bar, struck her head, exited, and hit the wall behind her. She died the same day; doctors confirmed a gunshot wound as the cause. Building supervisor Dipu Mia and his wife Maksuda, who were on the roof, saw a low-flying helicopter nearby. Locals said the area was calm, but helicopters were charging stun grenades and ground forces were firing at protesters on Chittagong Road, over 500 meters away.

Sanjida Akter & Rabbi Mia, Siddhirganj, Narayanganj:

About 200 meters from Sumiya's home, Sanjida Khatun, 20, and tenant Rabbi Mia, 23, were on a fourth-floor balcony when a bullet tore through the iron sheet door. It struck Sanjida's upper back; she ran inside and saw Rabbi lying in a pool of blood. Sanjida survived, but Rabbi died. Verified footage shows a helicopter hovering about 200 meters away over a lake, aligned with the bullet's trajectory.

timing suggests Hasina had communicated the instructions to the security forces well ahead of the phone call.

In one of its earliest aerial support, helicopters were dispatched to rescue about 60 policemen trapped inside the Canadian University of Bangladesh in Dhaka's Badda area, where they were caught in a tense, hours-long stand-off with protesters that day.

Documents show that helicopters remained deployed for about seven hours on July 18, until around 11:00pm, circling over neighbourhoods to assess the situation on the ground.

Over the next four days, until July 22, helicopters from various security forces continued to hover over Dhaka, often late into the night. Aboard these choppers, especially those belonging to Rab, security personnel were equipped not only with crowd-control weapons such as gas guns and stun grenades, but also with lethal arms including shotguns and SMGs. (Weapons experts say these were likely 7.62 Type 56 SMGs.)

During this time, disturbing reports began to surface across the capital. People were dying inside their homes.

The Daily Star investigated three incidents resulting in three deaths and two injuries in Narayanganj and the capital's Dhammondi on July 19

and witnesses said they saw low-flying helicopters around their buildings at the time and that no clashes were taking place in the neighbourhood during that period, effectively ruling out the possibility that the shots were fired from the ground.

'PANICKED AND RAN'

One year after the incident, Aiman Uddin, a university student, still bears the trauma.

On the afternoon of July 19, he stood on the rooftop of their 10-storey building, as a "white drone" and a helicopter flew low around their building and along Mirpur Road near the Science Laboratory intersection.

"Suddenly, a bullet struck my right chest and pierced through my back. I panicked and ran towards the staircase. But as I turned to flee, I saw my aunt lying face down," Aiman told The Daily Star early this month.

His aunt, Nasima Akter, had been hit in the face, right below her eyes. The bullet, lodged in the neck, was surgically removed, but she died the next day.

The Daily Star measured the distance between the two spots where Aiman and Nasima were standing: they were 18 feet apart, both positioned directly in the line of fire.

Our investigation -- based on the heights of the floors where the victims were struck, the trajectory and nature of impacts, accounts from at least 15 witnesses, combined with expert analyses -- indicates that

collected videos and photos of flying helicopters from eyewitnesses.

The Daily Star shared the audio-video materials with the Tech Global Institute, whose forensic examination confirmed that the geolocation showing the route of the helicopters could be mapped to hovering around Sanjida Akther's building in Narayanganj, although it was not possible to confirm if shots were fired from them.

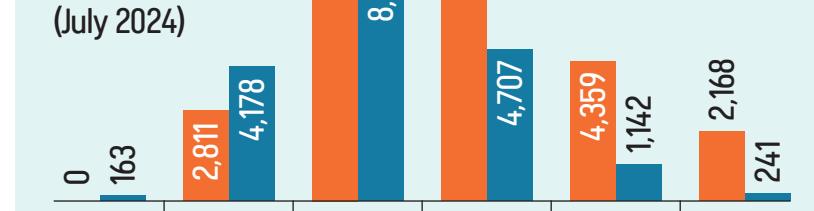
We also shared the photos of the bullets and videos of the locations with a retired Bangladeshi army officer, who is an expert in arms-ammunition and ballistics.

"The images show 7.62x39mm bullets, and are typically fired from 7.62mm Semi-Automatic Chinese Rifles or from 7.62mm Automatic SMGs [AK variant]," said the expert.

"Given the bullets' trajectories and points of impact in all three cases, it's clear they didn't come from the ground. They could have come from other buildings or floors positioned at similar heights. But they could also have come from helicopters flying low 300-400 meters away; it's not impossible."

"When fired from SMGs or 7.62mm AK-pattern Chinese Rifles, their bullets, if unobstructed, can hit targets roughly about 1,500 meters away. Thereby, it can cause significant damage to softer targets like the human body," the expert said, requesting anonymity.

Lethal vs Non-Lethal Weapons Usages (July 2024)



The data do not represent all police stations -- only 14 under the Dhaka Metropolitan Police; and even among those, not all police stations reported data on every date. Some dates have fewer reporting stations, which can skew daily totals and comparisons. So the comparison reflects only the subset of stations that reported data, not the full DMP area.

any such written order, but Sheikh Hasina's July 18 phone conversation is just one example of how and where that order might have come from.

Additional reporting: Mashfiq Mizan, Keero Adnan Ahmed, Mahmudul Hasan, Saurav Hossain Siam and Sahidul Islam Nirab.

Graphics and visualization: Anwar Sohel and Muhammad Imran.

'AL using Milestone tragedy to regroup'

FROM PAGE 16
and national welfare. The reforms we proposed must be implemented immediately to ensure a credible election. Before that, visible justice and structural reforms must be ensured."

Referring to the training jet crash at Milestone School, which has reportedly claimed 34 lives – most of them children – he said, "In this country, if you go out, you risk dying under a bus; if you go to a hospital, you may die from lack of treatment; you could die in a plane crash or ferry disaster – this state has never guaranteed a natural death. We demand the right to die naturally."

He also criticised Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum, calling her "unqualified" and accusing her of turning the system into a "textbook case of mismanagement".

Hasnat said the July uprising would only be meaningful with the introduction of quality education, an impartial electoral system, and a just state.

"If we stay united, we will make history. We will rise above tyranny and establish justice and equal rights for all – a fair and equitable Bangladesh."

Speaking at the rally, NCP Convenor

Nahid Islam reaffirmed the party's commitment to reforms, justice, and a new constitution.

"Many political parties are now supporting reforms, even stepping beyond official positions. We will push for the July Charter and Declaration to be completed by August 5."

He lauded Brahmanbaria's role in anti-fascist movements.

"People from this district have shed blood for justice. While Titas gas fuels homes across Dhaka and Mymensingh, Brahmanbaria remains deprived of its own resources. We reject such discriminatory development. True development must be inclusive and nationwide."

NCP Member Secretary Akhtar Hossain warned the party would return to the streets if the hopes and sacrifices of the July movement are betrayed. "The institutions of this country must be reformed. For 50 years, they've been politicised through partisan control."

The party's Chief Organiser (northern region) Sarjis Alam, Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwari, Senior Joint Member Secretary Tasnim Jara, Senior

Joint Convener Samantha Sharmin, among others, were also present.

Ahead of the rally, attended by both central and local leaders, the NCP met with families of those killed or injured in the July uprising at the local Circuit House.

Following the rally at Brahmanbaria, the NCP delegation left for Habiganj district.

They reached the Habiganj Circuit House around 3:30pm and met family members of the July uprising martyrs from the district.

Around 5:30pm, NCP leaders began a march from the circuit house to Saifur Rahman Town Hall, where they held another rally.

Addressing the crowd, Nahid said, "The fight we started against Mujibism and fascism is not over. We have not yet achieved the new Bangladesh we envisioned. Therefore, our struggle will continue."

"We want human rights to be established in Bangladesh. There will be no extrajudicial killings. And we must all stand united against extortion."

He also strongly protested border killings.

communities, the USCIRF pointed to a lack of accountability, attributing it partly to a "collapse of the law enforcement system".

Hindu, indigenous, Ahmadiya, and Sufi Muslim communities continue to report discrimination, the report said.

It said fears of religiously motivated violence persist with national elections due early next year, but the authorities have yet to outline a comprehensive strategy beyond increased police deployment.

The report observed that Bangladesh's political leadership has long oscillated between the Awami League and the BNP, both of which have drawn on religious identity for electoral gain. Though the Awami League is considered more secular and inclusive, attacks on religious minorities occurred under Sheikh Hasina's rule. The interim government has banned the party's activities.

discrimination from more hardline Islamic groups, and they emphasized that attacks along religious lines, while sporadic, continue," the report said.

The commission reiterated that all religious minorities should be able to practise their faith without fear or retribution.

BB withdraws dress code

FROM PAGE 16
immediately," the statement added.

The central bank explained that due to age differences among its staff, there is a diversity in dress choices among both male and female employees.

The advisory was intended to discourage overly elaborate clothing and reduce perceived disparities, aiming to promote mutual understanding among colleagues, according to the statement.

It also clarified that the advisory did not impose any obligation on female employees to wear burqas or hijabs. "Hopefully, this circular will not reduce anyone's freedom of dress code in the office."

India expelling Muslims unlawfully

FROM PAGE 16
1,500 Muslim men, women, and children to Bangladesh between May 7 and June 15, including about 100 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. The expulsions have continued, with each stay limited to 30 days.

"This will be good for both our businesses, tourists and migrants," a foreign ministry official said.

Bangladesh will be organising a business fair in Malaysia. Yunus will also attend events at two Malaysian universities.

The two countries are also likely to establish a joint business council to promote trade and investment.

Several BJP-run state governments started rounding up Bangla-speaking Muslim migrant workers after the Ministry of Home Affairs in May set a 30-day deadline for states to "detect, identify, and deport illegal immigrants" and told local authorities to "establish adequate holding centers in each district to detain" them.

Bangladesh has been seeking to be a sectoral dialogue partner of the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the issue will be raised with Ibrahim as Malaysia is the current chair of ASEAN.

"Obviously, the Rohingya crisis will be elaborately discussed," the foreign ministry official said.

Dhaka would seek to open the labour

market and a recruitment system based on competition, officials said.

Malaysia last week introduced a multiple-entry visa facility (MEV), which allows Bangladeshi citizens to enter and exit Malaysia multiple times within a validity period of 3 to 12 months, with each stay limited to 30 days.

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Dhaka would seek to open the labour

Govt wants balanced ties with all

FROM PAGE 16
Delhi following the 2024 uprising.

Asked if India's medical aid signals warming ties, he said Dhaka always wanted a good working relationship with India. "We continue to maintain this position. No one said we don't want good relations with India."

He also met Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen this week and discussed the planned hydropower project on the Yarlung Zangbo river in Tibet, which flows into Bangladesh as the Brahmaputra via India.

Yao assured Bangladesh that the

project includes no irrigation or water withdrawal, Touhid said.

"We said we want exchange of hydrological data between the experts and that they should consider our concerns," the adviser said.

This does not mean that they will not go ahead with their plan to build the dam, he said, adding, "We will try that we don't face any harmful impacts or it is minimum. India also has interest in it and is looking at it."

"All our rivers originate elsewhere. We cannot prevent other countries from building structures. We have to

ensure they don't affect us, or that the impact is very limited."

On the mission of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Bangladesh, Touhid said the MoU with the OHCHR in this regard was signed after considering national interest.

"I believe this will not go against the interest of Bangladesh," he said.

He said the OHCHR mission will be reviewed after three years, but the government can end it anytime if needed, which he believes will not be needed."

Religious freedom concerns persist

FROM PAGE 16
proposed alternatives such as "multiculturalism" or a Bangla equivalent.

Religious minorities reported being excluded from the reform process and underrepresented in politics and state institutions, the USCIRF said.

The Women's Reform Commission proposed 433 recommendations to combat discrimination against women. However, groups like Hefazat-e-Islam labelled the proposals "anti-Islamic" and staged protests. One recommendation to introduce a civil code to supplement religiously based family and personal laws sparked mixed responses.

In May, Hefazat led a 20,000-person rally in Dhaka demanding the disbandment of the Women's Reform Commission, restoration of "full trust and faith in Allah" in the constitution, and withdrawal of all cases against its leaders.

More broadly, some women have complained of more public displays of conservative Islamic views on university campuses, the report said.

Although the interim government condemned attacks on minority

communities, the USCIRF pointed to a lack of accountability, attributing it partly to a "collapse of the law enforcement system".

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Dhaka would seek to open the labour

Most child drownings go unnoticed

FROM PAGE 16
drowned. During Eid-ul-Fitr, from March 26 to April 6, 49 children lost their lives. In 2024, 58 children drowned during Eid-ul-Fitr and 65 during Eid-ul-Azha.

Predictably, drowning deaths surge during the monsoon season. In the first six days of July, at least 32 children drowned in 18 districts, according to the Society for Media and Suitable Human Communication Techniques (SoMaSHTe).

Most of these incidents happened while children were playing or bathing near ponds and ditches, often when parents were briefly distracted. Between 2020 and 2023, SoMaSHTe recorded 4,154 drowning deaths, 89 percent of which were children.

"For a one-year-old, even knee deep water can be a cause of danger," he said, adding that ponds located next to homes exacerbate the risks.

"About 60 percent of drownings occur between 9:00am and 1:00pm, when parents are busy with household chores or work. Children from larger

families are twice as vulnerable because of a lack of supervision," Dr Rahman added.

However, experts say most of these deaths are not inevitable.

The World Health Organization recommends three proven, low-cost solutions: supervised childcare, swimming and water safety training, and community education.

Though these methods were developed and tested in Bangladesh, experts say the country lacks systematic implementation. Countries like Vietnam have successfully adopted these interventions.

"It is proven that death by drowning can be reduced by 86 percent in areas where these measures have been implemented," said Dr Rahman.

He also said public awareness campaigns – like those used for ORS to treat diarrhoea – have saved many lives, and a similar effort could help prevent drowning deaths.

The Directorate General of Health Services prepared a draft National Drowning Prevention Strategy in 2016, including nationwide awareness plans and multi-sectoral implementation. However, the draft is yet to be approved.

There has been some progress.

The Bangladesh Shishu Academy is

implementing a Tk 271.82 crore project to set up 8,000 childcare centres for 200,000 children under five and 1,600 swimming facilities for 360,000 children aged six to ten in 16 districts, with support from the government, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and RNLI.

Project Manager Md Tariqul Islam said over 205,000 children under five are now enrolled in early childhood programmes across 8,020 centres, and more than 115,000 children have received swimming training.

However, the project currently covers only 16 districts. "We need this project to expand nationwide to have a meaningful impact," he said, adding that discussions with donors and stakeholders are ongoing for its continuation and scale up.

He said they will assess the impact of the project after evaluating the data soon.

Dr Rahman stressed the need to close policy gaps: "Bangladesh urgently needs to appoint a national focal person, approve the 2016 strategy, and coordinate efforts across ministries to address this preventable crisis."

Mir Masrur Zaman, executive director of SoMaSHTe, echoed his call, emphasising the need for a multi-sectoral, community-focused, and data-driven approach.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh						
Ministry of Public Administration						
Sarkari Karmachari Hospital, Fulbaria, Dhaka						
www.skh.gov.bd						
Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)						
Ministry/Division	:	Ministry of Public Administration				
Agency	:	Sarkari Karmachari Hospital, Fulbaria, Dhaka (SKH)				
Procuring Entity Code	:	N/A				
Procuring Entity District	:	Dhaka				
Expression of Interest for selection of	:	Individual Consultant (National) (Time-Based)				
EOI Ref. No	:	05.87.0000.015.007.100.25-440				
Date	:	24/07/2025				
KEY INFORMATION:						
Procurement Sub-Method	:	Selection of Individual Consultants (SIC)				
FUNDING INFORMATION:						
Budget and Source of Funds	:	GOB				
PARTICULAR INFORMATION:						
Program Name	:	Procurement of Service of Doctors in various Departments of Sarkari Karmachari Hospital.				
Scheme Name	:	N/A				
EOI Closing Date and Time	:	EOI (Application) must be submitted on or before 17.08.2025 at 12:00 pm in a sealed envelope delivered to the undersigned and must be clearly marked Request for Expressions of interest for Selection of Applied post (Title of Service for Applied Post)". Contact address with email and mobile number of the applicant must be written on the left side of envelope. Necessary documents in support of education qualifications, experience and skills have to be submitted with prescribed format of application stipulated with Request for Application (RFA).				
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT:						
Title of Service	Package	No of Post	Minimum Educational Qualification	Minimum Experience	Duties and Responsibilities	Brief Description of Assignment
Junior Consultant (Neurology)	Package No-1/25-26	2	FCPS/MD degree in Neurology	Not Applicable	They will perform the duties of a junior consultant in his/her respective department as like all other govt./Private Hospitals in Sarkari Karmachari Hospital as per directives of the concern authority.	Please

India push-ins need better response

Pursue all options to stop such unlawful expulsions

India's continued expulsion of ethnic Bengali Muslims to Bangladesh, as again highlighted by the Human Rights Watch (HRW) recently, is totally unacceptable. According to HRW's Asia director, "India's ruling BJP is fuelling discrimination by arbitrarily expelling Bengali Muslims from the country, including Indian citizens." By falsely labelling them as "illegal immigrants", Indian authorities are unlawfully deporting Indian Muslims to Bangladesh—at least 200 of whom have since been returned by Bangladeshi border guards after being found to be Indian citizens.

The Indian government has provided no official data on the number of people expelled so far. However, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) has reported that India expelled more than 1,500 Muslim men, women, and children to Bangladesh between May 7 and June 15, including around 100 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. Among them, some were found to be Bangladeshi nationals. Others were unable to prove their Indian citizenship due to various factors, including India's controversial new citizenship laws and verification processes. But the bypassing of established legal channels and international obligations renders all such push-ins—whether of Indian citizens, Bangladeshi nationals, or Rohingya refugees—unlawful. Moreover, as HRW has noted, it also reflects the Indian authorities' disregard for due process, domestic legal protections, and international human rights standards.

According to HRW's findings, authorities in BJP-run states such as Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha, and Rajasthan have rounded up Muslims, mostly impoverished migrant workers, and handed them over to Indian border guards. In some cases, Indian border guards threatened and assaulted the detainees to force them to cross into Bangladesh, without adequately verifying their citizenship claims. The Indian government has had to readmit dozens of such individuals who ultimately proved their Indian citizenship. One such citizen, a former schoolteacher from Assam, said that Indian border officials tied his hands, gagged him, and forced him into Bangladesh along with 14 others.

Meanwhile, in May, Indian authorities also expelled around 100 Rohingya refugees from a detention centre in Assam across the Bangladesh border. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reported that Indian authorities forced another 40 Rohingya refugees into the sea near Myanmar, giving them life jackets and making them swim to shore.

Despite repeated protests by our government, India has continued its illegal push-in campaign, in blatant violation of international norms and in an unneighbourly manner. Given these circumstances, while we must keep diplomatic channels open, it is perhaps time for Bangladesh to internationalise the issue and seek intervention from global forums like the UN to ensure that India puts an immediate stop to these operations.

Death toll confusion is unfortunate

Timely, verified updates vital to dispel rumours

Following the Uttara training jet crash that has killed around 30 individuals so far, mostly young students, it is understandable that citizens would be left with deep scars and traumas. The visceral expressions of shock, fear, or anger that we have witnessed since are natural reactions in the face of a tragedy of this magnitude. Right now, we need clarity, closure, and a calm, collective commitment to ensure that such a disaster is never repeated. But confusion and chaos do not help. One particular source of confusion of late has been about the death toll, caused by conspiracy theories based on unsubstantiated claims, which is undermining the vital process of national reckoning.

While the interim government has been rightly criticised for its indecision, mismanagement, and poor coordination and communication—which, to be frank, are symptomatic of a deeper dysfunction that long predates this administration—casting aspersions on the casualty figure only adds to public distress and hampers the collective healing process. Ever since the tragedy, we have seen how misinformation and rumours about death and missing person figures have spread rapidly on social media. That said, the chaotic rollout of information by those in charge is equally responsible for the confusion. We have seen conflicting casualty figures emerge from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), the Milestone School and College authorities, and the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) division of the armed forces. While the revising down of the casualty figure from 32 may be temporary, the fact that the authorities have failed to ensure centralised, coordinated communication has only fed the rumours.

Given the circumstances, it is high time the government set up a national strategic communication unit comprising all relevant stakeholders, so that any update shared is one verified and endorsed by all. The media too has a responsibility in this regard. Media outlets, instead of chasing sensationalism or circulating unverified figures, must uphold the public's right to credible information. At the same time, citizens should exercise restraint and verify facts before sharing content, including graphic videos, online. We must understand that the victims and their families need more than our sympathy—they need dignity, truth, and justice. And the nation needs disaster response systems built on transparency and accountability. Let us do what's required of us instead of creating more problems.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



First woman walks in space

On this day in 1984, Soviet cosmonaut Svetlana Yevgenyevna Savitskaya became the first woman to walk in space.

EDITORIAL

TRIBUTE TO TAJUDDIN AHMAD ON HIS BIRTH CENTENARY
The unsung leader of our Liberation War

THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher
of The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

Tajuddin Ahmad was an exceptional leader on many counts. His commitment for the downtrodden, his personal values of austerity, his self-discipline, his ability to focus on the task at hand without being distracted, his unselfish nature, and his determination and fearlessness together made him a rare leader anywhere in the world, especially in Bangladesh where moral values of politicians and their capacity to put the country above their personal interests is always a rare trait.

It is sad that an occasion like the birth centenary of a man like Tajuddin Ahmad is not being celebrated at the national level or by many more civic, intellectual and academic bodies. This is evidence of our lack of respect for history, dismal record of honouring our heroes, and the intellectual bankruptcy and, more sadly, intellectual cowardice in which we now live.

The decision by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 25, 1971 to stay back and court arrest by the Pakistanis and that by Tajuddin to venture into the totally uncertain world of armed struggle to gain our freedom marks for the man—and of course for the nation—the most significant turning point in our history. A lot has been written about Sheikh Mujib's decision to stay back. Many views have been critical and some not so. Arguments exist on both sides. My purpose today is not to discuss the merit or demerit of Bangabandhu's decision but what impact it had on Tajuddin's life.

From being Bangabandhu's second in command, the task for Tajuddin now was to lead the nation. And he did so with stupendous courage, determination, patriotism and exemplary leadership.

When we follow his journey through those nine crucial months and focus on how he evolved from a successful party organiser to the de facto commander-in-chief of our independence struggle, we realise the versatility and strength of his inner potential. He rose to the occasion, expanded his capabilities of thought and action, widened his knowledge and vision, and, most importantly, established

sometimes on boat, all the while deeply contemplating how to organise the armed struggle against Pakistan.

The first glimpse that we get of his state of mind is when he reached the border and said he did not want to enter India as a "refugee" seeking shelter but as the "representative of an independent country" seeking assistance. According to Amirul Islam's account, they waited for a long time to hear from the Indian side (Indian border forces had to consult their superiors) and at one point, being extremely tired, fell asleep on a culvert. The man who was destined to become prime minister of the Liberation War government within a few days thought nothing of sleeping on a culvert. That was how his revolutionary mind was already set.

The next testimony of Tajuddin's

This proved to be a serious challenge because of internal dissension. The younger leadership led by Sheikh Moni and Sirajul Alam Khan (as well as Tofail Ahmed, ASM Abdur Rab, and some others), which had emerged quite powerful during the non-cooperation movement of March '71, demanded a revolutionary government. This would give them far more power and manoeuvrability than otherwise. This contrasted with the more mainstream view, carried by Tajuddin and other senior leaders, of gathering a large number of the elected 167 central and 288 provincial members of parliament in Calcutta and forming the government-in-exile with their support.

In forming the government, Tajuddin's formula was to follow the same leadership group that operated under Bangabandhu during the non-cooperation movement. Opting for a presidential form, making Bangabandhu president and Nazrul Islam the acting president, Tajuddin as the prime minister and M Mansur Ali, AHM Qamaruzzaman and Khondakar Mostaq Ahmad as ministers, helped to solve the problem for the moment.

However, the Sheikh Moni-led younger group, though forced to

psychological and emotional support that troops needed at such a crucial moment in history. Tajuddin, who visited the war zones, built a very warm personal rapport with the freedom fighters.

One of his biggest successes was negotiating with the host country, India, and keeping the supply of arms and ammunition going, though not as much as we wanted and needed. Obviously, here the Indian decisions and actions were determined significantly by their own strategic considerations, but Tajuddin was able to always put our needs successfully forward and get his way to keep the operations going.

There are two initiatives of Tajuddin that are not well-known.

First was his attempt to create a platform to forge a unity of all political parties that supported the freedom struggle. He held a meeting in September with the leaders of various parties, including Maulana Bhashani, Muzaffar Ahmad, Comrade Moni Singh, and others. This was an astute move that greatly strengthened the image and prestige of the government-in-exile, especially globally.

Tajuddin also thought ahead and made advance plans of reconstruction



Tajuddin Ahmad played a tremendous role in terms of inspiring and motivating our forces during the Liberation War and giving them that crucial psychological and emotional support that troops needed at such a crucial moment in history.

PHOTO: ARCHIVE

The most serious decision that Tajuddin had to urgently implement was the formation of some sort of internationally acceptable government-in-exile so that our war acquired legitimacy, a visible existence, a command structure that was both representative and authentic. Such a set-up would expedite the process of international recognition and receiving assistance.

his leadership to face the various and unprecedented challenges and served the cause of our independence as no one else. No politician of the era, let alone Tajuddin himself, was remotely prepared to lead in an armed struggle. Yet, with confidence, dignity, strategic instincts, and unmatched integrity, he led the nation in spite of ever new impediments that emerged most damagingly, from within his own party.

To put it simply, his task now was to mobilise the nation to fight and convince the world to help.

Imagine this man, along with his associate Barrister Amirul Islam, hiding in Old Dhaka for the first two days, slipping out of the city disguised as a day labourer, criss-crossing the countryside mostly walking and

mental make-up and exceptional leadership quality is his first meeting with the then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The importance and gravity of this meeting cannot be overemphasised. It sowed the seed of a crucial partnership that sailed us through the following crucial nine months of genocide and brutal war.

Here was a man bereft of literally everything except his self-respect and faith in his people's desire to fight for freedom and the willingness to die for it, sitting face to face with the powerful prime minister of the biggest country in the region—with a most famous dynastic heritage—making a case to assist us in our fight for freedom.

According to Barrister Amirul Islam's account published in *Aloker Anantadhabra* (Vol 1, Pg 69), Tajuddin said, "... This independence war is ours and we want to do everything ourselves. What we need from you is shelter for the Mukti Bahini in the Indian soil, facilities for training and arms supply. Within two to three weeks there will be a huge influx of refugees whose shelter, safety and food India should help us with. We also need help to let the world know about our independence struggle. We also request your help in the field of diplomacy." The war, he said, was ours. He didn't want it to appear to be an India-Pakistan war, nor a civil war within Pakistan. It was our war for freedom and independence.

The most serious decision that Tajuddin had to urgently implement was the formation of some sort of internationally acceptable government-in-exile so that our war acquired legitimacy, a visible existence, a command structure that was both representative and authentic. Such a set-up would expedite the process of international recognition and receiving assistance.

accept Tajuddin's formula, continued their efforts to create dissension against him. He was contested and contradicted in every turn of events, which became very serious with the formation of Mujib Bahini.

Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid's piece in *Aloker Anantadhabra* elaborately depicts the problems faced by Tajuddin's government due to the factions within. In addition to Sheikh Moni and the student leaders, among the seniors the role played by Khondakar Mostaq was quite troubling. He demanded the foreign affairs portfolio, forced the Mujibnagar government to allocate a special office separate from the rest, and compelled Mahabubul Alam Chashi and Taheruddin to be brought to Calcutta and included in his team in the foreign office. Both their names surfaced after Bangabandhu's assassination in August 1975, in which Mostaq took a leading part and was made the president of Bangladesh by the killers.

One of the extraordinary examples of Tajuddin's leadership and management capacities is the way he ran our armed struggle—our *Muktijuddho*. This was an area totally unknown to any politician, including him. Setting up the II sectors and nearly 70 subsectors, creating their respective leadership structure, and assuring the supply of arms and ammunition, food and training were enormous tasks. Our own sector commanders came from Pakistan trained armed forces whose values, attitude and command system all came from a highly centralised army structure, which did not suit the needs of guerilla warfare—something that was the need of the moment. In spite of their background, our sector commanders did a stupendous job for which they have not been given appropriate honour.

Tajuddin played a tremendous role in terms of inspiring and motivating our forces and giving them that crucial psychological and emotional support that troops needed at such a crucial moment in history. Tajuddin, who visited the war zones, built a very warm personal rapport with the freedom fighters.

and rehabilitation to be implemented after the creation of Bangladesh. His most significant project was to create a militia force consisting of all the freedom fighters. The idea was to turn the young who took up arms to defeat the enemy into a massive force for nation building. He did not want to send any freedom fighter home empty-handed but to engage them to build the Sonar Bangla of our dreams.

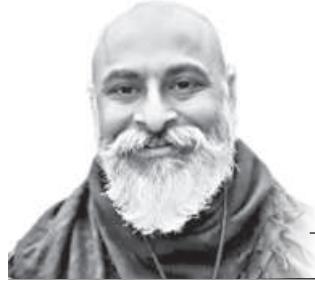
As we pay tribute to Tajuddin Ahmad on his birth centenary, we must ask ourselves the critical question as to why this man's legacy has been so neglected till date.

The answer lies in the mockery that we ourselves made of our Liberation War history. As regimes would change, so would our history books, the national symbols, the heroes, and school textbooks. Just imagine the harm we have done to the younger generation by tailoring our most glorious legacy into party-centred narratives. Since no pro-Tajuddin party ever came to power, he remained uncared.

Can any nation grow with such a short-sighted, dishonest and myopic view of history? The indifference and lack of respect we see today in the younger generation to the history of our Liberation War is caused, in many ways, by the personal and partisan games we played with our most sacred past, our independence struggle in which we faced genocide, ethnic cleansing, and the prospect of destruction as a nation, not to mention the huge number of lives we lost and many more millions who lost their homes and livelihood. When and how will our mind shift to fact-based authentic history? As I see the degradation of history, falsification of truth and false narratives replacing crucial ones, I wonder how we can rebuild our nation's history based on truth.

VACUUM CYCLE IN POLITICS

How creative stagnation triggers political resurrection

Amber M Islam
is executive creative director
at Grey Group.

AMBER M ISLAM

In the grand theatre of democratic politics, few phenomena are as startling as the resurrection of discredited political dynasties. Defying conventional wisdom about political accountability, we see this recurring pattern across South and Southeast Asia. Families and parties, once thought politically extinct, often return to power not through reform but through a persistent absence of viable alternatives. This is the "vacuum cycle," a phenomenon born from weak creative economies that produce risk-averse societies incapable of imagining new political narratives.

The impossible resurrections

Consider Pakistan, where the Sharif family's ignoble exit seemed permanent. Corruption scandals, Panama Papers revelations, and public disgrace appeared to seal their fate. Yet, Shahbaz Sharif leads the country again, proving that in the vacuum cycle, no political death is permanent. Even Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) rise offered hope before being crushed, creating another vacuum. Today, PTI faces fierce slander while its leader sits imprisoned, only to inevitably rise again when the cycle demands it. The see-saw between Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Muslim League has become a full scale wheel of fortune, with three options whose punishment and reward cycles seem fatalistically predetermined.

In India, the Congress Party's decimating defeat seemed to herald a new era. The Gandhi family appeared finished, their dynastic politics thoroughly rejected. Yet, as Modi's tenure reaches its critical juncture, the vacuum cycle positions a once-irrelevant party as kingmaker—not through reform, but because voters demand familiar shapes.

Bangladesh offers the most striking example. The Awami League's return in the late 1990s, after being branded a "traitor party," marked the first revolution of the wheel. Now in 2025, the much-maligned Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) positions itself to inherit power from Dr Muhammad Yunus's transitional government. The machinery of return is already in motion, driven by exhausted alternatives and a wizened party with no major reforms visible.

Thailand tells an astounding story of family political resurrection. The Pheu Thai Party has seen three prime ministers from the same family: Thaksin Shinawatra, his sister Yingluck, and now his daughter Paetongtarn, the current prime minister. Despite Thaksin's



VISUAL: SIFAT AFRIN SHAMS

2006 ouster, self-exile, and his party being outlawed, the family keeps returning through events bordering on magical realism. The vacuum cycle plays out blatantly as the punished party completes its return to glory.

Perhaps nowhere is this more acute than the Philippines, where Ferdinand Marcos's 1986 ouster seemed to deliver irreversible historical judgement. His wife Imelda became an icon of plunder with her infamous collection of shoes, coats, and handbags discovered during their flight. Yet, 36 years later, their son Bongbong won the 2022 election by a landslide, securing almost 50 percent of the votes. Today, he is president, his family's reputation restored while his opponent Rodrigo Duterte faces International Criminal Court charges.

The mechanics of the vacuum

The vacuum cycle rewards the worst punishment with the best outcomes. But what drives this relentless pattern? The answer lies not in discredited politicians' resilience, but

in the structural weakness of societies that repeatedly embrace them. At the heart lies a critical absence: the lack of new political parties capable of gaining traction, and more fundamentally, the absence of self-reliant creative economies that could foster the intellectual confidence necessary for political experimentation.

When voters face impoverished choices, they engage in political nostalgia, reminiscing

The cognitive mechanism: Creative industries train people in divergent thinking—the ability to generate multiple solutions to single problems. When societies regularly engage diverse narratives through film, literature, music, and digital media, they develop cognitive flexibility. This creates comfort with political experimentation and "narrative courage"—the intellectual confidence to try new stories about governance and leadership.

Consider South Korea's transformation. K-Pop's global success didn't just boost exports. It rewired Korean society's relationship with innovation and risk-taking. Young Koreans who consumed and created boundary-pushing cultural content became comfortable challenging political norms. The cognitive flexibility that produced genre-bending music also produced sustained civic movements that impeached Park Geun-hye. The candlelight vigils that brought down a president used similar collaborative networks as Korea's cultural exports.

Taiwan validates this pattern. The island's creative renaissance, from internationally acclaimed cinema to innovative digital democracy experiments, reflects a society valuing originality over imitation. Taiwanese film-makers competing globally with Hollywood developed the confidence to create political institutions competing with Washington and Beijing models. Creative confidence that produced unique cultural products also produced unique democratic innovations.

However, the reverse is equally true. When creative industries face erosion through imposed ideology, political outlook suffers. India's creative industries have recently declined through communal polarisation and political cronyism, increasingly reflected in its political discourse and democratic institutions—the exact opposite of what should happen.

The self-reliance imperative

The emphasis on "self-reliant" creative economies reveals why imported cultural content cannot substitute for indigenous creative capacity. Countries dependent on foreign cultural content—consuming Hollywood, Bollywood, or K-dramas without producing competitive alternatives—remain trapped in "narrative colonialism," becoming consumers rather than creators of stories about human possibility.

Breaking the cycle

The vacuum cycle represents more than a political phenomenon, it reveals a broader failure of imagination. Societies trapped in this cycle can destroy what they dislike but cannot create what they need. Only when societies develop the capacity to tell new stories about themselves can they escape the gravitational pull of old political narratives.

Until then, the wheel will continue turning, bringing back dynasties we thought buried—not because they deserve power, but because we failed to imagine alternatives. The health of democracy may depend less on electoral institutions than on creative industries, for it is in the realm of imagination where political possibilities are born. Without it, even the most dramatic revolutionary moments become mere preludes to resurrection.

about earlier periods when life seemed less complicated. This reflects a deeper psychological truth: people's core desire to return to regular lives after driving revolutionary changes. The initial energy that topples corrupt dynasties is extraordinary but unsustainable. Revolutionary moments demand tremendous civic engagement and psychological strain. Once immediate crises pass, societies naturally seek normality. But without compelling alternatives, normality becomes synonymous with the familiar, even if previously rejected.

The creative economy connection

Here lies the crucial insight: except for India and Thailand, the above-mentioned countries lag significantly in developing robust creative economies. This deficit is not merely economic but fundamentally political. The connection between creative industries and political innovation operates through three interconnected mechanisms.

The economic mechanism: Creative economies generate human capital spillovers. Skills developed in creative industries—critical thinking, collaborative problem-solving, comfort with ambiguity—create workforces naturally suited for political innovation. More importantly, creative industries provide economic alternatives to traditional patronage systems, reducing dependence on political parties for employment and social mobility.

The social mechanism: Creative industries function as "weak-tie networks"—social connections bridging different communities, classes, and ideologies. Unlike traditional political networks that reinforce divisions, creative collaborations bring together diverse groups around shared projects. Film productions, art exhibitions, or digital creative work create temporary but meaningful alliances across social boundaries. These cross-cutting networks become foundations for new political coalitions transcending dynastic loyalties.

We need a revival of our conscience

Naziba Basher
is a journalist at The Daily Star.

NAZIBA BASHER

Picture this: a site of tragedy. Smoke still rising, glass shards crunching beneath frantic footsteps, children's screams piercing the air. Rescue workers are scrambling, running on adrenaline and desperation, to save lives. And yet, they are blocked, not by fire, not by debris, but by people. People who are not there to help or find their loved ones. They are just there to watch, to gawk at what was going on, as if this were some grotesque street theatre unfolding for their afternoon entertainment.

When a fighter jet crashed into Milestone School and College in Dhaka's Diabari on

Monday, the world should have stood still. We should have all been gripped by the all-consuming urge to help somehow. Instead, we saw something far more frightening: we saw apathy, we witnessed a society desensitised to agony.

One journalist on the ground asked a woman in the crowd, "What are you doing here?" She replied with a smile, "I heard there was a fire incident. I have come to watch."

She went there "to watch" a fire incident—let that sink in.

This is not just a problem of social media

addiction or morbid curiosity; it's the case of a spiritual, moral, collective rot. Are we becoming so desensitised to suffering that when we see children burning, we reach for phones first, not our conscience?

And it does not stop at the crash site.

At surrounding hospitals and the burn institute, nurses and doctors were doing what they do best: racing against time to save lives, providing comfort to broken bodies and shattered families. But then came the politics.

Not policy, not coordination, but politics.

Politicians descended upon the hospitals in droves. And no, they did not come alone. They brought their entourages and photographers, hungry for headlines and votes. Their groups blocked the emergency gates. Their supporters pushed past nurses. One nurse was reportedly seen begging them to leave so the injured could be brought in. She, too, was ignored. Because in their eyes, she was not part of the show.

This is not a one-off moral failing. This is systemic and widespread, and it is deeply familiar.

Have we become a people who treat other people's pain like it is our afternoon drama serial? Some of us see blood and ask, "Which channel is airing it live?" Some others walk past collapsed children to get a better angle for a selfie. It seems we perform grief for clout, and we weaponise tragedy for power.

I would like to believe we were not always like this.

I remember a Bangladesh that has always prided itself for the compassion and humanity of its people, for their instinct to help one another. But somewhere along the way, that impulse seems to have been stifled by the noise of virality, YouTube likes, political theatrics, and self-serving indifference.

Now, we crowd scenes of horror for spectacle, we block ambulances to make way for our "leaders," and we completely forget that behind every statistic is a name, a face, a family shattered beyond repair.

And here is what frightens me the most: if a plane crash killing and burning schoolchildren cannot shake us, what will? Where are the collective gasps? Where is the

silence? The mourning? The mobilisation for justice?

Instead, we scroll. We click. We post. We conjecture theories. And then we move on.

What happened at Milestone school should have been a national reckoning. Instead, it has exposed how performative our grief has become, how little we value life—unless it is our own or our loved ones'. It has exposed the narcissism that passes for concern and the failure of our institutions to draw lines when ethics crumble.

Yes, we need laws to keep people away from rescue zones. We need protocols to ensure that politicians do not choke off emergency care. We need regulations to ensure that trauma survivors are not hounded for headlines and comments.

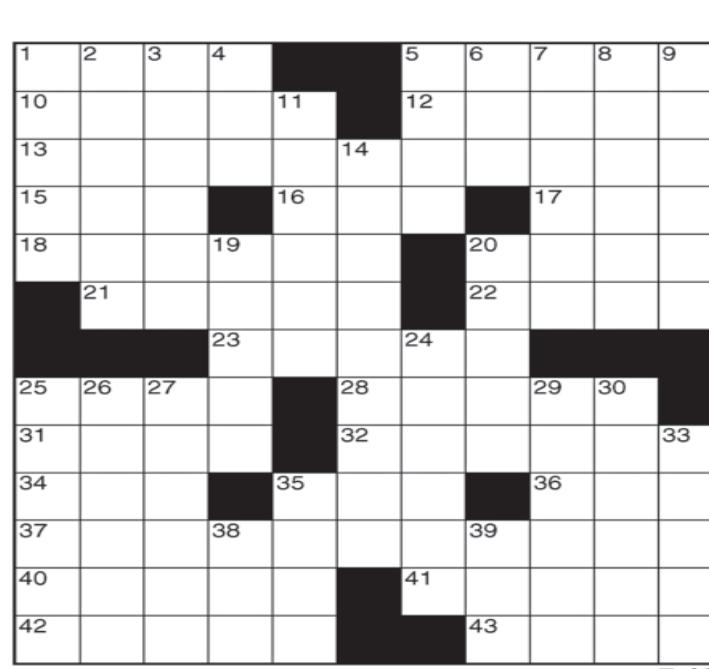
But more than anything, we need a revival of our conscience. Because right now, Bangladesh is burning. And not just from jet fuel or accidents. We are burning from within, from the sheer lack of empathy, of decency, of good sense. If we do not find our humanity again soon, there will be nothing left to save.

ACROSS

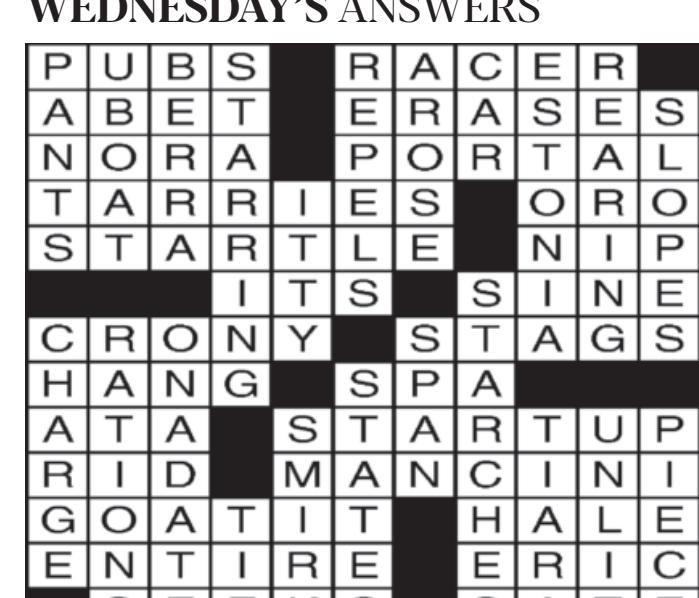
- Knee protectors
- Expose to intense heat
- Some woodwinds
- Fab Four drummer
- Egg option
- Airport screening org.
- Daiquiri ingredient
- Easy victim
- Becomes prevalent
- Evergreen tree
- Amy Winehouse hit
- Enjoy a novel
- Gay (WWII bomber)
- Unexciting
- Famous
- Leave out
- Baking spice
- Guitarist Wood
- Floral garland
- Longoria of TV
- Hollywood street
- Gibson garnish
- Polygon corner
- Worries
- Dick Tracy's love

DOWN

- Fence supports
- Addict, e.g.
- Give to charity
- Capitol Bldg. worker
- Hat part
- Relieve (of)
- Infant outfit
- Large lizard
- Cut off
- Damascus native
- Shaded headgear
- Paper piece
- Chris of "Guardians of the Galaxy"
- Writer — May Alcott
- Trunks
- Quantity
- Mickey's mate
- Come into view
- New Jersey NHL team
- Stares in shock
- Camera part
- Boar's mate
- Blasting stuff



WEDNESDAY'S ANSWERS



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PHOTO: HISHAM KHAN

What official recognition means for the esports scene in Bangladesh

There are many who hope that the esports scene might get a similar degree of funding and infrastructural support that other established sports in Bangladesh have.

AYAAN SHAMS SIDDIQUEE

On July 13, the Ministry of Youth and Sports announced that esports would now be recognised as an official sport in Bangladesh. In accordance with the National Sports Council Act, 2018, esports, as a sport, would refer to any type of game that enhances mental, physical, and intellectual excellence and is disciplined, open, voluntary, professional, and competitive in nature.

This recognition marks a massive turning point for the ever-growing gaming and esports scene in Bangladesh. As such, it shouldn't come as a surprise that the local gaming community erupted in joy following the ministry's confirmation of the matter.

Tanvir 'TripleNinja' Rahaman, a professional *Valorant* player, says, "It felt like a win, not just for current players, but for the entire community, including fans, casters, organisers, and content creators. For so long,

we've worked in the shadows with little recognition or support. Now, we finally have a shot at building something sustainable and respectable in the public sphere."

The announcement was also met with a series of expectations. Most notably, gamers hoped that this recognition would help dismantle a lot of misconceptions that the older generation bears about esports and gaming in general.

"Loads of parents think that esports is just a form of gambling or addiction," says Zahira 'kiwi' Aziz, a professional esports athlete for Team Celestials. "Bringing this industry within legal bounds will hopefully help esports overcome stigmas from parents who think that gaming is merely child's play and a waste of time."

Meanwhile, there are many who hope that the esports scene might get a similar degree of funding and infrastructural support that other established sports in Bangladesh have. Aslam Ahammed Apon,

co-founder of RedHawks, the team that recently represented Bangladesh in the Esports World Cup, hopes that the newfound legality of esports as a sport will empower his team to greater heights.

"Right now, the teams we're playing against on the international stage are much more advanced than us," he shares. "Many of them have access to bootcamps and specialised training facilities prior to major tournaments that we don't. Even in terms of branding, these teams are often backed by big sponsors who arrange for their travel, accommodation, gaming peripherals, etc. Following the official recognition, we're optimistic that we'll finally get access to external facilities and benefits that might help us grow further as esports athletes."

And it isn't just players and esports athletes who have high hopes from this update. Regardless of what role they hold, members of the community have been steadily

voicing their excitement about what the future might hold. Sanjida "Littlopata" Afrin, a professional esports commentator, streamer, and content creator, shared her own aspirations that were born from Bangladesh recognising esports as an official sport.

Sanjida is hopeful that the recognition will also help elevate the standard of the broadcasts of gaming tournaments in the country to the point where commentators like her might get the opportunity to go live on television channels on a big scale, as seen in sports like cricket. "If my commentating skills are appreciated on a national level, I would like to transition into being an esports show host as well someday," she says.

Sanjida also emphasises the impact this recognition will have on putting Bangladesh on the map when it comes to esports. "A lot of gaming companies assume that the South Asian region is just made up of India. So, esports stepping into official territories and receiving government support is the first step for us to be recognised globally," she says.

Speaking on further expectations from the government, Md Rashid Uz Zaman, Chief Operating Officer of Zenetic Esports, shares the importance of building an entire esports ecosystem, and not just a tournament-oriented competitive scene.

"By recognising esports as a sport, Bangladesh has opened doors to pivotal opportunities like esports education, job opportunities within esports, youth empowerment, and more, all of which are elements required for the base of an esports ecosystem," he shares. "With support from ministry authorities, I think this process to make esports accessible to everyone – not just esports athletes – gets sped up further."

As a long-time fan of everything associated with gaming, all of the recent strides in esports development excite me. Watching pros battle it out in titles like *Valorant*, *EAFC*, and *PUBG* on national television might not be such a far-off dream anymore. But beyond the hype, this move also gives Bangladesh a real shot at building an esports culture from the ground up, and I am all in for that.

Ayaan immerses himself in dinosaur comics and poorly-written manga. Recommend your least favourite reads at ayaan.shams@gmail.com

Boys don't cry but here's why they should

MAHIPARA FAATIN

How many times have you told someone, "I'm okay," despite not being okay at all? There's this strange, ever-present societal pressure to always appear fine and to rarely show emotional vulnerability. When someone checks up on us, we're likely to say "I'm good" mostly out of reflex, and also because we're afraid of opening up.

We pretend. We bottle it up. And we move on as if nothing's wrong.

This expectation weighs heavily on men. Women, despite being unfairly labelled as "emotional", can still find refuge in their close female circles. Men, however, get shunned by that same circle along with the rest of the world. The act of shedding a few tears is perceived as shedding off your entire masculinity. It's seen as shameful and as a sign of weakness. Men are forced to always appear calm, collected and strong – even when they're falling apart inside.

At the heart of this stigma lies the same patriarchy that hurts everyone it touches. It forces men to be the head of the family – a pillar that can never be knocked down no matter how many storms come its way. From a young age, we tell boys to "be a man" and that "boys don't cry". They're subtle, sometimes unintentional, but they plant deep roots – teaching boys to associate vulnerability with weakness and silence with strength. Over time, this becomes the unspoken rulebook of masculinity. And somewhere in the process, boys learn not to cry.

They refuse to acknowledge their emotional needs and therefore are much less likely to seek therapy or talk it out with their close ones. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), men are twice as likely to take their own lives compared to women. In the United States, nearly eighty percent of all suicide deaths are male.

On the other hand, research consistently shows that men are far less likely than women to seek help for mental health issues. A 2022 survey by the American Psychological Association found that only thirty percent of men said they would openly talk to someone if they were feeling depressed, compared to over 60 percent of women. These aren't just statistics – they're a reflection of the patriarchy's failure of men.

The idea that masculinity is defined by emotional control isn't just outdated; it's dangerous. Men who bottle up their emotions are more likely to experience higher levels of anger, frustration, and develop dependence on alcohol. This often leads to them having poor relations with their families. In the worst cases, this pain spills out as abuse, violence, or total emotional detachment. This negatively impacts the upbringing of a child who carries that trauma into adulthood, impacting their own future relations.

In a world where emotional expression is increasingly encouraged, where we urge people to speak up, seek help, and prioritise mental health, many men are still trapped behind the mask of stoicism. I think it's time that we as a society stop being averse to the very thing that makes any of us human – emotions.

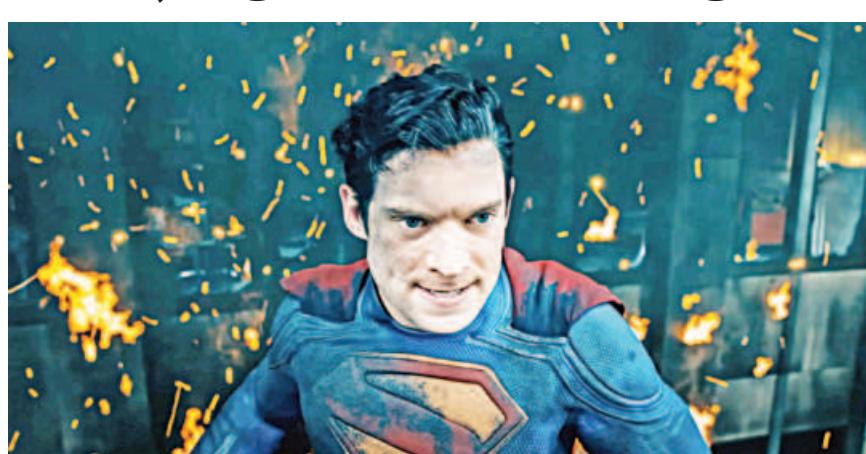
Recognising that this is a patriarchal issue is the first step in fighting it. We must stop raising boys to associate emotions and seeking help with a sense of inferiority. We need to stop teaching boys to hide their emotions and start teaching them how to validate and acknowledge them at the very least.

Masculinity, thus, needs to be redefined across cultures. We must tell boys that strength can look like self-awareness and tears are not a failure of character but a natural response to pain.

To get there, we need to build environments where men can speak without judgement. This means classrooms, workplaces, and homes where emotional honesty is welcomed – not mocked. It means fathers fostering emotional openness for their sons. It means friends checking in on each other and creating a safe space where men can feel comfortable opening up. Men deserve empathy, and their emotional struggles are just as valid as anyone else's.

When it comes to your emotions, "man up" is not the answer. Because boys do cry. And they absolutely should.

Mahpara thinks the real sigma move is going to therapy. Tell her she needs some herself at mahparafaatin@gmail.com



The official Israeli consulate in Los Angeles responded with a Facebook post on July 11th, which featured an AI-generated parody of the film's poster, featuring Israel Defence Forces (IDF) soldiers and the caption "The Real Superheroes." Right-wing Zionist political commentator Ben Shapiro also gave a negative review of the film, where he ironically defended the film, where he unironically defended the fictional Boravia as he would Israel.

Even before the movie's release, its pro-immigration themes sparked controversy among the right-wing media in the United States, with Fox News journalists heavily mocking the film as being "Superwoke", including making fun of Superman actor David Corenswet's last name (which is of Jewish origin).

In 1940, *Das Schwarze Korps*, the official newspaper of the SS (Schutzstaffel, or Protection Squads) in Germany, published a similar piece criticising the Superman comic strip by creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, claiming it "poisoned the American youth" and made fun of Jerry Siegel's last name as well.

Superman stories have always referenced and challenged real-life geopolitics since the character's inception. In 1946, *The Adventures of Superman* radio show featured a storyline called "Clan of the Fiery Cross", where Superman fought a fictionalised version of the Ku Klux Klan.

Intentional or not, the fact that most

people have thought that the film is pro-Palestinian is a sign of a massive culture shift. This speaks to how culture and the stories we tell can be used as tools for morality when politics and laws are clearly in the wrong. A major Hollywood movie featuring an allegory that people infer to be pro-Palestinian is a hopeful sign of a shift in the way mainstream media portrays this issue.

In fact, previous iterations of *Superman* stories have influenced real-life events. Before the US officially entered World War II, opinions on Nazis in the US and other parts of the world were either positive or neutral. Both before and during the war, comic book characters like Superman and Captain America, as well as films such as *The Great Dictator*, were used as tools against the Nazis. Eventually, the collective public perception of Nazism became synonymous with systematic racial genocide. Similarly, people's responses to the new *Superman* story attest to the influence such storytelling mediums have.

If a message of kindness, one that speaks out against the horrific crimes committed in the real world, can be spread through the media we consume, then there is reason to be hopeful. Superman may not be real. But kindness is.

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Star SPORT



FRIDAY JULY 25, 2025, SRABAN 10, 1432 BS

SCORES IN BRIEF

Pakistan

178-7 in 20 overs (Farhan 63, Ayub 21, Hasan Nawaz 33, Mohammad Nawaz 27; Taskin 3-38, Nasum 2-22)

Bangladesh

104 all out in 16.4 overs (Naim 10, Saifuddin 35 not out; Miraz 3-19, Ashraf 2-13, Mohammad Nawaz 2-4)

Result

Pakistan won by 74 runs.

Player-of-the-match

Sahibzada Farhan



Bangladesh T20I captain Litton Das, after losing the final T20I against Pakistan

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Test of bench strength GOES WRONG

SPORTS REPORTER

The third and final T20I against Pakistan in Mirpur yesterday presented the Tigers a luxury they don't often get - an opportunity to test their bench strength, having already taken an unassailable lead in the series by winning the opening two matches.

The Bangladesh management had two options - go in with their main XI in a quest to seal their maiden 3-0 clean sweep over Pakistan in T20Is or test their bench strength as this will be their last match before the Asia Cup T20, likely to be held in September.

Historically, Bangladesh aren't known as a side who test their bench strength. But this time, the think tank chose the second option.

Even though it did not go smoothly for the team, as they lost the match by 74 runs, it provided the think tank clarity over who should be part of their plans for the Asia Cup, and who should not.

In the third T20I, Bangladesh had rung in five changes in the playing XI from the previous game, as Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Mohammad Saifuddin, Taskin Ahmed and Nasum Ahmed came in for Parvez Hossain Emon, Tawhid Hridoy, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Mustafizur Rahman and Rishad Hossain.

Among the additions, Tanzid and Taskin are first-choice cricketers in T20Is but the

remaining three - Miraz, Saifuddin and Nasum - are not.

So, for these three players and opener Mohammad Naim, who received a second game in a row, this was a chance to prove their mettle. However, not all of them could cash in on the opportunity.

ODI captain Miraz, who is often criticised for not being up to par in T20Is, went for 14 runs in the first over and wasn't brought back by skipper Litton Das again. As a batter, he made an eight-ball 10 before getting caught at mid-off with a mistimed pull against Faheem Ashraf.

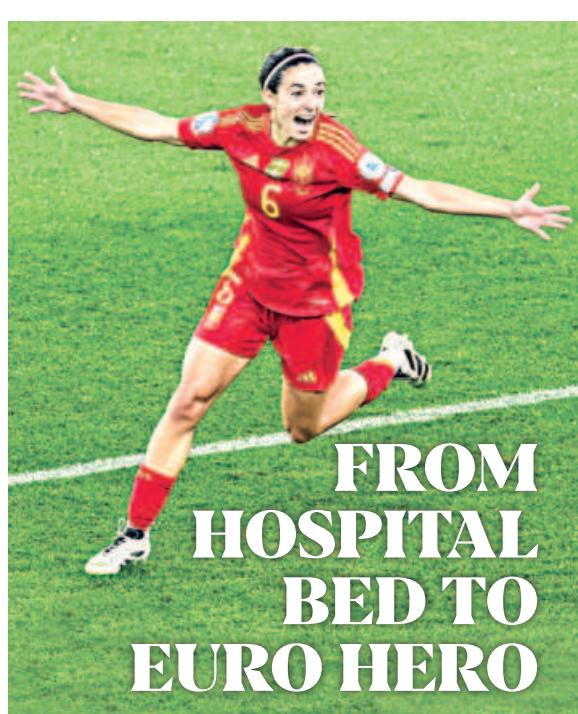
Naim, who had only made three runs in the second game on Thursday, could only make a 17-ball 10 while chasing a target of 179.

But it was not all gloom for the backup players as Nasum, who was playing a T20I after a year, finished with the best bowling figures for Bangladesh (2-22) on the day.

Saifuddin was economical, finishing with 1-28 in four overs, and also scored an unbeaten 34-ball 35, highest in the side, to push Bangladesh's total to 104 from 41-7. Although both Nasum and Saifuddin's performances were nowhere enough to make up for the shoddy display from the rest of the side, the duo has put forth a good showing to put themselves in line for a spot in the Asia Cup bound squad. Miraz and Naim, meanwhile, have done the exact opposite.

Including yesterday's game, Bangladesh were asked to chase 150 or more in 10 T20Is in Mirpur -- and the Tigers have failed to win any of those matches.

FROM HOSPITAL BED TO EURO HERO



"You could write a book about this," said Aitana Bonmati on Wednesday as she reflected on the last few weeks in her life after scoring the goal that took Spain to the final of the Women's Euro 2025. At the end of June, the reigning Ballon d'Or winner was lying in hospital with viral meningitis, and it looked like she might not be able to play for Spain at the tournament in Switzerland. Now she is preparing to lead her team into Sunday's final against England in Basel, in a rematch of the 2023 World Cup decider, which Spain won, after converting the only goal of the last-four clash with Germany in extra time.

PHOTO: AFP

SPORTS REPORTER

After resolving a dispute with players over selection criteria, the Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation (BTTF) has submitted late entries to ensure the country's top paddlers participate in the South Asian Regional Championship 2025.

A squad of eight players - four men and four women -- is set to depart for Kathmandu, Nepal, on July 28. The regional event, featuring only team competitions, will be held from July 30-31. Bangladesh will compete alongside India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, with only the champions earning a spot at the World Championships in London in April next year.

While preparations began in late May with 16 men and 16 women in camp, training was disrupted due to disagreements over selection methods. Players opposed trials in favour of the usual ranking-based approach -- how the BTTF usually selects teams for ITTF (International Table Tennis Federation) events -- which relies on results from the Federation Cup, National League, and two ranking tournaments.

However, in cases like the SA Games, Commonwealth Games,

Islamic Solidarity Games, and Asian Games, selection trials are the norm. This time, though, with the Federation Cup last held in 2021 and the league in 2023, the board insisted on trials to assess current form.

"We had initially planned not to send the team for disciplinary

reasons," said BTTF general secretary Captain Maksud Ahmed Sonet told The Daily Star.

"But the players now understand why trials were necessary. Plus, we've seen improvement in camp, and this tournament is a good chance to evaluate them."

Men's team coach Syed Mahmuduzzaman Shahed is targeting second place in both categories, acknowledging India's dominance but hopeful of success

against the rest. "India are stronger than us, no doubt," he told The Daily Star while conducting training at the Shaheed Taj Uddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium in Dhaka.

"But we've beaten teams like Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan before, and I believe we have a 50-50 chance against them."

Women's player Sonam Sultana Soma admitted the early training lacked intensity due to the dispute, but said the team is now fully focused.

"We didn't agree with the trial system, but preparations are serious now. We'll give our best even if the outcome is uncertain," she said, adding that the experience will help in next year's SA Games.

Mohutasin Ahmed Ridoy, who had been juggling camp and exams, said: "I'm trying to recover quickly and contribute. Against teams other than India, the margins have always been narrow. We're capable of beating them."

Ramhym Lian Bawm also pointed out time constraints due to academic commitments but is giving full effort in camp. "I'm not sure who else is competing yet, but other than India, I'd say our chances are 60-40."



BTTF to send full-strength squad to Nepal

SPORTS REPORTER

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What to WATCH

SONY SPORTS 1
England vs India
4th Test,
Day 3
Live from
4:00 pm

T SPORTS
West Indies vs
Australia
3rd T20I
Live from 5:00
am (Saturday)

ACC AGM wraps up without decision on Asia Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

After much speculation, the much-anticipated Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) was successfully held in Dhaka yesterday. However, one of the main agendas of the event, finalising the dates of the upcoming Asia Cup, was left undecided.

Among the 25 member nations, representatives of around 20 countries attended the meeting in person while India, Hong Kong and a few others joined virtually.

After the meeting, ACC president Mohsin Naqvi confirmed that all members participated in the meeting either physically or virtually and expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the AGM.

"First of all, the AGM meeting went very well... I am thankful to all the members who came here and all the members who attended the meeting through Zoom," Naqvi told reporters at the InterContinental Dhaka yesterday.

"I really want to thank Aminul [BCB president Aminul Islam Bulbul] bhai for his hospitality. The way they looked after us, we had amazing two days," he added.

Regarding the upcoming Asia Cup, Naqvi informed that the official announcement for the competition will



PHOTO: BCB

be made after the resolution of some issues with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

"That will also be announced soon [regarding Asia Cup]," Naqvi said. "We are in the consolidation with BCCI. We will hopefully resolve it also very soon."

According to a few Indian outlets, however, after Thursday's meeting, the BCCI, who has the hosting rights for the event, has agreed to stage the eight-team tournament in September. But rather than holding it in India, it wants to shift

it to the UAE.

Another major outcome of the AGM was the ACC announcing the inclusion of cricket in the upcoming Asian Games 2026 in Japan. The continental cricket body declared that the top 10 ranked men's teams and the top 8 ranked women's teams from Asia will compete at the event.

The organisation also welcomed three new members - Mongolia, Uzbekistan, and the Philippines. This was the first time the ACC AGM was held in Dhaka.

'Belal Bhai': The T20 batter born before his time

SPORTS REPORTER

"He was an ideal example of the kind of T20 batter we look for today."

With those words, former Bangladesh captain and current chief selector Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu paid tribute to one of the country's earliest cricketing gems -- Mir Belayet Hossain, affectionately known as Belal Bhai -- who passed away on Wednesday evening in Mymensingh at the age of 70.

To today's generation, his name might barely register, but for those who witnessed the golden era of club cricket in the 1970s and '80s, Belal Bhai was a revelation -- a charismatic, hard-hitting batter whose presence lit up the field, and whose joyful personality made him unforgettable off it.

"I joined Abahani in 1981. Belal bhai had already been with the club before me," recalled former Abahani skipper Lipu. "His extraordinary stroke-play, fitness, and power-hitting still flash before my eyes. People today can't even imagine how outstanding a batter he was -- how powerfully he could hit."

Former national selector and cricketer, Dr Asaduzzaman Misha, added a poignant reflection. "He was well ahead of his time. I remember watching him whack a flat six at the outer stadium -- it's still vivid in my mind. He had a rare quality as a wicketkeeper-batter. And just imagine -- he developed all that without proper coaching or facilities. It's very unfortunate that he never received a national award," he said.

Belayet represented Bangladesh from 1977 to 1984 and was part of the country's historic 1979 ICC Trophy squad. While that era lacked modern exposure and infrastructure, his cricketing reputation was forged in the heart of domestic cricket. He featured for Abahani, Kalabagan, Rupali Bank, Agrani Bank, and Dhanmondi Club, as well as for Mymensingh District in the National Cricket Championship.

Those who played alongside him or watched from the stands recall a player far ahead of his time -- an explosive stroke maker in an era yet to embrace aggressive batting.

"Physically, he was a bit bulky, but incredibly agile. He could run a lot and was very fit," said Lipu.

"Belal bhai was exceptionally stylish, aggressive, and cheerful. His sense of humour will keep his memory alive. He could see everything through the lens of joy," Lipu added.

Misha also spoke fondly of Belayet's jolly character.

"He will not only be remembered for his cricketing ability or performance but also for his jolly character. There was never a dull moment if Belal bhai was around. His style of speaking was amazing. I still remember how we spent an entire night listening to his stories during a national championship match in Faridpur. And once in Tangail, he suddenly disappeared at night -- we later found out he had gone to watch a jatra," Misha recalled.

Even after hanging up his gloves, Belayet remained deeply involved in the game. He served as a match referee in 79 first-class, 81 List A, and one T20 match, and also worked as regional development manager for the Bangladesh Cricket Board, continuing to nurture the game he loved.

Lipu summed it up best: "If there had been as many matches back then as there are today, people would have known Belal Bhai differently."



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Yunus may visit KL on Aug 11-13

PORIMOL PALMA

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus is likely to visit Malaysia on August 11-13 at the invitation of Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, who was the first to visit Bangladesh following the formation of the interim government last year.

The major focus of the visit would be labour recruitment, trade and investment, regional cooperation and Rohingya crisis, according to diplomatic sources in Dhaka and Kuala Lumpur.

During the visit, the two countries may sign six memorandums of understanding (MoUs), include cooperation in the areas of defence, trade and investment, education and training, and culture.

Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain, Expatriates' Welfare Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul and Energy Adviser Fouzul Kabir Khan, among others, will be accompanying Yunus.

Malaysia is a major destination for Bangladeshi migrant workers, with more than 8 lakh working in various sectors.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

India expelling Muslims unlawfully Says Human Rights Watch

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indian authorities have expelled hundreds of ethnic Bangladeshi Muslims to Bangladesh in recent weeks without due process, claiming they are "illegal immigrants," Human Rights Watch said yesterday.

Many of them are Indian citizens from states bordering Bangladesh, according to the report of the New York-based human rights organisation.

Since May 2025, the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government has intensified operations to expel ethnic Bangladeshi Muslims to Bangladesh, ostensibly to deter people from entering India without legal authorisation, the report claimed.

The organisation called upon the Indian government to stop unlawfully deporting people without due process and instead ensure everyone's access to procedural safeguards to protect against arbitrary detention and expulsion.

"India's ruling BJP is fueling discrimination by arbitrarily expelling Bengali Muslims from the country, including Indian citizens," said Elaine Pearson, Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

"The authorities' claims that they are managing irregular immigration are unconvincing given their disregard for due process rights, domestic guarantees, and international human rights standards."

Human Rights Watch interviewed 18 people in June, including affected individuals and family members in nine cases. Those interviewed include Indian citizens who returned to India after being expelled to Bangladesh and family members of those who were detained and are still missing. On July 8, Human Rights Watch wrote to India's Ministry of Home Affairs with the findings but received no response.

The Indian government has provided no official data on the number of people expelled, but Border Guard Bangladesh has reported that India expelled more than



NATURE'S OWN PESTICIDE... An oriental hornet having lunch near the National Press Club in Dhaka. To many, its presence sparks fear -- some squirm, others swat, most want to kill. But this reddish-brown insect is more than its sting. Native to Southeast Asia, the oriental hornet helps control pests like grasshoppers and flies, reducing the need for pesticides. Even more fascinating: it harnesses solar energy through its body. While stings can be painful or allergic, extermination isn't the answer. These hornets are crucial to ecosystem balance. Instead of reacting with fear, we must approach with informed respect -- for their safety, and ours.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



Govt wants balanced ties with all
Says foreign adviser

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government is maintaining good relations with all countries to avoid overdependence on any single nation, Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain said yesterday.

Responding to a question on the interim administration's foreign policy, he said, "We are not doing anything that can harm the relations with anyone."

"For India, our objective is to maintain good relations based on mutual respect," he added.

India, along with China and Singapore, has sent medical teams to treat survivors of the Milestone School & College plane crash, which killed at least 34 people, mostly children.

"We sought information from our burn institute and informed India based on the requirement. On that basis, India sent a medical team," Touhid said.

Bangladesh-India ties soured after the fall of the Awami League government last year, with Sheikh Hasina fleeing to New

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

WORLD DROWNING PREVENTION DAY

Most child drownings go unnoticed

Lack of policy and awareness makes drowning the second leading cause of death among children under five

NILIMA JAHAN

Largely unnoticed and mostly underreported, drowning remains one of the leading causes of death among children in Bangladesh, claiming thousands of young lives every year.

According to government data, drowning is the second leading cause of death among children under five in the country.

Today, July 25, is the World Drowning Prevention Day, a global advocacy event held annually, which serves as an opportunity to highlight the tragic and profound impact of drowning on families and communities and offer lifesaving solutions to prevent it.

The Foundation for Disaster Forum, a non-profit, which relies on media reports, said that between January and July 19 this year, 601 children drowned across Bangladesh -- 388 girls and 213 boys.

However, the true number of deaths is likely much higher, as there is no official system to track drowning cases. NGOs compile drowning data from media reports, but this captures only a fraction of actual cases, as most incidents go unnoticed and unreported.

Experts say this preventable crisis will continue to claim young lives unless the government adopts a national policy and an effective awareness campaign to address it.

According to the last comprehensive survey by the Bangladesh Health and Injury Survey (2016), nearly 19,000 people are estimated to

601 children died so far this year

Most deaths occur in monsoon, extended holidays

Experts say 86% deaths can be cut if policies implemented

National Drowning Prevention Strategy yet to be approved

drown every year in the country, including about 14,500 children under 18. That means around 40 children die from drowning each day, 30 of them under the age of five.

However, such a nationwide survey has not been conducted in recent years.

Experts say child drowning follows clear patterns in timing and circumstances, meaning targeted prevention measures can be highly effective.

Drowning deaths often rise sharply during Eid and other extended holidays, when families travel from cities to villages. Between June 3 and 15 this year, around Eid-ul-Azha, 91 children

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

BB withdraws dress code for its employees

Governor steps in amid flak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank yesterday withdrew its internal advisory on workplace attire following an instruction from Governor Ahsan H Mansur amid widespread criticism.

The advisory for its officials and employees had suggested female workers refrain from wearing short-sleeved and short-length dresses, and leggings while on duty.

Male workers were also advised to avoid jeans and gabardine pants.

The withdrawal came after media reports on the dress code drew massive criticism on social media.

In a press statement yesterday, BB said it was an advisory that encouraged its officials and employees to wear professional attire during office hours.

The decision to issue the advisory was made at a departmental meeting, considering the social context of all levels of officers and employees, the statement said.

However, no formal policy decision was taken, and no official circular was issued.

"When this internal matter came to the notice of the governor, who is currently abroad, through the media, he expressed his anger and instructed that the advisory be withdrawn

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Plane crash kills all 48 in eastern Russia

REUTERS, Moscow

A Russian Antonov An-24 passenger plane carrying 48 people crashed in the country's far east yesterday as it was preparing to land, killing everyone on board, the regional governor and investigators said.

The burning fuselage of the plane, which was made in the Soviet era and was nearly 50 years old, was spotted on the ground by a helicopter. There were 42 passengers, including five children, and six crew members on board.

Investigators said they had opened a criminal case into the suspected violation of air traffic and air transport rules, resulting in the death of more than two people through negligence.

Video shot from a helicopter showed the plane came down in a densely forested area and pale smoke could be seen rising from the crash site. There were no roads to the site and a rescue team numbering over 100 people had to use heavy machinery to cut a path there.

Vasily Orlov, the regional governor, offered his condolences to the families of those who died and declared three days of mourning, ordering flags to be lowered to half mast.

The plane was on a flight by a privately owned Siberian-based regional airline called Angara. The aircraft's tail number showed it was built in 1976 and was operated by Soviet flag carrier Aeroflot before the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union.

It was en route from the city of Blagoveshchensk to Tynda, a remote town and important railway junction in the Amur region bordering China, and dropped off radar screens while preparing to land.



Bangladesh's T20I skipper Litton Das walks back after being castled by Pakistan medium-pacer Faheem Ashraf in the final T20I at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Litton made a run-a-ball eight, disappointing like most of his teammates, as the Tigers were bundled out for 104 in 16.4 overs while in chase of a 179-run target to lose the game by 74 runs. However, victories in the first two games saw Bangladesh take the three-match series 2-1.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'AL using Milestone tragedy to regroup'
Hasnat tells B'baria rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Hasnat Abdullah, chief organiser for the southern region of the National Citizen Party (NCP), yesterday said the "fascist" Awami League is attempting to reorganise itself by capitalising on the recent Milestone School tragedy.

He called for unity among democratic forces to resist the move.

"We thought fascism had fallen. But the Awami League is now regrouping by exploiting the unfortunate incident at Milestone School," he told a rally at the Paurashabha Mukta Mancha in Brahmanbaria around 1:00pm.

The rally was part of NCP's ongoing campaign titled "July March to Rebuild the Nation".

Calling for a broad coalition against authoritarianism, Hasnat said, "[I urge all anti-fascist political forces to unite against the Awami League in the interest of democracy

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3