

"True to its historic commitment to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, I have decided that France will recognise the state of Palestine."

French President Emmanuel Macron

The Daily Star

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ICT CASES OVER JULY ATROCITIES

Two-thirds of 206 accused absconding

27 cases filed over crimes against humanity, enforced disappearances

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

More than two-thirds of the accused, including a dozen high-profile figures, are absconding in 27 cases filed with the International Crimes Tribunal over crimes against humanity during the July mass uprising and enforced disappearances under the 15-year rule of the Awami League government.

Law enforcers have managed to arrest only 73 out of the 206 accused after the ICT issued warrants for their arrests. One of the accused died in custody, said the office of the ICT chief prosecutor.

Of the cases, 22 were filed over killings during the mass uprising that left, according to a UN report, over 1,400 dead and several thousand wounded. The remaining five cases are related to enforced disappearances.

At least four prosecutors and an investigator at the ICT said many of the accused had gone into hiding after information on the issuance of arrest warrants was leaked. "These accused received information on the



A cluster of homes nestled at the foot of the hills near Jheeler Par in Chattogram's Akbar Shah Police Station area. Every year, ahead of the monsoon, authorities launch eviction drives targeting these precarious settlements, but without sustainable rehabilitation, displaced residents often return. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

"If they are not arrested, who will be tried? This is nothing but a mockery in the name of justice."

RABIUL AWAL, brother of Imam Hasan Tayem who was killed during the July uprising



"Some of them fled the country even before arrest warrants were issued."

ENAMUL HAQUE SAGAR, assistant inspector general (media) at the police headquarters

warrant before police could act," said one of the prosecutors seeking anonymity.

A senior official from the ICT's investigation agency explained that once warrants are issued, they are sent to police stations concerned for execution. "But in many cases, the accused go into hiding even before the notices reach police stations."

Asked, Enamul Haque Sagar, assistant inspector general (media) at the police headquarters, said police are hunting for the absconding accused. "Some of them fled the country even before arrest warrants were issued."

The National Central Bureau of Bangladesh Police has already requested Interpol to issue Red Notices for ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 11 others following court directives.

The others are former ministers Obaidul Quader, Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, AKM Mozammel Haque, Hasan Mahmud, Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury Nowfel; ex-state ministers Mohammad A Arafat and Nasrul Hamid Bipu; former Dhaka South City Corporation mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, and Hasina's ex-defence and security adviser Tarique Ahmed Siddique.

"Interpol is now reviewing the Red Notice requests. We are in constant touch with it," Sagar said, adding that the international police organisation has already issued a Red Notice for ex-IGP Benazir Ahmed over a corruption case.

A Red Notice is a request to law enforcement agencies worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action, according to the Interpol website.

FRUSTRATION OF VICTIMS' FAMILIES

Rabiul Awal, brother of Imam Hasan Tayem who was killed during the

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Two more jet crash victims die

Death toll now 33

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two more students, who sustained severe burns in the jet crash at Milestone School and College in the capital, died at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery yesterday.

Ten-year-old Tasnim Afroz Ayman passed away around 9:30am and 13-year-old Musabbir Makin around 1:15pm at the intensive care unit.

Ayman, a fourth grader, had burns on 45 percent of her body, while Makin, a seventh grader, had burns on 70 percent, said Shawon Bin Rahman, a resident surgeon at the institute, where 15 crash victims have died so far.

There was confusion over the total number of deaths immediately after the jet crash on July 21, as different government agencies provided varying

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GOPALGANJ VIOLENCE ASK finds serious rights violations

Calls for independent probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights group Ain o Salish Kendra has called for an independent and impartial investigation into the deadly violence in Gopalganj on July 16.

"The violence in Gopalganj involved serious violations of human rights, including excessive use of force, denial of the right to peaceful assembly, and harassment of innocent civilians," Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) said in a report released yesterday.

The report also said the incident, which occurred during a political rally organised by the National Citizen Party (NCP), sparked "grave concerns over allegations of unlawful killings, mass arrests, and excessive use of force".

The violence left five civilians dead and dozens injured. A four-member team of the rights organisation conducted a field visit on July 21 and 22 in Gopalganj, documenting accounts of family members of the deceased and injured, witnesses, professionals, law

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S&P sees stable outlook for Bangladesh

Keeps country at B+ amid steady economic footing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

S&P Global has kept its long-term credit ratings on Bangladesh's economy unchanged at B+ as the country works to rebuild external liquidity amid ongoing political uncertainty.

The US-based global credit rating agency said Bangladesh's external liquidity is stabilising, as indicated by the recent steady improvement in its official foreign exchange reserves.

"Macroeconomic policies enacted over the past 18 months -- such as transitioning to a more flexible exchange rate regime, allowing the taka to depreciate, and tightening monetary policy -- are helping to rebuild foreign exchange liquidity," said S&P in a report published on Thursday.

The agency said gradual easing of inflation should support a modest recovery in domestic demand conditions.

However, Bangladesh faces heightened trade risk from relatively high US tariffs, said the agency, which downgraded the country's ratings from BB- to B+ amid deadly protests over the quota-based hiring system for government jobs a year ago.

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2 Bangladeshis shot dead by BSF at Feni border

A CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Two Bangladeshi nationals were killed and another injured after Indian Border Security Force troops opened fire on them along the Bashpadua border in Feni's Parshuram upazila early yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Md Millat Hossain, 20, and Mohammad Yasin alias Liton, 32, while the injured is Md Afsar, 30 -- all residents of Bashpadua village under Parshuram municipality.

Quoting locals, Parshuram Model Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mostafa Hakim said the trio had gone to catch fish in a submerged agricultural field near the border around 12:00am. At that time, BSF personnel from Amzadnagar camp opened fire from near border pillar No. 2164, hitting all three.

Upon hearing the gunfire, locals rushed to the scene and found Millat and Afsar with bullet injuries.

They were immediately taken to Parshuram Upazila Health Complex.

As their condition worsened, they were transferred to Feni General Hospital around 1:00am.

Millat later succumbed to his injuries, the OC confirmed.

Iftekhhar Hasan Bhuiyan, resident medical officer at the health complex,

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A lemonade vendor sets up shop directly between the rail tracks at the capital's Sayedabad level crossing, putting both his and his customers' lives at risk. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Thailand warns of war with Cambodia

Death toll rises to 20 as cross-border clashes expand for a second day; more than 138,000 displaced

AFP, Surin

Thailand's acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai warned yesterday that cross-border clashes with Cambodia that have uprooted more than 130,000 people "could develop into war", as the countries traded deadly strikes for a second day.

A long-running border dispute erupted into intense fighting with jets, artillery, tanks and ground troops on Thursday, and the UN Security Council was set to hold an emergency meeting on the crisis later yesterday.

A steady thump of artillery strikes could be heard from the Cambodian side of the border yesterday, where the province of Oddar Meanchey reported one civilian -- a 70-year-old man -- had been killed and five more wounded.

More than 138,000 people have been evacuated from Thailand's border regions, its health ministry said, adding that death toll rose to 20.

"We have tried to compromise as we are neighbours, but we have now instructed the Thai military to act immediately in case of urgency," said Wechayachai.

"If the situation escalates, it could develop into war -- though for now, it remains limited to clashes," he told

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Crackdown deepens, grief grows

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

As Bangladesh reeled from days of unrest, the government intensified its crackdown. By 6:00pm on July 26, 2024, at least 738 more people had been arrested in the capital and several other districts in connection with the ongoing violence. This brought the total number of arrests over the past seven days to over 5,522, including many leaders of the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) alone detained 2,357 individuals in 209 cases filed at various police stations, citing allegations of violence, vandalism, and arson targeting government establishments and other institutions. Of these, 148 were arrested on July 26.

Among the most notable detentions were three key organisers of the quota reform protests – Nahid Islam, Asif Mahmud, and Abu Baker Majumder – who were picked up by police from a city hospital where two of them were receiving treatment.

Junaed Alam Sharker, additional deputy commissioner of the Detective Branch of DMP, claimed the three had sought police protection and were taken into DB custody. "We will interrogate them about the incidents that took place in the last two days," he said.

Tragically, four more individuals who had suffered bullet wounds during the previous week died at hospitals in Dhaka within the 48 hours leading up to July 26, 2024. The deceased were identified as Imtiaz Ahmed Dalim, 20, a student of Southeast University;



JULY 26, 2024



Members of various cultural and social organisations brought out a procession from in front of the Jatiya Press Club on the morning of July 26, 2024, demanding fair and impartial investigations -- under the United Nations -- into the violence and killings linked to the quota reform protests.

FILE PHOTO

Mainuddin, 25, a madrasa student; Sohail Rana, 20; and Yeasin, 17.

Meanwhile, international voices of concern grew louder. United Nations experts issued a statement urging the Bangladesh government to ensure accountability for human rights violations, immediately halt the violent crackdown on protesters and political opponents, and fully restore access to the internet and social media platforms.

Then-prime minister Sheikh Hasina, during a visit to Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 4:30pm, condemned the recent violence and called for strict punishment for those responsible. She reiterated her appeal to the public to help identify those responsible for the attacks, calling the acts "heinous."

In a counter-statement, BNP

Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir called for national unity among all democratic political and socio-cultural organisations to demand the resignation of the government. "At this critical moment of the nation, the aim of the unity will be restoration of democracy and voting rights," he stated.

Public outcry also took shape in other forms. Around 11:00am, a group of cultural and social organisations held a protest rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club, demanding an impartial UN-led investigation into the deaths, false cases, and indiscriminate arrests. They gathered under the banner "Protesting Cultural and Social Organisation."

From abroad, fifty academics under the banner of Bangladesh Communication Scholars in North

America (BCSNA) issued a statement expressing deep concern over the crackdown. They declared solidarity with the student protesters and demanded justice for the deaths of unarmed civilians. The group also called for an end to ongoing legal harassment and repression.

Adding to the chorus of concern, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) called on the Bangladesh authorities to investigate the killings of three journalists and the ongoing attacks on reporters covering the protests.

As the day came to a close, Bangladesh remained locked in crisis -- its streets tense, its hospitals full, and its institutions under siege. While the state hardened its stance, voices from home and abroad continued to demand truth, accountability, and justice.

INDIA'S RAJASTHAN School roof collapse kills 7 children

17 injured; dozens feared trapped

REUTERS, New Delhi

At least seven children were killed and 17 injured in India's western state of Rajasthan after the roof of a school building collapsed yesterday, local media reported, with dozens still feared trapped under the rubble.

A local police officer, who declined to be named, told Reuters the school building was old and the roof might have fallen in as a result of heavy rainfall in the region.

"There were 25-30 children in the room when the roof fell after the morning prayers," Rajasthan education minister, Madan Dilawar, told AajTak news channel.

Visuals from news channels showed locals gathered around the site of the collapse. Distressed family members could be heard crying as authorities used a crane to remove the debris.

Local media reported that 32 students had been pulled out safely, but rescue operations were ongoing.

Musk's Starlink network suffers rare global outage

Internal software failure blamed

REUTERS

SpaceX's Starlink suffered one of its biggest international outages on Thursday when an internal software failure knocked tens of thousands of users offline, a rare disruption for Elon Musk's powerful satellite internet system.

Users in the US and Europe began experiencing the outage at around 3:00 pm EDT (19:00 GMT), according to Downdetector, a crowdsourced outage tracker that said as many as 61,000 user reports to the site were made.

Starlink, which has more than 6 million users across roughly 140 countries and territories, later acknowledged the outage on its X account and said "we are actively implementing a solution."

Two more jet crash victims die

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figures -- differing by two or three deaths.

However, the health ministry put the count at 33, including yesterday's two.

According to the ministry, 50 people, mostly children, were undergoing treatment at four hospitals in the capital.

Meanwhile, five of the injured are currently in critical condition at the burn institute and receiving specialised care. Ten others have been categorised as severe cases, while the rest were in stable condition as of yesterday, Prof Nasir Uddin, director of the institute, told a press briefing.

"We are planning to release four to five patients tomorrow. Hopefully, we will be able to send a few patients home in stable condition every day."

"Two of the patients who were on ventilation are now conscious and breathing on their own."

Prof Nasir added that medical teams from Singapore, China, and India yesterday held a meeting with them regarding the patients. They also examined the patients.

"We hope more patients will recover and return home in the coming days. Please keep us in your prayers so that we can carry out our responsibilities," he said.

Two-thirds of 206 accused absconding 2 Bangladeshis shot dead

FROM PAGE 1

July uprising, said that most of the accused in the Tayem murder case remain at large, with some having fled the country.

"If they are not arrested, who will be tried? This is nothing but a mockery in the name of justice," Rabiul, also general secretary of the July 24 Shaheed Family Society, told The Daily Star.

Zartaj Parveen, mother of slain 17-year-old Shafiq Uddin Ahnaf, echoed his frustration.

"A murder case was filed with Mirpur police but no arrests have been made," she said, alleging that though she provided police with addresses of some of her son's killers, no action was taken.

Refuting the allegation of foot-dragging on the probe, Mohammad Sajjad Rummon, officer-in-charge of Mirpur Model Police Station, said, "We will arrest whoever the accused are."

CHARGES FRAMED IN TWO CASES
Following the AL government's fall on August 5 last year, the ICT-1 was reconstituted on October 14 to try those involved in crimes against humanity committed during the July uprising. The ICT-2 was formed in May this year to speed up proceedings and deal with the growing number of cases.

ICT-1 has already framed charges in two cases related to crimes against humanity, while charges have been pressed in two more similar cases

pending with ICT-2.

On July 10, ICT-1 framed charges against Hasina, ex-home minister Asaduzzaman and former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun in a case over murder, attempted murder, torture, and the use of lethal weapons during the mass uprising.

It will hear opening statements of the prosecution and the defence on August 3 and begin recording witness testimonies the following day, marking the start of the first ever trial in a case over July atrocities.

Hasina is facing two more cases -- one over alleged involvement in enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings, and the other over the killings during the 2013 Hefazat-e-Islam rally at Shapla Chattar in Motijheel.

She has already been sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment by the ICT-1 for contempt of court over her remarks during a conversation with a party leader, which the tribunal deemed obstructive to judicial proceedings.

The same tribunal on July 14 framed charges against former Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Habibur Rahman and seven ex-police personnel in the case over the killing of six people in Chankharpool during the uprising.

It fixed August 10 for hearing the prosecution's opening statements, and will start taking depositions from

witnesses the following day.

Besides, charges have been pressed in two other cases -- one over the murder of Begum Rokeya University student Abu Sayed in Rangpur and the other over the shooting of six protesters and the burning of their bodies in Ashulia.

Contacted, Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam said the trial proceedings in four cases have already begun while probe reports in another five to seven cases are likely to be submitted by this month.

He further said that if trials in these cases begin on time, the tribunals could dispose of most of them within the next six months.

Since August 5 last year, 429 complaints have been lodged with the ICT's investigation agency.

The complainants include family members of 115 slain protesters and 63 others injured during the mass uprising. Besides, 214 victims and family members of enforced disappearances filed complaints, said ICT prosecutors.

According to standard procedure, a complaint is initially lodged with the chief prosecutor's office or the ICT's investigation agency. If the allegation is found to have prima facie credibility, a "miscellaneous" case is recorded in the tribunal's registry. An investigation report is then submitted and, if approved, charges are framed, converting the "miscellaneous" case into a regular one.

ASK finds serious rights violations

FROM PAGE 1

enforcers and hospital authorities, as well as prison officials during their investigation.

Pointing to the involvement of multiple law enforcement agencies, the rights group reiterated its demand for justice for the victims and accountability for the perpetrators.

ASK said such state actions "undermine democratic freedoms and fuel fear among ordinary citizens", many of whom have since fled their homes.

Describing the incident, the report said on July 16, around 10:30am, over 50-60 people chanting "Joy Bangla" slogans began vandalising chairs at the NCP rally venue.

NCP supporters, about 150-200 in number, retreated towards the deputy commissioner's (DC) office. The alleged attackers' group fled the scene following police action.

Security was tightened with police and army deployment, and NCP central leaders arrived at the venue under heavy escort around 1:00pm, said the report.

As long as the leaders finished their speeches, which included "derogatory remarks against Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League", violence erupted in different parts of the city, it added.

Awami League supporters began pelting stones at security personnel, leading to the law enforcers using stun grenades, tear gas, and live ammunition, the ASK report said, citing eye-witnesses.

Witnesses confirmed to the ASK

delegation that while the attackers used stones and crude weapons, no firearms were seen among them.

However, law enforcers fired live bullets indiscriminately, the report said.

Of those injured by bullets, four were declared dead at Gopalganj General Hospital, while a fifth victim, Ramzan Munshi, died later at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Families of the deceased -- Imon Talukder, 17, Ramzan Kazi, 18, Deepto Saha, 25, Sobel Molla, 32, and Ramzan Munshi -- alleged that the bodies were hurriedly handed over by the hospital authorities with pressure to bury or cremate them without post-mortem examination.

Except for Ramzan Munshi, none of the dead bodies initially underwent a postmortem.

Witnesses and family members told ASK that Imon, who worked at a crockery shop and had no political affiliation, had been brutally beaten, even stomped on the face, by security forces.

The report said footage of violence targeting Imon circulated widely online.

His family confirmed visible bullet wounds and injuries on his face and body.

After media outcry over the lack of autopsies, on July 20, police reportedly contacted families, excluding Deepto Saha's, to exhume the bodies for postmortem examinations.

On July 21, ASK representatives were present during the exhumation and inquest of Imon and Ramzan

Kazi.

Families called the process a form of secondary harassment and reiterated their demand for justice.

One injured person said during an interview at the hospital that he was shot in the stomach and hand while riding a motorised rickshaw to work.

His finger was amputated as a result. He, too, claimed to have no political affiliation.

The ASK report said that 18 children had been arrested by July 21, some under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009.

Family members claimed these minors had no connection to the clashes.

By July 21, a total of eight cases had been filed related to the violence, with 5,400 persons charged, of whom 358 were named, including three women and 32 members of the Hindu minority community.

Three of the cases were filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act, one under the Special Powers Act, 1974, and others under penal codes.

Police filed cases over the deaths of Ramzan Kazi and Deepto, saying the victims' families declined to file complaints.

However, ASK said family members denied being contacted by police for legal proceedings.

The report also said there were arbitrary arrests of civilians, even from areas unaffected by the clashes. Accusations of extortion by threatening arrest also surfaced.

Following the violence, a curfew and Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which bars gathering, were

2 Bangladeshis shot dead by BSF at Feni border

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said Millat had suffered two bullet wounds, while Afsar was hit by one bullet.

Yasin, who was also shot, fell into a bush and remained undiscovered initially.

He was later detained by the BSF and taken to Bilonia Hospital in India, where he died.

The critically injured Afsar was transferred to Chattogram Medical College Hospital for advanced treatment.

Lt Col Mohammad Mosharraf Hossain, commanding officer of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) Battalion-4 in Feni, told The Daily Star, "In the morning, we were informed that one person had been killed and another injured by BSF

gunfire.

"Around noon, one of our sources reported that another individual had also been killed and taken away by the BSF. When we contacted the BSF, they acknowledged the incident and confirmed that the body was at an Indian hospital."

He added, "We strongly protested the incident and called for a flag meeting."

A meeting was later held with the BSF in the afternoon. The BGB demanded the immediate return of the deceased's body at that time.

The BSF said the body would be handed over after completing some formalities.

As a result, another flag meeting was scheduled for today, said the commanding officer.

Thailand warns of war with Cambodia

FROM PAGE 1

reporters in Bangkok. Thailand also declared martial law in eight of its districts bordering Cambodia.

Fighting resumed in three areas around 4:00 am yesterday, the Thai army said, with Cambodian forces firing heavy weapons, field artillery, and BM-21 rocket systems, and Thai troops responding "with appropriate supporting fire".

But in the afternoon, foreign ministry spokesman Nikorndej Balankura told AFP there were signs the fighting was easing off, and said Thailand was open to talks, possibly aided by Malaysia.

"We are ready, if Cambodia would like to settle this matter via diplomatic channels, bilaterally, or even through Malaysia, we are ready to do that. But so far we have not had any response," Nikorndej told AFP.

Malaysia currently holds the chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) regional bloc, of which Thailand and Cambodia are both members.

Cambodia has stayed tight-lipped about its casualty numbers, but

AFP journalists saw four wounded soldiers and three civilians receiving treatment at a hospital in Oddar Meanchey.

The soldiers said they were injured during the fighting on Thursday, while the civilians said they were hit by shrapnel.

In the Cambodian town of Samraong, 20 kilometres (12 miles) from the border, AFP journalists saw families speeding away in vehicles with their children and belongings as gunfire erupted.

"I live very close to the border. We are scared," Pro Bak, 41, told AFP. He was taking his wife and children to a Buddhist temple to seek refuge.

The fighting marks a dramatic escalation in a long running dispute between the neighbours -- both popular destinations for millions of foreign tourists -- over their shared 800 kilometre (500-mile) frontier.

Dozens of kilometres in several areas are contested and fighting broke out between 2008 and 2011, leaving at least 28 people dead and tens of thousands displaced.



People flee their homes near the Cambodia-Thailand border in Oddar Meanchey province yesterday, as the two countries exchange heavy artillery fire for a second consecutive day.

PHOTO: AFP



Pedestrians walk freely along the footpath in front of the Sangsad Bhaban in Dhaka yesterday, a day after city corporation authorities evicted street vendors, inset.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS, PALASH KHAN

Take action against illegal structures near Dhaka airport

Speakers tell BIP event; call for white paper on planning violations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) yesterday called for a comprehensive technical assessment of all high-occupancy structures located within the flight approach and funnel zones of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport and urged legal action against buildings lacking proper approvals.

At a press conference titled "Aircraft Crash at Milestone School: The State's Responsibilities and Actions in Public Safety and Development Control", held at the BIP Conference Hall, BIP leaders also demanded the publication of a white paper detailing planning-related violations in Dhaka,



Rajuk is not authorised to approve any project in aviation zones without an NOC from CAAB. The fact that Milestone School is situated directly in the runway's takeoff and landing path exposes a serious lack of coordination between Rajuk and CAAB.

Sheikh Muhammad Mehedi Ahsan
BIP general secretary

followed by corrective actions based on its findings.

Presenting key insights from a rapid assessment conducted by BIP's research team, Planner Tamjidul Islam, joint secretary of BIP, said the permanent campus of Milestone School lies within the inner approach area of the airport's runway.

He said the location not only hampers aviation operations and safety but also poses long-term public health risks, such as excessive noise pollution and high carbon emissions.

While the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) has guidelines under the Obstacle Limitation Surface (OLS) to regulate building height,

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Justice after 40 years

Sonali Bank to pay Tk 20 lakh as man wins legal battle

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After a 40-year legal battle, 80-year-old Harendranath Chandra finally achieved victory as the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court has upheld its previous verdict over the payment of Tk 20 lakh to him as litigation cost.

A six-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed came up with the order after dismissing a review petition filed by Sonali Bank against its earlier verdict.

Following the apex court order, Sonali Bank PLC must pay Tk 20 lakh to Harendranath Chandra without any delay, his lawyer Md Omar Farouq told The Daily Star.

Barrister Farouq said his client was made accused of embezzling funds falsely by the Sonali Bank and Harendranath endured years of hardship, including imprisonment and financial ruin.

In 1985, the Sonali Bank initiated a departmental proceeding and filed three cases against Harendranath alleging misappropriation of Tk 16.16 lakh from the bank. This accusation eventually led to the loss of Harendranath's job and a five-year prison sentence.

Over the past four decades, he has tirelessly fought to clear his name.

On December 9 last year, the Appellate Division upheld a lower court judgement, acquitting him of all charges and ordering Sonali Bank to pay him Tk 20 lakh as compensation for legal expenditures. The bank authorities have also been

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Harendranath Chandra

SERVER HACK

Rajuk services halted for over 2 months

DIPAN NANDY

On May 19, a group of hackers reportedly infiltrated the Electronic Construction Permitting System (ECPS), the server of the Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk), and illegally obtained approval for a building. From the following day, Rajuk suspended all activities of the ECPS.

Even after two months, the server remains offline. As a result, all types of services under Rajuk have come to a standstill. From design approvals to land use clearance, no services are currently being provided -- not even general information.

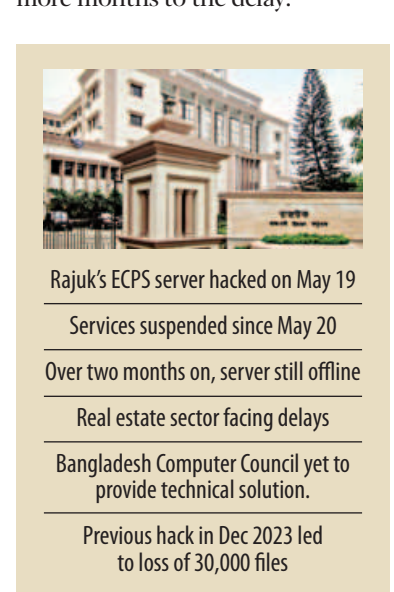
Rajuk authorities claim they have sought technical advice from the Bangladesh Computer Council to fix the server errors, but no response has been received yet. As a result, they have not been able to restart the server and are now considering launching manual citizen services.

The breach occurred on May 19, when a group infiltrated the ECPS server. Within 17 minutes, a building was approved. The 15-storey, 185-unit building, located in a wetland and height-restricted area, had previously been denied approval. The group managed to get the building's design approved. A month later, police conducted a raid in Motijheel and arrested three individuals linked to the incident.

When this reporter visited the Rajuk building on Sunday, Sirajul Islam, a resident of Pallabi in the

capital, said, "We've been coming to Rajuk for nearly one and a half months for a design approval, but we haven't received any solution. Even the officials don't know when this issue will be resolved."

Mohammad Ali, another resident from Basabo, said, "My building's approval was stuck for six months. This problem has already added two more months to the delay."



Several Rajuk officials mentioned that every day, people come to Rajuk to find out when the server will be operational again, but they cannot give them any clear answer.

In areas under Rajuk's jurisdiction, land use clearance and construction approval are required before constructing any building.

Previously, this was done through a manual process. In 2016, Rajuk began its online operations on a limited scale, starting with land use clearance in only one of its eight zones. By 2018, online land use clearance was expanded to all zones. In May 2019, Rajuk officially began issuing both land use clearance and construction permits online.

To perform these tasks online, a specific website is used. Citizens must register on the site and apply for land use clearance and construction approval. They must upload all necessary documents, including building designs. After verification and necessary processing, the approved land use certificate and building design are uploaded to the website. Users can then download the documents and begin construction.

Rajuk's server had previously been hacked on December 6, 2023. It took 17 days to regain control, which happened on December 21. Upon inspection, Rajuk found that 30,000 files were missing from the server. These files belonged to applicants who had submitted for construction approval between May 2019 and December 6, 2022. The matter escalated to the High Court.

An HC bench comprising Justice Nazrul Islam and Justice Khizir Hayat asked the then Rajuk chairman, Anisur Rahman Miah, to explain the disappearance of the 30,000 files within 30 days. While Rajuk claimed to have the files stored on a hard disk, there has

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DENGUE IN 2025

July the deadliest month so far
Death toll reaches 70;
cases rise to 18,789

- 28 dengue deaths reported in first 25 days of July
- Experts urge early hospitalisation
- Call for decentralised healthcare
- Lack of primary care in Dhaka delays diagnosis, care
- Urgent policy shift needed to prevent further fatalities

HELEMUL ALAM

At least 28 dengue patients have died in the first 25 days of July, including eight in last five days, highlighting the alarming trajectory of this year's dengue outbreak.

According to data from Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), dengue-related deaths stood at 19 in June, 3 in May, 7 in April, 3 in February, and 10 in January.

With 164 new infections reported yesterday, the total number of dengue cases this year has risen to 18,789, while the death toll has reached 70.

Health experts attribute the rising fatalities to severe complications, such as multi-organ failure, dengue shock syndrome, delayed hospitalisation, and underlying health conditions.

Dr HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, said this year they are seeing a growing number of patients suffering from Expanded Dengue Syndrome (EDS).

These patients often die suddenly due to the severity of the complications, he said.

EDS refers to atypical, severe, and multi-organ manifestations of dengue fever that fall outside the traditional classifications of Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever and Dengue Shock

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



'Abul Mansur Ahmad's words still guide us'

Speakers pay tribute to the renowned writer, politician, and journalist at Kolkata seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The writings of renowned writer, politician, and journalist Abul Mansur Ahmad remain timeless and continue to inspire to this day.

His works on social reform, religious fundamentalism, secularism, democratic values, the Language Movement, Bangladesh's Liberation War, and politics still resonate and guide us.

Professor Rochona Majumdar of the University of Chicago, USA, made the remarks at a special seminar in memory of the noted journalist, political thinker, and writer at Presidency University in Kolkata yesterday.

The event titled "Abul Mansur Ahmad's America: A Global Intellectual History of the Language Movement in East Pakistan/Bangladesh," was held at the university's AK Basak Auditorium.



Prof Rochona Majumdar of the University of Chicago speaks at the seminar yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

The event began with a welcome speech by Utpal Chakraborty, associate professor of sociology at the university.

The university's Department of Sociology organised the event.

Professor Majumdar was the keynote speaker at the seminar. She discussed various

books written by Abul Mansur Ahmad.

She said, "Abul Mansur Ahmad portrayed the social life, superstitions, politics, and major movements of the subcontinent in a way that remains historically significant and relevant for the future."

He also highlighted, both

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



The Ilisha launch terminal in Bhola remains submerged due to tidal surges triggered by a low-pressure system over the Bay of Bengal, disrupting operations and causing immense suffering to passengers -- particularly those arriving from Dhaka. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: MONIR UDDIN ANIK

Deep depression formed over Northwest Bay: BMD

UNB, Dhaka

The low-pressure system over the North Bay and nearby areas moved west-northwest and gradually intensified – first into a well-marked low, then into a depression – over the Northwest Bay and the coasts of West Bengal and Bangladesh (near 21.3°N, 89.6°E) at 6:00am yesterday, according to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD).

It was likely set to move west-northwestwards and cross the West Bengal-Bangladesh coast on Friday afternoon.

Due to the depression over Northwest Bay and adjoining West Bengal and Bangladesh coasts, all maritime ports have been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary Signal No. 3.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

Polls delay to invite more complications Says Gayeshwar Roy

UNB, Dhaka

The longer the election is delayed, the more complications and questions the interim government will face, given its lack of coordination and inexperience in governance, warned BNP Standing Committee member Gayeshwar Chandra Roy yesterday.

"Since the interim government is not an elected one, it can avoid taking responsibility for the country's various crises. But the more the election is delayed, the more pressure and questions the government will face, and different complications will arise," he said.

He made the remarks while visiting the family of Nusrat Jahan Anika, a third-grade student who was killed in the jet crash at Milestone School and College in Uttara.

Gayeshwar expressed sympathy to the grieving family on behalf of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman.

The BNP leader said

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Locals suffer as bridge work stalls for 4 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The construction of a bridge over Rangamatia canal on the Phulbaria-Trishal road in Mymensingh's Phulbaria upazila has remained incomplete for the last four years, causing immense suffering to residents of at least 15 villages.

The work order for the 60-metre bridge, with an estimated cost of Tk 3 crore, was issued to Messer's Islam Brothers, a Dhaka-based construction firm, in December 2020. Construction was inaugurated in 2021, but progress has since stalled.

Villagers from Polasholi, Raghunathpur, Andariapara, Chowder, Radhakanai, Gobindapur, Dhurdhuria, Chhalimpur and several other areas rely heavily on the road. The incomplete bridge has left them grappling with severe transport difficulties, especially during the rainy season, said locals.

Jannatul Ferdous, an honours student from Chowder village,

said, "The suffering intensifies during the monsoon. Hundreds of students and around 2,000 industrial workers face serious trouble due to the lack of a bridge."



A wooden bridge was recently constructed by locals to facilitate travel between Phulbaria and Trishal, but it is risky. "Several people have been injured in

recent months trying to cross it," said Kabir Uddin Harun, a local journalist.

Md Tofail Hossain, a retired agriculture officer from Naudhar village, said without a concrete

The surrounding villages are known for producing pineapples, turmeric, Lal Chini, and fish, but poor connectivity prevents farmers from fetching fair prices. "Middlemen pocket most of the profits as farmers often have to sell their goods from home," said Hazi Golam Mustafa of Chowder village.

Locals alleged that the construction firm abandoned the site years ago, citing negligence by officials.

Md Mahbub Hasan, sub-assistant engineer of the Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) in Phulbaria, denied any negligence on their part. "We have repeatedly written to the firm, but they have not responded. They have been saying they'll resume work soon," he said.

Contacted, Md Ariful Islam, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Phulbaria, said he was recently made aware of the issue and assured that immediate steps would be taken to alleviate the suffering of the locals.

bridge, villagers are forced to take longer alternative routes to reach the upazila headquarters, resulting in additional time, expense, and hardship.

Global operator, foreign tech key to boosting Ctg Port efficiency: adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Shipping Adviser M Sakhawat Hussain yesterday stressed the need for appointing a global operator and bringing in foreign technological expertise to enhance operational efficiency at Chattogram Port.

He made the remarks while speaking to journalists during a visit to the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) at Chattogram Port.

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Chairman Rear Admiral SM Moniruzzaman, senior port officials, and officials from Chattogram Dry Dock Limited (CDDL) were also present during the visit.

Addressing the government's move to appoint a foreign operator for NCT, the adviser clarified, "It is only about operator. Don't forget that I am not talking about the management of the port. Operator is one thing, management is another. Management will be in our control."

"We want to proceed. We want to step into global arena. We don't want to be stuck within ourselves," he said.

The government recently handed over interim operational responsibilities of the NCT for six months to CDDL, a Bangladesh Navy-run entity, replacing previous operator Saif Powertec Limited. CDDL will continue running the terminal until a foreign operator is appointed.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Abul Mansur Ahmad's words still

FROM PAGE 3

at home and abroad, the connection between language and nationhood as seen during the founding of the United States, she added.

Prof Majumdar also discussed several of Abul Mansur Ahmad's notable works, including Ayna (Mirror), Food Conference, and Gulliver's Safarnama (Gulliver's Travels).

She said Ayna and Food Conference addressed issues such as superstition in the Muslim society, while Gulliver's Safarnama is a satire.

She also touched upon his writings related to language and history in the United States.

Among others, Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star and son of Abul Mansur Ahmad, attended the event.

In his concluding remarks, he expressed gratitude to the Presidency University for honouring the legacy of Abul Mansur Ahmad. He later handed over several of Abul Mansur Ahmad's books to the university authorities.

Abul Mansur Ahmad was a prominent figure in the subcontinent – an accomplished journalist, politician, lawyer, and writer.

Born on September 3, 1898, in Dhanikhola village of Trishal, Mymensingh, he graduated in law from Ripon College, Kolkata. He

began his political career with the Congress Party. He also did politics in close association with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

He was also a pioneer of modern and progressive journalism. He worked for prominent newspapers such as Krishak, Nabajug, Sultan, and Mohammadi and was editor of the Kolkata-based Daily Ittehad from 1946 to 1948.

Abul Mansur Ahmad wrote about the language issue from the early 1940s and contributed to the Language Movement as the editor of the Ittehad.

A very successful politician, Abul Mansur Ahmad played a key role in the formation of the Awami Muslim League. He served as vice-president of the organisation from 1953 to 1958.

Abul Mansur Ahmad was the author of the famous Ekush Dafa (21-point programme) election manifesto of Jukta Front in the 1954 election through which the Muslim League was ousted from power.

The Ekush Dafa was the first comprehensive articulation of the political, economic and cultural demands of the Bengalees of the then eastern part of Pakistan.

He was elected a member of East Bengal Provincial Assembly in that election, and served as health

minister in the United Front cabinet under Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq. In 1955, he was elected a member of Pakistan Constituent Assembly.

He was the minister for education in the United Front government of East Pakistan in 1956 and the minister for commerce and trade in 1956-1957. After the promulgation of martial law by Ayub Khan in 1958, he was imprisoned and subsequently released in 1962.

He then retired from politics.

Abul Mansur Ahmad was known for his strong stand in favour of regional autonomy of East Pakistan. He also made remarkable contributions to industrialisation of the long neglected East Pakistan.

He always propagated secularism in a manner unparalleled in the forties, fifties and sixties.

Ahmad's publications include great satires like "Asmani Purdah", and "Food Conference". He also penned insightful works on social and political history of Bengal such as "Bangladesher Culture". He has two autobiographical writings – "Atma Katha" and "Amar Dekha Rajniti Panchash Bakha".

He received both the Independence Award and the Ekush Padak for his contributions.

মোহাম্মদপুরে আর্জেন্ট লান্ডারিয়াস স্ল্যাট বিক্রয়

মোহাম্মদপুর জমির হোসেন রোড, ই-ব্লক, লালমাটিয়া মহিলা কলেজের সন্নিহিত সাদানির্মিত পতলা বিজি এর এম ভলার, ওবেক, ওবাথ (এটাভু) ও ওবেলবুদীর আকর্ষণীয় ইন্টেরিয়রকৃত ৩,৮০০/- (আটত্রিশ হাজার) টাকা খর ভাড়া সমান, কারপার্কিংসহ ১৪০০ বর্গফুট আর্জেন্ট স্ল্যাট বিক্রয়। (নে-সিডিয়া), মোবাইল: ০১৮৯-০৫৮৩২৭ ও হোয়াটসঅ্যাপ যোগাযোগ: +৯৬৬ ৫৩ ১০৭ ৭৩৬২

LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
Company Matter No. 1276 of 2025

IN THE MATTER OF: An application under section 81(2) read with Section 85(3) and Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994, AND IN THE MATTER OF: Mohammad Nawaz Managing Director of NY Trading Ltd., of Ahmed Tower, 28 & 29 Karnal Atank Avenue (4th Floor), Banani, Dhaka-1213 Bangladesh. -----Petitioner.

-VERSUS-
The Registrar, Joint Stock Companies and Firms (RJSC), TCB Bhaban (6th Floor), 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215. -----Respondent

Take notice that an application under section 81(2) read with Section 85(3) and Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on behalf of the above-named Petitioner for condonation of the delay in holding the Annual General Meeting of NY Trading Ltd. for the year ended 30 June 2024 to give necessary direction for holding the said Annual General Meeting. Upon hearing the application on 23.07.2025, the Hon'ble Company Judge Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel was pleased to admit the application. If anyone is interested in opposing the said application, you may appear before the Hon'ble Court either in person or through an advocate on or before the date fixed for hearing of the matter. Copy of the application may be obtained on payment of necessary cost.

Mahbub Uzzaman, Advocate,
Room No. 145 (Main Building), Supreme Court Bar Association,
Shabbag, Dhaka. Mobile No. 01715815107

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
High Court Division,
(Statutory Original Jurisdiction)
Matter No. 1187/2025,
IN THE MATTER OF
An Application under Section 12 Read with Section 13 of the Companies Act, 1994.

MR. MOHAMMED MASUM, Managing Director, SUPREME AGRO-INDUSTRIES LTD. House-8, Road-14, Sector No. 7, Uttara, Dhaka. -----Petitioner.

-Versus-
1. The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and firms having office at 1,TCB Bhaban, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.---Respondents

Dear Sir, Notice is hereby given that upon application filed by the petitioner Section 12 Read with Section 13 of the Companies Act, 1994 for condonation of delay in holding Annual General Meeting (AGM) and for exoneration from penalty, if any and the Company Bench of the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh presided over by Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel was pleased to admit the same on 10.07.2025 If you are interested to oppose the said application you may do so by an advocate or in person on the date so fixed. Md. Nurul Huda, Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh.64/4 Naya Paltan, Dhaka-1000. Mob.-01911357642

Rajuk services

FROM PAGE 3

been no confirmation that affected clients got their documents back.

Regarding the current situation, Kamrul Islam, director (Development Control-II) of Rajuk, told The Daily Star, "We have requested the Bangladesh Computer Council to provide a permanent solution. Necessary actions will be taken based on their recommendations. But they are delaying in giving their opinion."

On the suspension of services, he added, "We are working intensively. We are trying to get the server back online as soon as possible. If necessary, we will start processing building and design approvals manually."

Meanwhile, real estate companies are also in trouble as Rajuk's server remains closed. They cannot approve their apartment plans.

Liakat Ali Bhuiyan, senior vice president of the Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB), said business activities have come to a standstill as REHAB members could not apply for land use clearance, Rajuk design and occupancy certificates due to the prolonged closure of the ECPS software.

Take action against illegal structures near Dhaka

FROM PAGE 3

Tamjidul pointed to the absence of land use restrictions defining what types of institutions or structures are permissible in such sensitive zones.

He said neither the Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP) nor the Detailed Area Plan (DAP) includes policies to restrict land use near the airport's OLS zones, which are essential for ensuring public safety and health.

Globally, land uses that attract large gatherings – such as residential areas, schools, hospitals, community centres, and commercial buildings – are discouraged within inner runway approach zones. Unfortunately, such global best practices are rarely implemented in Bangladesh, he said.

Planner Sheikh Muhammad Mehedi Ahsan, general secretary of BIP, said the 1995 DMDP had designated the area as a protected wetland or natural space. Satellite images also indicate that the site previously contained a water body, which was later filled in to make way for development.

Mehedi also said Rajuk is not authorised to approve any project in aviation zones without a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from CAAB. The fact that Milestone School is situated directly in the runway's takeoff and landing path exposes a serious lack of coordination between Rajuk and CAAB.

He argued that CAAB must base NOC decisions on thorough planning analysis, yet urban planners are currently excluded from this critical process. To prevent such tragedies in the future, planners must be involved in all planning-related evaluations, he urged.

BIP President Professor Dr Adil Mohammed Khan said training flights must not operate over densely populated areas.

He emphasised that aviation pathways must remain clear in urban planning, which is why major international airports are typically located outside city centres with designated buffer zones.

Although Dhaka airport was originally situated away from the city, unchecked urban expansion has brought high-density development dangerously close to its boundaries. Urban growth should have been managed to avoid encroaching upon the flight approach zones, he said.

The DMDP had classified the current location of Milestone School as a wetland, which also served as a safety buffer for the airport.

Why did Rajuk approve development here in violation of the DMDP? Whose interests were served? he asked.

He also expressed concern over the safety conditions of the damaged building, noting that its grilled balconies and single access/exit point hampered rescue operations and

contributed to the tragic death of students.

Dr Adil stressed the need for urgent urban safety measures, not just within aviation zones but throughout Dhaka,

to ensure secure housing and infrastructure for all. Institutional accountability is just as important as personal responsibility.

"We must confront land grabbing, corruption, and planning violations at both levels," he said.

He said, "All institutions attracting public gatherings

– schools, hospitals, mosques, Eidgahs, and others – must be gradually relocated from airport approach zones to prevent future disasters."

Responding to questions from journalists, BIP Vice President Shahriar Amin underscored the need to address all irregularities linked to the incident.

Ensuring transparency and accountability across all sectors of governance is essential, and planners must play an active role in that process, he said.

Justice after 40 years

FROM PAGE 3

directed to pay this amount within three months of receiving the order.

Later, the bank authorities filed a petition with the Appellate Division seeking review of its December 9 judgement.

On Thursday, the Appellate Division dismissed the review petition, clearing the way for Harendranath to receive the amount from the Sonali Bank.

According to the case documents, Harendranath, a man from Kushtia's Khoksa area, after completing BA, began his career at Sonali Bank in Dhaka as a cashier-cum-clerk on December 31, 1979. After three years, he was promoted to senior cashier-cum-clerk and

subsequently transferred to the Jatrabari branch.

During his time at Jatrabari, a remittance of Tk 16.16 lakh was transferred to the Motijheel branch. The receiving branch officer acknowledged the full amount in writing, complete with their seal and signature. However, a few days later in 1985, an internal bank investigation revealed that the funds were missing.

In late 1985, Sonali Bank initiated departmental proceedings and filed three cases against nine individuals, including Harendranath, accusing them of embezzling the missing funds.

The ordeal has taken a severetoll on Harendranath's life.

While talking to The Daily Star, Harendranath said, "I was forced to sell my home and land to fund my legal defence. To support my family, I worked as a ticket seller at a bus stand for nearly 15 years. Now, at the age of 80, I am homeless and destitute."

Seeking payment of all due salaries and benefits from Sonali Bank, Harendranath has also filed a writ petition with the High Court, which is now pending. When contacted, Sonali Bank's lawyer Barrister Shamim Khaled told The Daily Star that his client must give Tk 20 lakh as litigation expenses to Harendranath in compliance with the Appellate Division order.



EUCALYPTUS, AKASHMONI

Govt begins destroying 10m banned saplings

MD NAZRUL ISLAM, Ctg

The government has begun destroying nearly 10 million eucalyptus and akashmoni saplings across 49 districts, following a nationwide ban on the production, planting, and sale of the two species.

The Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) launched the operation last month, aiming to eliminate ecologically harmful saplings from public, private, and individual nurseries.

More than five million saplings have already been destroyed, with nursery owners receiving Tk 4 per sapling in compensation.

Citing biodiversity loss and environmental imbalance, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change issued a gazette on May 15 banning the cultivation and marketing of eucalyptus and akashmoni.

Environmentalists have long campaigned against these fast-growing species, known for depleting groundwater and offering limited ecological value.

Surveys were conducted in 49 districts, and on June 17, a directive ordered the destruction of

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Frugal Innovation Forum 2025 begins



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 200 national and international experts, entrepreneurs, researchers, and development practitioners gathered for the two-day eighth Frugal Innovation Forum (FIF), which began yesterday at BRAC's Centre for Development Management in Savar.

This year's forum is themed "Climate Adaptation in Agriculture, Food Security, and Livelihoods", with a focus on practical, locally driven solutions to climate risks across the Global South.

The event began with a minute of silence in remembrance of the Milestone School and College tragedy.

In his opening address, BRAC Executive Director Asif Saleh noted that while "the world is on fire", it is also at a breaking point.

He emphasised that climate-related economic losses now total \$2.3 trillion annually,

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Europeans, Iran hold 'frank' nuclear talks

REUTERS, Istanbul

Iran said it would continue nuclear talks with European powers after "serious, frank, and detailed" conversations yesterday, the first such face-to-face meeting since Israel and the US bombed Iran last month.

Before the meeting in Istanbul, Iran also pushed back on suggestions of extending the UN resolution that ratifies a 2015 deal, nearing expiry, that was designed to curb its nuclear programme.

Delegations from the EU and so-called E3 group of France, Britain and Germany met Iranian counterparts at Iran's consulate for talks that the IAEA said could provide an opening to resume inspections in Iran.

Iranian Deputy FM Kazem Gharibabadi said afterward that both sides had presented specific ideas on sanctions relief.



Protesters burn tyres to block a key road between Babil and Qadisiyah governorates in central Iraq's Hilla city, demanding action over severe water shortages and dried-up rivers.

PHOTO: AFP

Syria arms depot blasts kill 12

Over 100 injured

AFP, Damascus

A series of explosions killed at least 12 people and wounded more than 100 at a weapons depot in northwestern Syria on Thursday, a monitor said.

"Multiple blasts at a weapons and ammunition warehouse belonging to the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) killed at least 12 people and wounded more than 100 in Maaret Misrin, in northern Idlib province," said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Those killed included a woman and a child, said the Britain-based monitor, which relies on a network of sources on the ground.

The TIP is a jihadist group active in the Idlib region made up of Uighur fighters who joined the Syrian civil war to fight against former president Bashar al-Assad.

No evidence of massive Hamas theft of Gaza aid

USAID analysis found; state dept disputes findings

REUTERS, Washington

An internal US government analysis found no evidence of systematic theft by the Palestinian group Hamas of US-funded humanitarian supplies, challenging the main rationale that Israel and the US give for backing a new armed private aid operation.

The analysis, which has not been previously reported, was conducted by a bureau within the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and completed in late June. It examined 156 incidents of theft or loss of US-funded supplies reported by US aid partner organisations between October 2023 and this May.

It found "no reports alleging Hamas" benefited from US-funded supplies, according to a slide presentation of the findings seen by Reuters.

A State Department spokesperson disputed the



findings, saying there is video evidence of Hamas looting aid, but provided no such videos. The spokesperson also accused traditional humanitarian groups of covering up "aid corruption."

The findings were shared with the USAID's inspector general's office and State Department officials involved in Middle East policy, said two sources familiar with the matter, and come as dire food shortages deepen in the devastated enclave.

Israel says it is committed to allowing in aid but must control

it to prevent it from being stolen by Hamas, which it blames for the crisis.

The WFP says nearly a quarter of Gaza's 2.1 million Palestinians face famine-like conditions, thousands are suffering acute malnutrition, and the WHO and doctors in the enclave report starvation deaths of children and others.

The UN also estimates that Israeli forces have killed more than 1,000 people seeking food supplies, the majority near the militarized distribution sites of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), the new private aid group that uses a for-profit US logistics firm run by a former CIA officer and armed US military veterans.

The study was conducted by the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance of USAID, which was the largest funder of assistance to Gaza before the Trump administration froze all US foreign aid in January, terminating thousands of programs.

Indonesia says its poverty rate lowest in two decades

AFP, Jakarta

The number of Indonesians living under the poverty line has hit a record low for the past two decades, the country's statistics bureau said yesterday.

According to the Central Statistics Agency, there were roughly 23.85 million Indonesians living in poverty as of March this year — representing 8.47 percent of the country's total population of 280 million.

BPS categorises people living off Rp 609,160 a month, about \$37, as poor. "The poverty line figure for 2025 is the lowest for the past two decades," the agency's official, Ateng Hartono, said.

However, the agency noted the significant gap between big cities and rural areas, with villages still seeing a higher poverty rate.

Modi announces \$565m credit line for Maldives

REUTERS, Colombo

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a \$565-million credit line and launched free trade talks with the Maldives yesterday during a visit to the Indian Ocean archipelago, where India competes with China for influence.

Modi's two-day trip is aimed at boosting India's development partnership with the Maldives, and he said the credit line was central to that goal.

"This will be used for projects linked to infrastructure development in line with the priorities of the Maldivian people," he said, adding that the two countries would also finalise a bilateral investment agreement.

They will work to deepen cooperation on multiple sectors including tourism, healthcare, and housing, Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu said.

"Looking ahead we are fully committed to further strengthen our cooperation with India across a broad range of sectors through exchange of high-level visits," Muizzu added.

Modi is the first foreign leader to visit Muizzu since he took office in 2023, pledging at the time to end the Maldives' "India first" policy, and taking steps to strengthen ties with China.

Muizzu's moves briefly soured relations with New Delhi, before India helped to prevent the \$7.5 billion economy from defaulting on its debt as the Maldives struggled to get tourists to its white-sand beaches and luxury resorts.

Ukraine secures 3 Patriot systems

REUTERS, Kyiv

Ukraine has received confirmation from partners that they will provide three Patriot missile defence systems and discussions are underway to obtain seven more, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Thursday.

"I have officially received confirmation from Germany for two systems, and from Norway for one. We are currently working with Dutch partners," he told reporters.

President Donald Trump announced earlier this month that billions of dollars of US weapons would go to Ukraine, including Patriot missiles. This set off negotiations around which partners could contribute to the weapons purchasing scheme — a process that will determine the support Ukraine receives.

The Patriot systems have proven effective at destroying Russian ballistic missiles aimed at Ukraine's cities. Russia has intensified its nationwide aerial attacks this summer, forcing Ukraine to adapt to new tactics, including turning to drone interceptors.

Man stabs cops

FROM PAGE 12

provide the information even after 20 minutes, Bidroho said.

Police also questioned why he came to the Saghata Police Station to file a GD when his phone was lost in Gaibandha Sadar upazila.

"He was later given auto-rickshaw fare and sent back home," the police officer said.

CCTV footage provided by police showed a man, purportedly Siju, entering the station at 9:50pm, armed with a knife.

When a constable tried to stop him at the entrance, he snatched a rifle from the policeman and entered the duty officer's room.

As multiple police personnel tried to stop him, the man swung the knife in an attempt to stab everyone.

He then fled the police station, according to Additional SP Bidroho.

Constable Sirajul Islam and Assistant Sub-Inspector Mohsin Ali suffered stab wounds during the incident, the police officer said.

While fleeing the police station, Siju jumped into a nearby pond at Saghata High School, he said.

Siju did not respond when police and locals repeatedly asked him to come ashore, Bidroho said.

Saghata Fire Station Officer Ratan Chandra Sharma said they were called on Thursday night but could not conduct a rescue operation immediately because the pond was extremely deep and there was a lack of light.

Fire service divers recovered Siju's body and handed it over to the police at 9:30am yesterday, Ratan said, adding that "there were no visible signs of injury on Siju's body".

According to Siju's family, he had an argument with the police station's duty officer over the refusal to register the GD.

Additional SP Bidroho said a post-mortem examination of the body was being conducted in the afternoon.

4 cops withdrawn

FROM PAGE 12

had come undone during the assault. When Wadud asked to file a written complaint, he was told there was no one to take it. When he offered to write it himself, he was reluctantly handed a blank sheet but refused a pen despite several lying on the desk.

Eventually, Wadud managed to submit his complaint and was asked to contact ASI Anarul, who was reportedly at a nearby location. Despite repeated pleas to accompany him to the scene — just a short walk away — SI Jasim refused, saying, "Only Anarul handles that area. You should just leave."

Wadud later managed to reach ASI Anarul at a local bus stand. The officer eventually agreed to visit the crime scene, but by the time they arrived — almost 40 minutes after the attack — the suspects were still there.

Wadud identified them from a distance, but ASI Anarul did not approach. Instead, he stood with his hands on his waist as the suspects noticed them and casually walked away. Wadud expressed disbelief and frustration at the officer's inaction.

US lifts sanctions

FROM PAGE 12

the military seizure of power in Myanmar that plunged the country into chaos.

Sit Taing Aung and Aung Hlaing Oo were placed on the sanctions list the same year for operating in Myanmar's defence sector. Tin Latt Min, identified as another close associate of the military rulers, was placed on the list in 2024 to mark the third anniversary of the coup.

The Treasury Department did not explain the reason for the move, and the White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Myanmar is one of the world's main sources of sought-after rare earth minerals used in high-tech defense and consumer applications. Securing supplies of the minerals is a major focus for the Trump administration in

he wrote.

The incident triggered outrage on social media, with many netizens slamming the OC's insensitive remarks and the police's lacklustre response.

OC Ittekkhar did not receive phone calls.

Contacted, Md Ibne Mizan, deputy commissioner of Tejgaon Division, told The Daily Star that a one-member probe committee, led by Alamgir Kabir, additional deputy commissioner (Tejgaon Zone), has been formed to investigate the allegations against the OC.

"He has been asked to submit the report as soon as possible," the DC said. In a Facebook post yesterday, the Bangladesh Police expressed regret over the incident and the subsequent inaction of the police.

Meanwhile, a group of locals in Mohammadpur staged a demonstration in front of the police station, demanding the removal of the OC.

Police station sources said that the protestors arrived around 5:00pm and demonstrated there for an hour.

its strategic competition with China, which is responsible for 90 percent of rare earth processing capacity.

On July 11, Myanmar's ruling military general, Min Aung Hlaing, asked Trump in a letter for a reduction in the 40 percent tariff rate on his country's exports to the US and said he was ready to send a negotiating team to Washington if needed.

"The senior general acknowledged the president's strong leadership in guiding his country towards national prosperity with the spirit of a true patriot," state media said at the time.

In his response to a letter from Trump notifying Myanmar of the tariff to take effect on August 1, Min Aung Hlaing proposed a reduced rate of 10 percent to 20 percent, with Myanmar slashing its levy on US imports to a range of zero to 10 percent.

Gunmen kill 14 in north-central Nigeria market 'ambush'

AFP, Jos

Unidentified gunmen in Nigeria's restive Plateau state killed 14 people in an ambush Thursday as they returned home from a weekly market, local residents and a Red Cross official told AFP.

The north-central state has long been gripped by conflicts over dwindling land and attacks by armed gangs known as "bandits", mostly across rural areas where government presence is sparse and impunity is almost guaranteed.

Following the ambush, two youths were killed in a revenge attack across ethnic lines, residents said.

The gunmen opened fire Thursday evening on vehicles returning from the market in Bokkos town, residents said, near a village called Mangor.

"Some armed men ambushed them, they fired gunshots indiscriminately," Moses Maren, a local youth leader, told AFP Thursday.

State Red Cross secretary Nurudeen Hussaini Magaji confirmed the toll yesterday morning.

"Amongst the dead were males, females and children," he said.

The Bokkos area is known as a major hub for potato farming in Nigeria.

The town's Monday and Thursday markets host traders from as far away as Chad, Benin, Niger and Cameroon.

Insecurity is a major factor in food inflation in Nigeria.

Consultancy SBM Intelligence recently recorded price hikes of rice, onions and pepper seeing hikes by more than 430 percent in neighbouring Bauchi state, blamed on bandit attacks as well as drought.

Land used by farmers and herders in central Nigeria, including Plateau, is coming under stress from climate change and human expansion, sparking deadly competition for increasingly limited space.



Migrants on board a rubber boat wait to be assisted by NGO Open Arms rescue boat "Astral" in the international waters of the Maltese Search and Rescue (SAR) zone, in the Mediterranean Sea, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Russian rocket puts Iran satellite into space

AFP, Tehran

A Russian rocket put an Iranian communications satellite into space yesterday, Iranian state media reported, the latest achievement for an aerospace programme that has long concerned Western governments.

"The Nahid-2 communications satellite was launched from Russia's Vostochny Cosmodrome using a Soyuz rocket," state television said.

Weighing 110 kilograms (over 240 pounds), the satellite was designed and manufactured by Iranian engineers, the broadcaster added.

Western governments have long expressed concern that technological advances made in Iran's space programme can also be used to upgrade its ballistic missile arsenal.

The launch was announced shortly before nuclear talks between Iran and

Britain, France and Germany opened in Istanbul.

In December, Iran announced it had put its heaviest payload to date into space, using a domestically manufactured satellite carrier.

In September, Iran said it had put the Chamran-1 research satellite into orbit using the Ghaem-100 carrier, which is produced by the Revolutionary Guards' aerospace division.

Quarter of children

FROM PAGE 12

Nations General Assembly next September.

Earlier, Canada also pressed Israel to seek peace, with Prime Minister Mark Carney condemning its "failure to prevent the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian disaster in Gaza" and reiterating support for a two-state solution.

Don't exclude women with disabilities

Their plight demands urgent, multi-sectoral intervention

We are alarmed by the stark realities revealed at a recent seminar on the lack of rights and services available to women with disabilities in Bangladesh. Experts at the event, held at The Daily Star Centre on Thursday, highlighted how underrepresented and excluded these women remain across multiple sectors, including education, training, employment, healthcare, social participation, policy and funding, legal access, etc. The cumulative effect of all these gaps on both the women and the nation in general is profound, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive interventions.

The problem seems to begin with the underreporting of their numbers, as women with disabilities are not adequately represented in official statistics. This lack of visibility in data leads to a policy blind spot, making it difficult to design targeted interventions or allocate resources for specific needs. This is already evident across the many sectors where women with disabilities consistently lag behind. For instance, while 55 percent of men with disabilities are illiterate, the figure for women rises to 72 percent. Their participation in vocational training is equally dismal. Moreover, only 11.34 percent of such women participate in the labour force. And among those employed, only 3.13 percent work in the formal sector, with the vast majority (96.87 percent) engaged in informal work.

These numbers illustrate the structural barriers that deny them access to even the most basic opportunities for advancement. When it comes to healthcare, the picture is equally troubling, with over 37 percent being deprived of essential care due to poverty, lack of family support, poor infrastructure, privacy concerns, etc. Their gynaecological and reproductive health needs are almost entirely overlooked; even hospital toilets remain largely inaccessible for them. They also face disproportionately high rates of mental, physical and sexual abuse, especially those with intellectual and speech impairments.

These challenges are further exacerbated by systemic exclusions as exemplified by the absence of a specific state-wide protocol or employment policy for them, or that of a dedicated women's disability corner at the National Disability Development Foundation or within the Department of Social Services, which could begin to redress some of the imbalance. Accessing courts also remains a major hurdle, with the legal system not even recording or recognising disability status in court documentation.

But we cannot continue to ignore the plight of a community that constitutes about 15 percent of the population. While we welcome the gradual increase in government allowances for persons with disabilities, all such efforts risk becoming token gestures without a strategic, multi-sectoral approach to guide them. We, therefore, urge the government to undertake comprehensive institutional and legal measures to insulate these vulnerable individuals from abuse, exclusion and systemic barriers, so that they can reach their potential like all other citizens. Greater research and funding support for relevant organisations are also crucial.

Revive information, rights commissions

These oversight institutions must not be left in limbo any longer

We share Transparency International Bangladesh's (TIB) concern over the interim government's failure to set up the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the Information Commission since assuming office on August 8, 2024. This inertia surrounding the operationalisation of two crucial statutory bodies is alarming, especially as the country has witnessed repeated crimes and human rights abuses in recent months.

Following the ousting of the Awami League regime, many politically appointed officials in the administration and statutory or autonomous bodies either resigned or were removed. On September 10, the then chief information commissioner along with another commissioner were suspended. Later, on November 7, the then NHRC chairman and all five members resigned. Since then, as the TIB has noted, the interim government has taken no visible steps as yet to reconstitute these commissions.

The importance of the functions of these bodies cannot be overstated. Many rights defenders, including this newspaper, have called for the revival and proper empowerment of these organisations, which are governed by a statutory process where the president appoints commissioners based on recommendations from a selection committee. The legal procedure exists, so why has the government failed to act for more than six months? This is particularly baffling given that many advisers in the interim cabinet previously led rights institutions themselves. One would have expected them to prioritise the restoration and strengthening of the NHRC and the Information Commission, not delay it.

To its credit, the government recently signed an MoU with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), paving the way for a UN rights mission in Bangladesh for three years. However, this international initiative with its broad-based mandate cannot replace a national rights body embedded within the country's legal and institutional framework. A properly reconstituted NHRC, with adequate independence and resources, could play a critical role in investigating rights violations—such as use of excessive force by security forces, mob violence, or any discrimination faced by marginalised groups—and providing remedies to victims. It could also advise the government on rights-related reforms. Likewise, a properly empowered Information Commission is essential to ensuring citizens' right to information, particularly in an era of heightened public demand for transparency around critical developments, controversial decisions, etc.

The formation of these two commissions is thus essential to rebuilding public trust and democratic oversight, especially ahead of the upcoming elections. We urge the government to immediately form the selection committees, appoint commissioners, and amend relevant laws or rules to ensure these bodies are not only restored but also empowered to act.

Can decentralisation improve primary school outcomes?

Dr Manzoor Ahmed is emeritus professor at BRAC University and has served as the convener of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education's consultation committee on primary and non-formal education.

Dr John Richards is emeritus professor of public policy at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada.

Shahidul Islam is doctoral researcher at Queens University in Kingston, Canada.

MANZOOR AHMED, JOHN RICHARDS and SHAHIDUL ISLAM

It is a matter of abiding shame and regret that the majority of our children—aged 10-14 years, including many who have completed five years of primary education—cannot read, write or count at a functional level. The World Bank's learning poverty assessment for low- and middle-income countries says so. This unhappy outcome of the primary education system is corroborated by the national student assessment reports prepared under the Directorate of Primary Education, the latest one for 2022.

This is so despite the government's and development partners' investments through a series of primary education development programmes (PEDPs) carried out over two decades. The fourth phase of PEDP is about to close and the PEDP5 will be launched in 2026. Can the fifth phase mark a new beginning so that the clock begins to move in the students' learning outcome?

Popular expectations were high about education reform when Prof Muhammad Yunus took the reign of the interim government nearly a year ago. The surge of reform initiatives of the new government did not include an education reform commission. Only a consultation committee on primary and non-formal education (PNFECC) was appointed in October 2024 by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education with one of the authors here as the convener. The nine-member committee recommended over a hundred action points grouped under eight clusters, aimed at "overcoming the stagnation in quality." The report was handed to Prof Yunus on February 10 this year. He eagerly listened to the committee members, asked many questions, and promised serious consideration of the report and early follow-up action.

More than five months later, on July 16, after a meeting with the adviser and senior personnel of the primary education ministry, Prof Yunus, according to press reports, directed that urgent steps be taken to fill the headteachers' posts, which lie vacant in about half of the 65,000 government primary schools in the country. He also urged that teacher transfer, a sore point for many teachers, be transparent, school infrastructure be made more girl-friendly, and internet and multimedia facilities be extended to all primary schools.

One may wonder why the chief

adviser's instruction was necessary regarding such basic conditions as ensuring a headteacher is available to provide leadership for good management of each school, or a school's physical facilities not become an obstacle to learning and teaching for girl students and female staff. Furthermore, why is basic instructional technology including internet connectivity not a common feature yet



VISUAL: SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON

in primary schools?

Will the chief adviser's instruction make much difference? These problems were to be tackled under the PEDP4, which has been in operation since 2018. The consultation committee also recommended specific measures regarding school leadership and filling immediately the headteachers' and other field-level vacancies to be taken immediately. Actions regarding infrastructure and technology were also recommended. Suggestions were made about necessary actions in making each school function effectively. As it turns out, an initiative and a mechanism with a sense of urgency have been absent. Only some sporadic and uncoordinated decisions, which are in the nature of the ongoing administrative steps, have been taken.

Bureaucratic inertia, top-down decision-making with indifference to diverse field conditions, frequent indecisiveness, and a lack of proactive anticipation of problems have been characteristic in education management. How can this culture and

mindset change?

Many of the problems mentioned have been identified in the earlier phases of PEDP; some steps have been taken and resources expended without satisfactory results. For instance, the Upazila Primary Education Plan (UPEP) and School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) have been half-hearted efforts labelled as decentralised management. The former remained an academic exercise in a few locations with no follow-up through actual implementation steps and budget allocations. The latter amounted to small funds handed to schools for spending under highly restrictive central controls. A lack of conviction and commitment at the central level about devolution of authority and deep-seated mistrust of field personnel's capacity prevented meaningful decentralisation. The commitment of political and

and accountable management of schools. In Nepal, decentralisation of school governance has been taken since 2017 as an element of national democratic transformation. Sri Lanka, an outlier in the region with its superior performance in students' learning outcome, has decentralised school management as an essential element in reconciling ethnic, language and economic divisions.

In Bangladesh, the PNFECC report recommends that the government take a stand on decentralised governance of the basic education services. It urges that decentralisation initiatives be taken with the aim of more effective and dynamic management. The committee specifically recommends carrying out a pilot decentralisation programme within the PEDP5 as the first step towards meaningful decentralisation of primary education. The pilot is proposed for 20 upazilas; the aim would be to prepare plans, involve government and non-government providers in assessing total education needs in an upazila, secure necessary resources, and implement the plans through decentralised management (PNFECC Report, Chapter 6).

The convergence of strategic actions and efforts in an administrative area (an upazila) can overcome the obstacles of overly centralised management. A decentralised trial for creating effective schools and successful learners can be a distinctive feature of the PEDP5. For the initiative to succeed, it will require:

- High-level political commitment, support and assurance of proper technical capacity with the combination of appropriate international and national expertise through institutional collaboration for this purpose.

- Designation by the primary education ministry of a small high-level technical advisory committee, which will help guide the pilot programme's development and implementation within the PEDP5 programme framework with due consideration of risks and potentials and advise the minister-in-charge on policy-level decisions by the ministry and the government.

- Identifying and recruiting an international and national technical support team to begin necessary preparatory activities.

If the 20 upazila pilot receives government support and priority attention, by the midpoint of PEDP5, the pilot could be extended to 100 upazilas across the country, envisaging nationwide coverage in the next phase of the PEDP.

The authors wrote the book 'Political Economy of Education in South Asia: Fighting Poverty, Inequality and Exclusion' (University of Toronto Press, Toronto and Prothoma, Dhaka, 2022).

No equality without menstrual dignity



Fayazuddin Ahmad is policy and advocacy lead at WaterAid Bangladesh and coordinates the Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHM) Platform.

FAYAZUDDIN AHMAD

Menstruation, once shrouded in silence, stigma and taboo, has now gained global recognition as a critical human rights concern. This shift in perspective has highlighted that menstrual health is not merely a hygiene issue. In Bangladesh, a nation striving for gender equality amid its development journey, the pursuit of dignified menstrual health for all is fraught with persistent challenges.

In 2005, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF introduced the concept of menstrual hygiene management (MHM). By 2022, the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) established a link between menstrual hygiene and menstrual health. This broader understanding embraces the physical, psychological and social dimensions of menstruation, demanding access to information, education, products, WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) services, empathetic care, and an environment free from shame and discrimination.

Attaining menstrual health, as defined by global health and human rights bodies, is a multifaceted endeavour. It involves ensuring that individuals have access to accurate, age-appropriate information, supportive facilities, and affordable materials for bodily care; timely

diagnosis and treatment for discomforts; a stigma-free and respectful environment; and a mindset free from taboos, enabling full participation in all aspects of life without exclusion or discrimination due to menstruation.

This complex issue is intrinsically linked to a range of human rights, including access to water and sanitation, dignity, health, education, equality, sexual and reproductive rights, labour rights, and participation in public life. Furthermore, addressing menstrual health directly contributes to several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Bangladesh has taken commendable steps to embed human rights principles within its governance. The constitution upholds gender equality, health, non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, and sustainability in several of its articles. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare oversees the health of women and girls, as well as the availability, accessibility, quality, and affordability of menstrual products, often working in conjunction with the ministries of commerce and women and children affairs.

Effective menstrual management depends on access to and use of safe water, safely managed sanitation

and hygiene services, as well as the availability of affordable products. Government circulars even encourage the establishment of separate WASH blocks for girls and boys in schools. Policies aim to ensure access to safe water and sanitation services at an affordable cost, including public latrines in schools and public places, and to expand access for all.

Educational policies play a pivotal role in promoting menstrual hygiene management. National strategies focus on developing sanitation facilities that integrate menstrual hygiene management and support strategic leadership for a national platform, ensuring that everyone is informed and aware of the importance of MHM.

In schools, government circulars have mandated the installation of improved, gender-segregated toilets in secondary and higher secondary institutions, including waste bins, soap, and water for female students. These circulars also include a vital stipulation: female teachers should discuss menstruation with female students and ensure the availability of sanitary napkins.

In the workplace, while the National Menstrual Hygiene Management Strategy 2021 notes that WASH facilities are often not gender-friendly in most government offices—lacking proper maintenance, soap, bins, and washing amenities—it aims to ensure that MHM facilities are accessible in all settings, including workplaces, prisons, industries, and commercial spaces.

Educational programmes, sometimes in collaboration with international partners, aim to provide school-based interventions

on menstrual management. National strategies also seek to strengthen menstrual health education in school curricula for both boys and girls, including students who have dropped out of school. In health institutions, strategies seek to ensure accessible MHM facilities and equip healthcare outlets to provide services in "woman-friendly units."

The affordability of menstrual products and sanitation facilities remains a significant challenge. While products need not always be free, economic reasons should never deprive anyone of dignity or the ability to participate in daily activities. Menstrual products are essential items and therefore should ideally be classified as such for tax purposes, exempting them from VAT and making them more affordable.

There are limited laws or regulations in Bangladesh specifically ensuring the affordability of menstrual products. Although tax exemptions on raw materials for sanitary napkin production were intended to improve affordability, their actual impact depends on whether manufacturers pass those cost savings on to consumers. Concerns have been raised that these tax cuts may have primarily benefited a dominant company, while VAT continues to be charged.

What is needed is a cohesive, rights-based approach: clear legal frameworks, sustained investment in infrastructure and product access, rigorous quality standards, and inclusive public education. By treating menstrual health as a core issue of dignity and justice, Bangladesh has the opportunity to set a powerful example in the region and beyond.

MARINE DRIVE IN TEKNAF

Jhau forest faces rampant tree theft

Locals allege illegal logging; officials point to natural causes



MOKAMMEL SHUVO, Cox's Bazar

At Nidania in Ukhiya, alongside the Teknaf Marine Drive, a group of women were seen collecting branches from felled Jhau trees.

When asked about the tree cutting, one of them, Khurshida, said, "The trees were cut down to widen the road, and we are just gathering the leftover branches."

However, deep inside the nearby forest, numerous stumps of cut trees could be seen. Asked who cut them down, she replied, "They do it at night; we don't know who they are."

The area still has a dense Jhau forest, though signs of illegal tree cutting are clearly visible in many places. During the monsoon season, tidal surges often submerge parts of the forest.

Forest officials claim that strong tides are a primary reason for trees being uprooted, but they also admit that theft contributes significantly to the deforestation.

A visit along the Marine Drive reveals makeshift shops, restaurants, and

various structures have been set up inside the forest and other parts of the beaches. This type of encroachment is particularly noticeable in the Ukhiya and Ramu sections of the coastal belt.

A few days ago, local journalists captured footage of Jhau logs being transported by truck from the Teknaf beach.

Journalist Abdur Rahman of Teknaf said, "The truck driver claimed the trees were already uprooted by the tide."

However, locals allege that tree theft is being committed regularly under the pretext of storm damage.

Bashir Ahmed, ranger of the coastal forest division in Teknaf, said, "The trees uprooted by tidal surges were being brought to our office."

He also admitted to the problem

of illegal logging, attributing it to a shortage of manpower.

Stretching nearly 80 kilometres from Cox's Bazar to Teknaf, the Marine Drive is a popular tourist route, and the Jhau forest adds to its scenic appeal.

Dipak Sharma Dipu, president of the Cox's Bazar Forest and Environmental Conservation Council, said, "These trees were originally planted to enhance natural beauty and protect the coast from strong wind. But now, the forests are being steadily destroyed."

He accused influential individuals of systematically clearing the trees in order to occupy the coastal land.

"Around 3,000 illegal structures have already been built," he added, "yet the authorities have taken little action."

Firoz Al Amin, ranger of the Inani forest range in Ukhiya, said, "Most of the trees are uprooted by excessive tides. We collect those trees and store them. Last year, uprooted trees worth around Tk 7 lakh were sold through auction."

He added, "Theft is the second cause of the destruction of the Jhau forest. We filed three cases this month for stealing the Jhau trees, and one was held on Wednesday in this connection."

Shahinul Islam, assistant conservator of Cox's Bazar South Forest Division in Ukhiya, said protecting the Jhau forest along the Marine Drive requires coordinated efforts from several government agencies.

"We are currently preparing a list of illegal structures inside the forest, and steps will be taken to remove them," he said.

However, he said makeshift huts used by local fishermen to store fishing gear are not demolished out of humanitarian concern. These fishermen, he said, also contribute to protecting the forest.



July the deadliest month so far

FROM PAGE 3
Syndrome. It involves critical damage to organs such as the liver, brain, heart, kidneys, and central nervous system.

Dr Ahsan said patients with comorbidities such as hypertension, diabetes, or chronic lung and kidney disease are particularly vulnerable.

Many patients fail to recognise warning signs like severe abdominal pain, breathing difficulty, bleeding, extreme weakness, or a sharp drop in urination and platelet count. By the time they reach the hospital, their condition has often deteriorated significantly, he said.

He recommended immediate hospitalisation for any patient displaying these warning signs. Additionally, he advised patients with comorbidities, the elderly, and pregnant women to be admitted at the onset of dengue fever to minimise the risk of death.

Dr Ahsan also warned about the dangers of cross-infection from different

dengue serotypes, which can cause more severe outcomes if medical intervention is delayed. Anyone experiencing fever should consult a doctor immediately and follow the prescribed treatment, he advised.

He said many patients from Dhaka arrive at hospitals late — often without having received adequate fluid therapy during transport. By the time they get here, many are already in shock. Early intervention could have saved many of these lives, he said.

Public health expert Dr Mushtaq Hussain said decentralising the healthcare system is vital to reducing dengue-related deaths.

If patients can access early treatment, they are less likely to reach a critical stage, he said.

While the healthcare system outside Dhaka includes community clinics, union health centres, upazila health complexes, and district hospitals, it often lacks

essential equipment. In contrast, Dhaka lacks a functional multi-tiered system altogether, he observed.

In Dhaka, there are no proper primary healthcare centres, and the few secondary hospitals that exist are often underutilised due to a lack of basic facilities.

He said complications from dengue usually arise after the fever subsides, but early symptoms are often ignored, as many assume they are recovering.

He stressed the need for a tiered treatment model dividing care into primary, secondary, and tertiary levels to improve case management and reduce deaths. "A stronger primary healthcare system is essential, especially for low-income communities."

He also called for more blood collection centres and expanded secondary care services within Dhaka.

A clear policy decision is urgently required to implement this decentralised model, Dr Mushtaq added.

Frugal Innovation

FROM PAGE 4
disproportionately affecting those in the Global South who are least able to cope. He underscored the need for conversations on climate adaptation to go beyond survival — and speak equally to livelihoods, dignity, and inclusive growth.

Mohamed Nasheed, secretary general of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, delivered the keynote virtually. He criticised the current international financial system for failing

Govt begins destroying

FROM PAGE 4
93,78,900 saplings. The initial budget allocation stands at Tk 37.6 million.

Cox's Bazar leads the list, with 1.73 million saplings being destroyed in the first phase. Other high-figure districts include Bandarban (792,100), Gaibandha (784,300), Chattogram (738,400), and Tangail (728,000).

In the greater Chattogram region — which includes Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Noakhali, Feni, and Lakshmipur — the DAE reported a combined stock of 6.31 million saplings. In Cox's Bazar alone, 1.73 million of the 4.07 million

vulnerable countries, noting that high borrowing costs are pricing developing nations out of critical investments in clean energy and resilient infrastructure.

The forum emphasised how communities can lead resilience-building efforts by drawing on local knowledge and limited resources.

Since its inception in 2013, the FIF has served as a key platform for exploring innovation and sustainability from the perspective of the Global South.

Deep depression formed

FROM PAGE 4
The monsoon trough extends from Rajasthan through Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and the centre of the depression in Assam, stretching across the southern part of Bangladesh.

The monsoon is active over Bangladesh and strong over the North Bay, read the BMD updates.

Moreover, the Met office has forecast light to moderate rain in all divisions, including Dhaka, of the country in 24 hours

commencing 9:00am yesterday.

"Light to moderate rain or thunderstorms accompanied by temporary gusty wind are likely at most places over Khulna, Barishal, Chattogram and Sylhet divisions and at many places over Rangpur, Rajshahi, Dhaka and Mymensingh divisions with moderately heavy to very heavy falls at places over Khulna, Barishal and Chattogram divisions," said a Met office bulletin.

Meanwhile, a mild heat wave is sweeping over

Rangpur division and it may abate.

Day and night temperatures may fall slightly over the country, according to the BMD.

Khulna's Koyra experienced the highest 92 mm of rainfall in the last 24 hours, till 6:00am.

The country's highest temperature 37.2°C was recorded in Tetulia over the past 24 hours till 6:00pm on Thursday, while the lowest temperature 20.5°C was recorded in Bandarban till 6:00am yesterday.

Global operator, foreign tech

FROM PAGE 3
The government is currently in talks with UAE-based DP World to operate the terminal.

"What we are going to do is only to appoint a new operator replacing the old one. And the purpose is only for enhancing the efficiency. Because I have seen global port operations while visiting those. I do not have any personal interest. I am not even a dweller of Chattogram," said the adviser.

About the outgoing private operator, he said, "The private operator that ran NCT and another terminal for the last 17 to 18 years did good job. But the government has now taken initiative to run this

terminal more efficiently compared to them."

Sakhawat opined that Chattogram Port is lagging behind many global ports.

Citing his visits to international facilities, he noted, "A good portion of the country's export containers are sent to the Port of Singapore for transshipment. Those containers cannot stay in the Singapore port for more than two days."

He added that most ports in Singapore and many other countries are operated by private entities.

"It is necessary to bring technological know-how from abroad in order to enhance efficiency," he

said. "Currently, we are running our ports inefficiently. But for enhancing efficiency more we need to step into international arena," he remarked.

According to the adviser, a port would truly enter the global arena only when a global operator is engaged.

Commenting on recent improvements in NCT's performance, Sakhawat said container handling at the terminal has increased by an average of 30 percent since CDDL took over.

He expressed hope that the next appointed operator would maintain this improvement.

Polls delay to invite

FROM PAGE 3
although the country is going through various crises, the government's actions are barely visible to the public. "People don't even feel its presence."

He questioned whether government officials, apart from the advisers, are attending their offices regularly or properly carrying out their duties.

He alleged that corruption is continuing unchecked, just as it has over the past 17 years, and in some areas, it has even increased.

Gayeshwar said the current government

is unable to function effectively due to a lack of coordination and governance experience. "Had they asserted their authority properly, many of these controversies might not have happened."

He said BNP does not intend to criticise the interim government harshly, as it is a non-partisan administration. "Only an elected government is accountable to the people — not an unelected one."

Gayeshwar warned that without an elected government in place, the country is likely to face further uncertainty.

S&P sees stable

FROM PAGE 1
"... a US tariff rate of 35 percent that will potentially apply to

Bangladeshi imports into the US beginning 1 August 2025 could affect labour market conditions if the two countries fail to reach a more effective agreement."

S&P said the country's garment industry remains highly competitive, with low unit labour costs and an ample supply of labour.

But the proposed US tariff would undermine Bangladesh's competitiveness in that market and potentially disrupt its RMG industry.

S&P said Bangladesh's real growth rate per capita is very strong compared with those of peers and that downside and upside risks to its external balance sheet have now become broadly balanced.

"This is despite headwinds in the next 12-18 months stemming from external trade conditions."

S&P also said it could lower its ratings on Bangladesh if the country's external position worsens.

The agency said Bangladesh is receiving increasing external financial support, stemming from deep engagement with bilateral and multilateral development partners, consistent remittances from overseas Bangladeshi workers, and solid export receipts from its globally competitive garment manufacturing sector.

Bangladesh's real economic growth rate decelerated meaningfully over the past two years. It may pick up pace should political and external stability solidify over the next 12 months, said S&P, forecasting about 6.1 percent growth in the next three years if these conditions materialise.

It said elections tentatively scheduled for April 2026 could be a milestone in that process.

"Bangladesh's volatile political situation may stymie the predictability of policy responses."

"Mooted elections in the first half of 2026 are likely to be a critical pivot point for more lasting political stability following the abrupt collapse of the government in July 2024," it said in the latest report.

Should the establishment of an elected government lead to a more stable political environment, it could help to alleviate persistently low foreign direct investment inflows and set the foundation for long-term structural reforms, it added.

"Nevertheless, investors will likely continue to face challenges, including evolving institutional settings, infrastructure deficiencies, and bureaucratic inefficiencies."

S&P said its assessment on Bangladesh's banking risk is negative.

It classified Bangladesh's banking sector in group '9' (with '1' being the highest assessment and '10' the lowest). "That said, the sovereign faces limited contingent liabilities from the banking sector."

It said although private sector banks are in better shape, there are notable risks in the state-owned commercial banks.

The agency said state banks account for less than 30 percent of total banking sector assets but their nonperforming loans ratio is much higher than that of peer commercial banks, standing at about 40 percent according to the IMF.



Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-20	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT 4-55	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



NCP procession in Sunamganj.

PHOTO: STAR

Hasina left us a dysfunctional

FROM PAGE 12
"People have overthrown Sheikh Hasina through their struggle against authoritarianism, but our fight is not over yet. We must continue until a new Bangladesh and a new political arrangement are established," he said.

"We will work to rebuild Sunamganj as part of this broader transformation," he added.

Nahid and other NCP central leaders reached Sunamganj after a road march in Habiganj on Thursday.

In the morning, they met with families of those killed and injured in the July uprising. Following Friday prayers at the town's central mosque, they joined a procession and rally at Allat Square.

Also addressing the rally, Hasnat Abdullah, chief coordinator (South) of NCP, alleged that supporters of the party were being threatened.

"We've heard of people facing intimidation for supporting NCP. I urge everyone to strengthen the party in every ward," he said.

Hasnat encouraged residents to work with existing local leaders. "Support them, build ward and upazila committees under their guidance," he said.

He also addressed local economic concerns and said, "Sunamganj has long suffered from a lack of employment opportunities. Governments have come and gone, but little has changed here."

"For meaningful change, you must organise yourselves and act collectively."



11TH CONVOCATION UNIVERSITY OF ASIA PACIFIC



Prof. Dr. Bidhan Ranjan Roy Podder
Adviser
Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Message

It is a great privilege to extend my warmest congratulations to the University of Asia Pacific (UAP) on the occasion of its 11th Convocation. This event demonstrates dedication, perseverance, and academic pursuit, not only for the graduates but also for the faculty members and administrators who have guided them along the way.

Since its inception in 1996, UAP has remained committed to broadening access to quality higher education in Bangladesh. The university's role in promoting academic excellence and preparing students to contribute meaningfully to the national and global progress is truly commendable. Its commitment to innovation and the holistic development of students reflects a strong dedication to shaping future leaders.

To the graduates, this convocation is a stepping stone towards new challenges and opportunities. As you embark on the next phase of your journey, I encourage you to apply the knowledge and values you have acquired at UAP to serve the society with integrity, determination and a sense of responsibility. Your contributions will play a vital role in the continued advancement of our nation.

I express my best wishes to the University of Asia Pacific for its continued success and to the graduates for a bright and fulfilling future. May this 11th Convocation be a memorable and inspiring event for all.

Professor Dr. Bidhan Ranjan Roy Podder



Professor Dr. S. M. A. Faiz
Chairman
University Grants Commission of Bangladesh
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Message

On this momentous occasion of the 11th Convocation of the University of Asia Pacific (UAP), I extend my warmest congratulations to all graduating students. This is a significant milestone, marking the culmination of years of dedication, perseverance, and academic pursuit. Your achievements reflect not only your individual commitment but also the collective efforts of the entire UAP family.

I sincerely commend the University's leadership, faculty members, administrative staff, and all other stakeholders for their unwavering commitment to fostering an environment of academic excellence, innovation, and personal growth. Your steadfast support has been instrumental in shaping the bright futures of these graduates.

I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable support and encouragement of the graduates' families, particularly their parents. Their sacrifices, guidance, and enduring belief in the potential of their children have been fundamental to this success. Quality education is the cornerstone of national development. It enhances individual capabilities and equips students to address the dynamic challenges of an increasingly interconnected and fast-evolving global landscape. Both public and private universities have a shared responsibility to ensure that our graduates emerge as capable, ethical, and confident leaders, armed with cutting-edge knowledge and skills. Since its establishment in 1996, UAP has steadily grown into one of Bangladesh's respected academic institutions. With a mission to bridge academic learning and real-world application, UAP has focused on delivering industry-relevant education that fosters innovation, critical thinking, and community impact. Its diverse academic programs, research initiatives, and commitment to excellence have positioned the University as a hub of learning and transformation.

As the graduates step into the next chapter of their journey—whether it be further studies, entrepreneurship, or entering the workforce—I am confident that they will apply their knowledge with integrity, contribute meaningfully to society, and uphold the values of their alma mater. They have the potential to bring pride to their families, uplift their communities, and play a vital role in building a more prosperous and sustainable Bangladesh.

I wish the 11th Convocation of UAP resounding success and extend my best wishes to all graduates for a bright and impactful future.

Professor Dr. S. M. A. Faiz



Professor Dr. Qumrul Ahsan
Vice Chancellor
University of Asia Pacific (UAP)

Message

My heartfelt congratulations to the graduating students of the 11th Convocation of the University of Asia Pacific (UAP). This significant occasion celebrates your accomplishments and marks the beginning of a promising new chapter. Despite the evolving challenges in higher education, UAP remains steadfast in its commitment to academic excellence, nurturing a learning environment where students thrive.

I deeply appreciate our esteemed faculty, conveners, co-conveners, subcommittee members, and all who contributed to the success of this convocation. Special thanks to the Board of Trustees, led by Chairperson Architect Mahbuba Haque, for their visionary leadership and enduring dedication to institutional growth and research.

We are honored by the presence of our esteemed guests and dignitaries, including Prof. Dr. Bidhan Ranjan Roy Podder, Hon'ble Advisor to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, who presided over the Convocation Ceremony on behalf of the President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and Chancellor of UAP. We are also privileged to welcome our distinguished Convocation Speaker, Engineer Mohammed Enayetur Rahman, Chief Executive Officer and President of ULKASEMI Pvt. Ltd. Our sincere thanks go to Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, Former Prime Minister and the "Father of Modernization" of Malaysia, for his inspiring video message.

Congratulations once again to the graduating classes. May your future be filled with success and fulfillment, bringing pride to yourselves and UAP.

Professor Dr. Qumrul Ahsan



Professor Dr. Mohiuddin Ahmed Bhuiyan
Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor
University of Asia Pacific (UAP)

Message

I am delighted to welcome you all to the 11th Convocation of the University of Asia Pacific (UAP) on July 26, 2025. Today marks a defining moment in your academic journey, a joyous occasion for students, families, faculty, and staff.

Since its founding in 1996, UAP has remained committed to delivering high-quality education and nurturing graduates prepared to drive national progress. Your resilience and optimism, especially in challenging times, have been a profound source of pride and inspiration.

As you embark on this new chapter, the skills and knowledge you have gained, strengthened by our innovative teaching methods and state-of-the-art facilities will empower you to face the future with confidence. UAP's achievements in academic excellence, research, and ICT integration, recognized by global ranking organizations, reflect our dedication to preparing graduates who will contribute to Bangladesh's growth and the global community.

This milestone is just the beginning. UAP will always be a part of your journey, and we eagerly anticipate your continued success.

Congratulations, once again, on this historic moment.

Professor Dr. Mohiuddin Ahmed Bhuiyan

UAP Profile

The University of Asia Pacific (UAP), established in 1996 under the Private University Act of 1992, was the first project of the Foundation for Human and Social Development, a group of visionaries and philanthropists. The primary objective of the UAP Foundation, a Dhaka-based non-profit and non-commercial organization, is to promote human and social development through enhanced educational opportunities, innovative programs, and institutional growth to meet contemporary needs. To remain up-to-date, the university's administrative operations have been aligned with the new Private University Act of 2010.

Facilities and Departments

The University of Asia Pacific (UAP) has seven schools and nine departments, including the Departments of Architecture, Business Administration, Civil Engineering, Computer Science and Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, English, Law and Human Rights, Pharmacy, and Basic Sciences and Humanities.

The Academic Programs

The University of Asia Pacific (UAP) currently offers undergraduate programs in nine disciplines. All undergraduate programs are of four years' duration, except for Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch), which is a five-year program. The university follows a two-semester academic system each year, ensuring a structured and comprehensive academic calendar across all disciplines. UAP also offers twelve postgraduate programs leading to a Master's degree in six disciplines. All undergraduate and postgraduate syllabi are approved by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of the Government of Bangladesh. In addition, specialized programs in engineering, architecture, pharmacy, and law are accredited by their respective professional bodies.

The campus

The University of Asia Pacific (UAP) has its permanent campus at 74/A, Green Road, Dhaka 1215, comprising 388,800 sq. ft. of space in an eleven-story building situated on just over an acre of land. Additionally, UAP has been allotted 2.65 acres (160.32 kathas) of land at Road 224, Sector 21, RAJUK Purbachal Project—the largest planned township in Bangladesh—for the development of a larger permanent campus. Recently, the UAP Foundation acquired approximately 20 kathas of land adjacent to the current campus to facilitate future expansion.

UAP offers spacious classrooms equipped with computers, air conditioners, and multimedia projectors. Portable sound systems are available on demand to support audiovisual presentations. Each department has a state-of-the-art seminar room for organizing seminars and workshops for students and faculty members. The university provides high-speed broadband internet across all departments and laboratories. The auditorium in the main building is a notable asset of UAP, featuring modern lighting and sound systems and a seating capacity of 271.

UAP is also a pioneer among private universities in Bangladesh in offering advanced laboratory facilities, which are fully equipped to support both practical classes and experimental research. The Center for Research, Training, Testing, and Consultancy (CRTTC) provides access to university laboratory resources and offers a wide range of testing and analysis services to organizations of all sizes. The Central Library houses a rich collection of books, research journals, and magazines. In addition, each department has its own library or reading room stocked with subject-specific materials. The campus also features a well-equipped medical center staffed by qualified doctors and nurses to provide primary medical care to all members of the UAP community.

Research and innovation

The University of Asia Pacific (UAP) has a multidisciplinary research institute named the Institute for Research, Innovation, and Development (IRID), established to encourage and support impactful research by faculty members and students. UAP's faculty, often in collaboration with students, have published extensively in reputed international journals and conferences.

Co-curricular activities

The University of Asia Pacific (UAP) has a dedicated center called the Directorate of Students' Welfare (DSW), which supports students in preparing for the challenges of a highly competitive world. Its key functions include facilitating job placements, organizing workshops, seminars, training programs, and career fairs, supervising all central student clubs, and providing counseling services on physical and mental health. UAP also hosts a wide range of curricular and co-curricular activities throughout the year. Recent events include debate and drama competitions, cultural programs, cricket and football tournaments, indoor games, photography exhibitions, cybersecurity competitions, club fairs, and project showcases from various departments.

Collaboration/academic affiliation

The University of Asia Pacific (UAP) has an active Office of International Affairs (OIA) that fosters affiliations with foreign universities and organizes various seminars and conferences. UAP maintains collaborative ties with several reputed international and national universities and institutions of higher education and research in countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia, Ireland, Japan, and Latvia. Notably, UAP is the first private university in Bangladesh to become a member of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU). It is also a member of the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham), the Association of Universities of Asia and the Pacific (AUAP), and the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP).

Ranking

In the QS Asia University Rankings 2025, the University of Asia Pacific (UAP) ranked 23rd among all public and private universities in Bangladesh, within the 681-700 range in Asia, and 212th in Southern Asia. In the 2024 edition, UAP held the same national position, ranking 751-800 in Asia and 238th in Southern Asia. Additionally, in the Webometrics Ranking of World Universities 2023, UAP was placed 9th among private universities and 26th among all universities in Bangladesh.

Recent salient achievements

UAP has several achievements both on institutional and personal levels. Some of the recent ones include the following:

- UAP hosted the International Conference on Pharmaceutical and Health Sciences (ICPHS) on December 6-7, 2024. The event, organized by the Department of Pharmacy in collaboration with Universitas Sumatera Utara (Indonesia) and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, focused on "Advancements in Pharmaceutical and Health Sciences for Sustainable Development".
- The EEE team of UAP won 1st place at the 1st Research Summit organized by Jahangirnagar University. Their poster was titled "TechTutor: Enhancing Engineering Education with a Multimodal Conversational Framework".
- Team Supersonic654 from EEE, UAP, secured 1st place at the IEEE WIE BD Summit 2024 in the "Robotics for Climate Change and Assistive Technology" competition.
- Mr. Md. Khairul Alam Assistant Professor (EEE, UAP) won the grand prize in the Mobility Impairments Challenge, sponsored by Arm, Nordic Semiconductor, and SeedStudio, for a sewing machine solution for individuals with leg impairments.
- The Department of English was runner-up in both the 4th and 5th Inter-University Student Conference & Cultural Competitions, themed "200 Years of the Brontës" and "The Romantic and the Gothic".
- Four English Department faculty members were elected to the Executive Committee of BELTA (2023-2025).
- UAP students actively participated with research papers and posters at the 2nd TESOL BD International Conference (2023) and the 11th BELTA-NSU International Conference (2024).
- UAP organized a seminar on COP29 on December 23, 2024, analyzing the expectations, outcomes, and future lessons of the UN Climate Change Conference in Baku, Azerbaijan. Key speakers included Syeda Rizwana Hasan and Dr. Aimin Nishat.
- A team from the Department of Law and Human Rights, UAP, represented Bangladesh at the 20th KK Luthra Memorial Moot Court Competition, held at the University of Delhi, India, from March 15-17, 2024.
- The Office of International Affairs (OIA) hosted an induction ceremony for the newly formed International Advisory Council (IAC) on May 19, 2024. The council includes 13 members from global universities and organizations.
- The UAP Indoor Games Club participated in the Inter-University Table Tennis Tournament organized by ULAB on April 28, 2025, at the National Indoor Stadium.
- The UAP Cultural Club became runner-up at the "সংস্কৃতি" inter-university cultural competition held by AUST on February 8, 2025.
- UAP ranked in the 681-700 band in the QS Asia University Rankings 2025.
- UAP students joined the global strike for Gaza, showing solidarity against ongoing violence in the region.
- Ms. Badhan Das, a graduate of the Department of Architecture, received an Honorable Mention in the Tamayouz Excellence International Graduation Projects Award 2024.
- The ACI-UAP Student Chapter was awarded the "2023 Outstanding Student Chapter" by the American Concrete Institute — the fourth time UAP received this recognition.
- Engineer Safayat Hossain, UAP Civil Engineering alumnus, was named one of the 10 New Faces of Civil Engineering — Young Professionals by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).
- The UAP-UAMSAILS Inter-University Moot Court Competition 2024 was held from April 18-20, in collaboration with the UNESCO Madanjeet Singh South Asian Institute of Advanced Legal and Human Rights Studies.
- UAP served as an academic partner in the GPH Ispat-Prothom Alo Engenium event.
- Aporajita Barua, a Civil Engineering graduate, won the Best Paper Award at ICCESD 2024 (KUET) for her research on earthquake vibration damping using floating sand-filled balls in tuned liquid column dampers.
- Ms. Laika Bashir, Assistant Professor, Department of Basic Sciences and Humanities, was nominated to the Governing Council of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.
- Dr. Md. Masrur Mamun Hossain, Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture, received the IAB Award 2023 in the Conservation and Revitalization category for the "Conservation of Baro Sarder Bari" project.
- Prof. Dr. Abu Sayeed M. Ahmad, Dean, School of Environmental Sciences and Design, also received the IAB Award 2023 for the same project.

Graduates Overview of the 11th Convocation

Name of the Department	Undergraduate	Post Graduate
Department of Architecture	56	0
Department of Business Administration	117	129
Department of Civil Engineering	216	37
Department of Computer Science and Engineering	200	16
Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering	92	0
Department of Pharmacy	273	340
Department of Law & Human Rights	125	148
Department of English	194	32
Sub Total	1273	702
Total Number of Graduates in 11th Convocation		1975

List of Chancellor's Gold Medal Awardees for 11th Convocation

S/L	Name	Passing Semester	CGPA	Department
1.	Gazi Shahbaz Mohammad	Spring 2023	3.99	Business Administration
2.	Bidita Sarkar Diba	Fall 2023	3.99	Computer Science and Engineering
3.	Ripa Rani Biswas	Spring 2024	3.98	Computer Science and Engineering



Professor Dr. Chowdhury Rafiqul Abrar
Adviser
Ministry of Education
Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Message

I am pleased to extend my congratulations to the University of Asia Pacific (UAP) on the occasion of its 11th Convocation. This momentous event marks the dedication and hard work by the graduates, as well as the relentless commitment of the university's leadership, faculty members and administrative staff in upholding academic excellence.

Since its establishment in 1996, UAP has been active in expanding higher education opportunities in Bangladesh. The university's adherence to quality education and its efforts to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for national and global development are admirable.

To the graduating students, this convocation is both a celebration of your achievements and the beginning of new responsibilities. I encourage you to carry forward the values instilled in you and to contribute meaningfully to society. Your dedication and perseverance will play a crucial role in shaping a brighter future for Bangladesh.

I extend my best wishes to the University of Asia Pacific for continued success and to the graduates for a future filled with accomplishments and fulfillment. May this 11th Convocation be a memorable and inspiring occasion for all!

DR C R Abrar



Mohammed Enayetur Rahman
Convocation Speaker
CEO & President, ULKASEMI

Message

It gives me immense pride and heartfelt joy to congratulate the graduates who will be awarded their degrees at the 11th Convocation of the University of Asia Pacific (UAP). This moment marks not only the culmination of years of hard work, resilience, and dedication, but also the beginning of an exciting new journey.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation and congratulations to the parents whose unwavering support, sacrifices, and encouragement have played a vital role in helping the graduates reach this remarkable milestone. Your pride today is richly deserved.

Equally, this is a proud day for the faculty of UAP, who have mentored, challenged, and inspired these bright minds. Through their dedication and academic leadership, they have instilled in the graduates the critical thinking, curiosity, and values necessary for a life of impact and purpose.

My profound gratitude goes to the Honorable Vice Chancellor and respected members of the Board of Trustees, the Academic Council, and all other academic and administrative bodies of UAP. Your visionary guidance and collective commitment have laid a strong foundation for our students' success and the university's continued excellence.

UAP continues to stand as a beacon of quality education, equipping students with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills that prepare them to thrive in a fast-changing world. Through a rich, multidisciplinary learning experience, they have acquired the tools to collaborate, innovate, and solve complex real-world problems. With this solid foundation, our graduates are now ready to take their place in a global community of thinkers, creators, and change-makers.

Once again, congratulations to all our graduates, and to the families, faculty, and well-wishers who have helped them reach this day of triumph. May your future be filled with purpose, pride, and great promise.

Mohammed Enayetur Rahman



HE Tun Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad
4th & 7th Prime Minister of Malaysia

Message

I am indeed honoured to be invited to share a few words on the occasion of the 11th Convocation of the University of Asia Pacific. It is a joyous occasion to be celebrated, to be remembered and to be cherished not only by the graduates but also their families, teachers and the university as well. It is, after all, the day that all students of higher learning look forward to. It is the day that they are officially successful in their quest for knowledge. But it must be remembered that it is only the early stage of the quest. It should be taken as the key to open up more doors to pursue knowledge, through conventional means or otherwise. The hope is that, as one embarks on this journey, wisdom will eventually prevail.

Before I proceed further with my speech, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on what a convocation means. It is widely defined as a celebration of knowledge as well as an acknowledgement of intellectual achievement. It is also a rite of passage. It is transformative as it shapes one's character and way of thinking. Simply put, you entered the university as an adolescent and now, you leave as an adult on the day of your convocation. With that, responsibilities and expectations are added to the qualifications. You are now expected to be responsible to your family, to society and to the nation. Bangladesh is a nation rich in culture, history, and resilience. It was not so long ago, Bangladesh was submerged in a crisis. But it seems to have turned the corner and come out stronger, and I believe the citizenry is looking forward to an even better future. But all these hopes would not be realised unless serious effort, commitment and dedication are put into them. No nation has ever enjoyed success and growth if its people are not the key component to it. And the backbone to all of these is its youth, and the more knowledgeable they are, the better the prospect of the nation. This is especially true today when the world is actually ruled by technologies and artificial intelligence.

The youth are born into these new technologies while the older generations are trying to keep up. As such, it is a natural progression for the youths to be able to keep abreast as it is the technology of their generation - discovered, developed and expanded for them. But technology is without emotion. It lacks the conviction of truth, right and wrong. It is without a conscience and that is where youths with knowledge are of the essence. As in the past, the advent of new technologies brings along new hopes for mankind and yet, rogues emerge and use some of these technologies for their end - devastating mankind with cruelties which spawned from their greed. Herein is the conundrum. Knowledge is supposed to make a person smarter, meaning able to see truth and understand what is right or what is wrong. And yet, it is this very knowledge that is being used to commit all the crimes against humanity. We are witness to this. We see it being committed every day. I risk sounding like a broken record. But I hope you will bear with me. Too many intelligent people have committed monstrosities to this world. Their civilisation leads the world and yet their behaviour is more uncivilised than those of the stone-age. They kill and massacre, commit and support genocides which are being carried out before the eyes of the civilised world. They commit them with impunity. We see it in Palestine. We saw it in Iraq and we see it in other parts of the world. Yet, some of us look up to them as models of success and civilization. It is my fervent hope that graduates of the University of Asia Pacific today will remind themselves of this. It must be the voice of conscience and stand as a reminder that knowledge, above all else, is about realising what is right and what is wrong.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all graduates the very best in your journeys ahead. Congratulations. May you bring honour to your families, to the University of Asia Pacific, and be the pride of Bangladesh. Once again, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to be part of your special day.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

HE Tun Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad



Architect Mahbuba Haque
Chairperson
Board of Trustees (BOT)
University of Asia Pacific (UAP)

Message

On the 11th convocation of the University of Asia Pacific (UAP), I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all our graduating students.

This ceremony is a significant moment for the graduates and also a proud moment for their parents, guardians, and the entire UAP community. I sincerely thank the parents and the guardians for entrusting UAP with the responsibility of nurturing, guiding and shaping their children's career aspiration.

The motto of UAP is "Committed to excellence". I truly hope our graduates embody the motto of UAP. Let honesty, dedication, perseverance, and the pursuit of knowledge be the compass that directs you in the next phase of your lives. Remember that the foundation you have built here will serve as a steadfast platform for innovation, leadership, and positive contributions to society. As you step into the world beyond these walls, your responsibilities are not only limited to yourselves and your family, but you all need to stand on a unified platform regardless of gender, caste, religion to save our beloved nation, planet, environment, race & humanity and help achieving a better world together.

To the graduating class of the University of Asia Pacific, I wish you a successful journey ahead marked by meaningful achievements. Here is to your good future. Thank You.

Architect Mahbuba Haque

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a bank with vision

Shari'ah Based Islami Bank

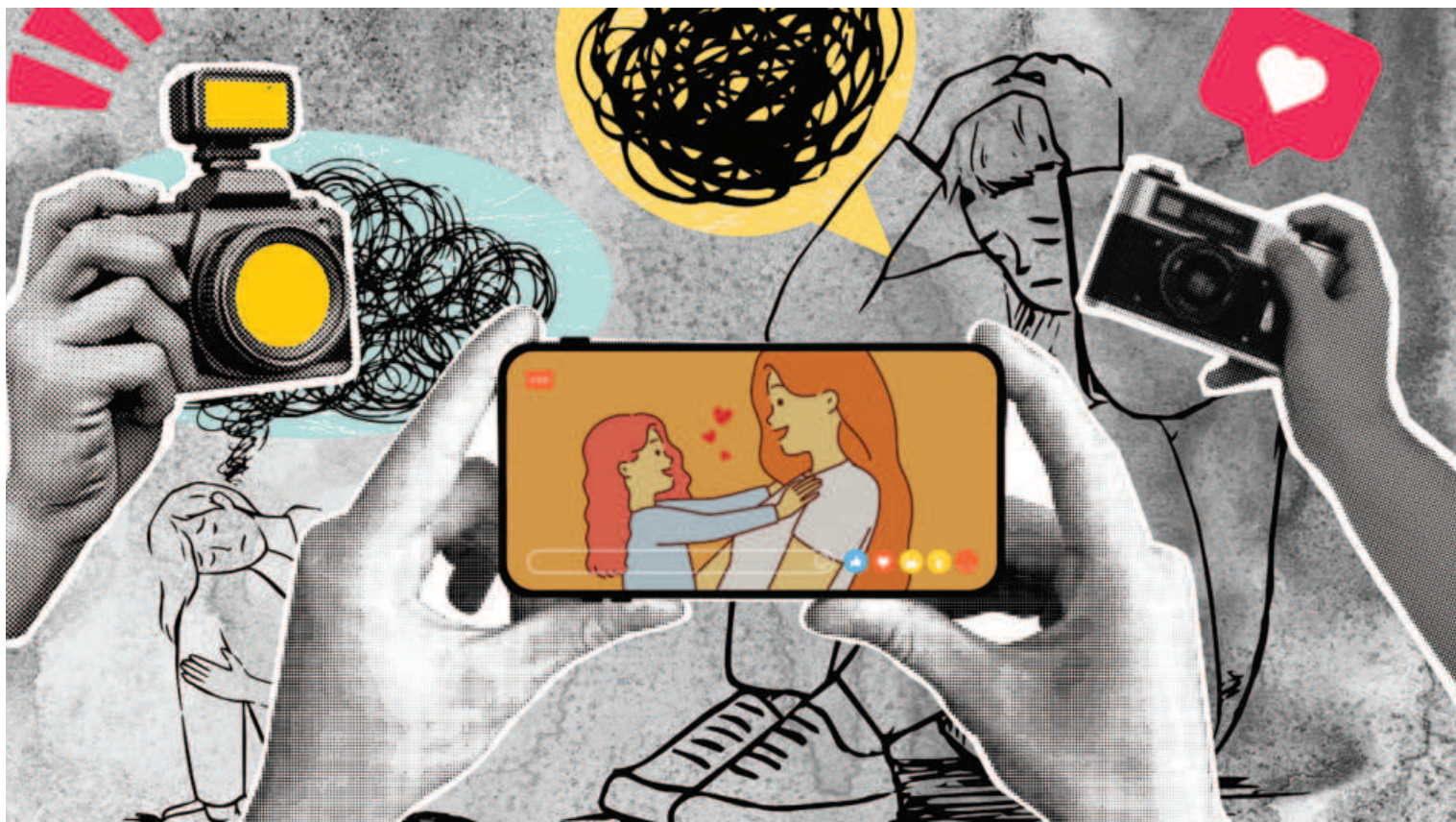


ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

FICTION

The feed and the filter

After school, she waits at the gate. It's not that she hates Mira. She misses the old version of her—barefoot in a nightie, dancing to Lata Mangeshkar, cooking shorshe ilish in their Rajshahi kitchen, hugging her close when the power went out and the dark felt alive.

HAROOZZAMAN

Mira presses her thumb on the cracked power button of her phone. The screen flickers: 2% battery. She exhales sharply, then lunges for her charger, knocking over the mess on her bedside table: a lipstick stub, a greasy Cheez Puffs wrapper, and a candle labeled Monsoon Breeze that hasn't smelled like anything in weeks.

Outside her third-floor apartment in Uttara, life moves: the jingle of rickshaw bells, the Asr azaan echoing through thick, humid air, and a street vendor's call—"Dim paratha, gorom gorom!"—rising from the street. But Mira doesn't really hear it. Her mind drifts elsewhere—somewhere curated. Somewhere filtered. A place where her skin glows, her smile radiates calm, and her loneliness stays out of frame.

She steps onto the small, sunlit balcony. Light catches on the iron grillwork. With careful fingers, she tucks a strand of hair behind her ear, lifts her phone, and tilts her face. Swipe. The "Lagos" filter warms everything. Her lips part slightly, her eyes angled upward—as if caught in a thought.

"Sun-kissed and healing," she murmurs. Click. Post. In the quiet corners of solitude, I bloom. #SelfLove #DivorceDiaries #DhakaGlowUp She doesn't mention the unpaid WiFi bill on the fridge. Or the breakfast argument with her daughter, Annya. Or the fact she hasn't called her parents in weeks.

Later, the apartment door slams behind Annya, loud and final.

Mira wipes toast crumbs off the counter. "Annya, this is how things work now. I'm building something."

Annya doesn't look up. "No, you're building something fake."

Before Mira can respond, Annya walks away. The toast sits untouched. Mira doesn't notice. She's still scrolling, watching her digital self unfold like a flower that only blooms online.

At school, Annya stares out the window. A crow flies low, dips, then disappears. Algebra hums in the background like a distant machine.

Jisha leans over. "I saw your mom's post. You guys look like you live in a magazine."

Annya forces a smile. "Yeah. A magazine where no one eats and everything's pretend."

After school, she waits at the gate. It's not that she hates Mira. She misses the old version of her—barefoot in a nightie, dancing to Lata Mangeshkar, cooking shorshe ilish in their Rajshahi kitchen, hugging her close when the power went out and the dark felt alive.

Now there are ring lights. Not real lights. At dinner, Mira scrolls under the table.

"I know when you're posting," Annya says. "Even when I'm talking."

"It's part of the job, darling."

"I thought you were my mom. Not a brand."

"I'm both," Mira replies. "I need you to understand that."

Annya doesn't answer. The rice tastes like chalk. She gets up, leaves her plate in the sink, the grains clinging like stubborn little lies.

In her bedroom, Mira lays out her off-white kurta and chunky silver earrings beside a copy of Atomic Habits. She plans to quote it in her story.

"Purbachal's going to be divine," she says to her phone. "Healing weekend with my girls."

Hearts and comments pour in: "Queen energy! Slay, ma'am!"

She breathes it in like medicine. But something aches beneath it all—a hollow she can't quite name.

She packs her ring light, false lashes, the herbal tea she never drinks. Leaves behind a rejection email. A message from her sister: "You've changed. I don't know if I like it."

Makes sense, Mira tells herself: "People hate growth. Especially when they're stuck."

Rupa Khala's house smells of cinnamon and something older. The fan squeaks. Cushions sag with stories. No filters here. Just chipped mugs and quiet.

"Want to bake?" Khala asks, holding two blackened bananas. "They're begging to be something."

Annya grins. "Okay."

They mash, spill sugar, and laugh when the batter overflows. Later, they sit on the roof with mismatched mugs. The sky over Purbachal glows dusty orange.

Annya checks her phone. A new video—her mother again, swirling dupattas, laughing for the camera. Caption: "Healing looks good on us."

Her stomach drops. One frame shows her journal—blurred, but unmistakable. She switches off her phone. Slides it under her pillow.

Mira wakes early. Her head aches. Her friends scroll silently beside her. No one talks.

"You're always so curated," Lata says. "Even your sadness matches your aesthetic."

"It's what people want," Mira shrugs. "Light. Not shadows."

"But it's heavy," Rekha murmurs. "Pretending all the time."

Mira checks her latest reel—likes slowing, comments dying. She scrolls through her gallery and stops at a photo. Not planned. Not edited.

Annya, asleep. Rain streaks the window behind her. No filters. Just her. She stares at it. Later, she tries to record something raw—"Breaking cycles"—but the words sound hollow, like someone else speaking through her.

A comment appears: "You're so fake. Your daughter deserves better." She doesn't delete it.

In the school library, dust floats in warm shafts of sunlight. Annya breathes in the quiet—the paper, the pencil shavings, the stillness. She doesn't check her phone.

She writes in her journal: "When the camera's off, I breathe differently. I stretch wider. I disappear less."

She speaks to the counselor: "She uses my life like wallpaper," Annya says. "I want to be the foreground."

"Do you love her?" the counselor asks.

"I do. But I hate her new version the world claps for."

Outside, boys shout across the field. The sun hangs low and unforgiving.

That night, Annya deletes the app. She opens a new page in her journal.

Stop cropping me. I'm not a backdrop. I am the frame.

She doesn't show it to anyone. Not yet.

Mira stands outside Annya's room. No phone. Just her.

"Can I come in?" Annya looks up. Nods.

Mira sits on the edge of the bed, staring at the old cartoon sticker on the wardrobe.

"I deleted the reels," she says.

"Which ones?"

"All the ones with you. I never asked."

Silence.

"I got scared," Mira admits. "After your father left, I didn't know who I was. So I tried proving I existed."

"But you disappeared from me," Annya whispers.

Mira's voice breaks. "I know. I'm sorry."

No camera records the moment. Just something small and real beginning again—like roti rising on a pan. Quiet. Alive.

That night, they burn the onions trying to cook daal. They laugh anyway, and eat cross-legged on the floor, licking lentils off their fingers.

No hashtags. No posts. Just presence.

Two weeks later, Mira knocks. A notebook in her hand.

"I saw your poem on the fridge."

"You weren't supposed to—"

"I didn't take a photo. I just read it."

A pause.

"Can I read more? If that's okay?"

Annya pulls out her journal—the one Mira once used for a flat lay. She hands it over.

"No stories. No sharing."

"No hashtags," Mira promises. She flips a page. Her eyes mist over.

Annya waits, listening for a shutter that never clicks.

"Want to go for a walk?" Mira asks.

"No phones?"

"No phones."

Annya smiles. "Let's walk."

And they do—past honking rickshaws, sizzling chhola carts, under a Dhaka sky that glows without needing a filter.

Haroonuzzaman is a translator, novelist, poet, researcher, and essayist. Besides teaching English in Libya and Qatar for about 12 years, he has had 20 years of teaching experience in English Language and Literature at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB).

POETRY

Maturing

AHMAD SALEH ABDULLAH

for SAP

Always the same whining about the distances, always the same muscles flinching at the thought. The shortest distance covered is displacement, you say; it is physics. I say I know without knowing anything about desperation. I am not a walker: who became wiser anyways by rising early for walks? You say I am just a baby, wrapping your hands around me—an amniotic memory. I say this is magic; you are, you say. I learnt to love walking like blood learns a narcotic. Love is the shortest distance to you. This is geometry. Half the circumference of a day the sun's iridescence no longer a nuisance. You see, you scorched me into life.

Ahmad Saleh Abdullah, a former medical student, is currently an English major at the University of Dhaka. Reach him at asabdullah.ag@gmail.com.



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

POETRY

The lost rhythm

AYESHA AMEN, SOBIT BASNET

Summer has imprinted crow's feet under my eyes, Yet I have aged only a quarter. That's was when I dunked myself—starting with the crown of my head—into the ocean where The southern sun resides, to imprint upon my face its sheen, rhythm of miracles, and to honour it with my palms pressed together, placed on my pineal gland. The wind has braided my hair last fall, When my fingers failed to even tuck it behind my ear. By winter, a wildfire blazed down the forest of my heart— All its leaves' weary veins' rhythm now beats with No soul. To live, I now move with rain, To float on the water's vastness, To become one with its rhythm, As the whole of the low-shuttering world among burnt honeysuckle trees blurs above me. The tides' rhythm floats me back to land Where I tumble upon the scattered pebbles beneath my feet and then wander With crooked steps To untangle my soul's rhythm by spring.

Ayesha Amen and Sobit Basnet are occasional contributors to Star Literature.

POETRY

Ashen bloom

SENSEI

The air tasted of burnt sugar and broken vows—sweetness clinging to the char. It began with a whisper, then the slow, inevitable searing of what we believed was solid ground.

Every word left unsaid became a cinder lodged in the throat. Every passing slight, a lick of fire on the skin; unseen, but deeply felt. A quiet simmer beneath smiles that had long since turned brittle.

Even the city seemed to hold its breath, exhaling only the dust of old fires. The asphalt didn't shimmer with heat alone, but with the ghosts of promises it could no longer carry. Cracks split the pavement like fault lines fracturing through concrete, through the brittle shell of old friendships, through the silent treaties we signed



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

with ourselves and then forgot.

And still, a lone jasmine bloomed—defiant. Its petals were singed at the edges, its perfume stubborn, as if unaware of the ruin around it. The scent carried something else now too,

the metallic tang of what had burned.

They say the rot has teeth. But sometimes the fire begins within, a slow, private combustion born of silence and self denial.

And then, one day, the mirror

cracked yet not from impact, but from the unbearable heat of honesty. The reflection showed a face carved by restraint, eyes smoldering with a thousand unvoiced grievances.

The silence finally broke, not with a scream, but with the crackle of everything that had been consumed.

Now, only the scent of smoke remains, clinging to the skin like a memory that refuses to cool. We call it dust. We learn to live with the ash. But the bloom, once white, now bears the unmistakable mark of its scorching.

Tousif Rishat explores themes of memory, silence and emotional turmoil through reflective prose. He occasionally writes under the name SENSEI and can be reached at: tousifrishat135@gmail.com.

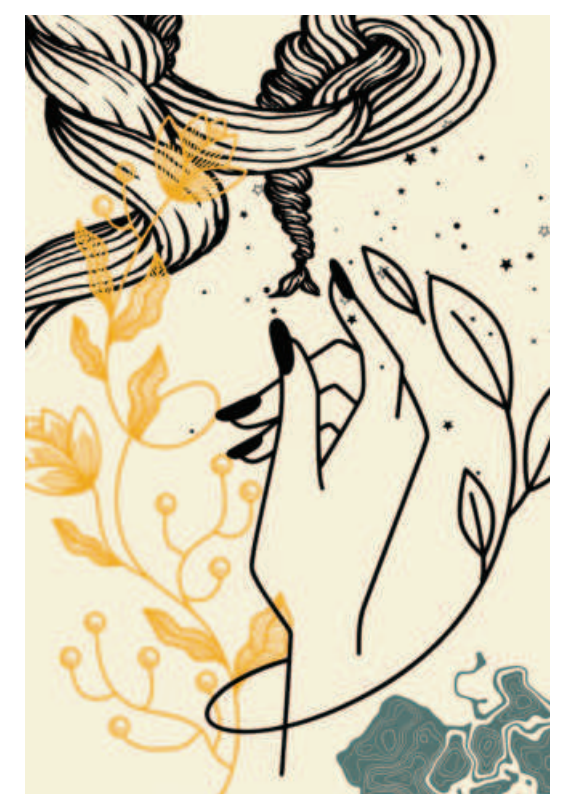


ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

BCB plots power-hitting boost before Asia Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is planning a comprehensive training camp next month, including a plan to boost the players' power-hitting ahead of the upcoming Asia Cup T20, likely to be held in the UAE in September.

With the scheduled home white-ball series against India in August postponed and pushed to next year, the Tigers have received a rare break from their packed international calendar.

Since April, Bangladesh have been engaged in continuous cricket. They hosted Zimbabwe for a two-match Test series, then toured the UAE and Pakistan for separate white-ball series. In June, they toured Sri Lanka for two Tests, three ODIs, and three T20s, and recently hosted Pakistan for three T20s.

BCB's cricket operations chairman, Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, said they are still trying to arrange a series before the Asia Cup. However, regardless of the outcome, a training camp will be held, featuring a power-hitting coach and a psychologist.

"Our players don't often get the chance for a proper camp. Getting a

BCB is considering to bring in Julian Wood as a power-hitting coach ahead of the Asia Cup.

break and then preparing through a camp -- I don't think national team players got such an opportunity for a long time," Fahim told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the players would get a 10-day break followed by a three-week camp. Part of the camp will be held in Dhaka, while the rest may take place in Sylhet or Chattogram.

"We're discussing a potential series with other boards. If that doesn't happen, we'll play some internal matches," Fahim added, confirming they're in talks with power-hitting coach Julian Wood and sports psychologist David Scott.

Julian, who was head coach of Chattogram Challengers in the Bangladesh Premier League 2023, is set to work in a 10-day programme with Sri Lanka Cricket later this month. Scott has previously worked with the BCB in different programmes, with the latest as a part of the BCB's High Performance Unit and the U-19 team.

"We've been in discussions with him [Julian]. If finalised, we'll bring him in. He [Scott] has already worked with us. He'll be given a new contract and work regularly with the team," said Fahim.

Meanwhile, Fahim did not rule out the possibility of some national players participating in next month's Top End T20 Series in Darwin, Australia. Bangladesh 'A' team will take part in the 11-team event from August 14 to 24.

Tigers redefining themselves in T20s, one six at a time

ASHEAQ-UL-ALAM

After the first T20I against Pakistan on July 20, opener Parvez Hossain Emon had claimed that even the No.11 batter of the current Bangladesh team can clear the ropes.

And on Thursday, in the third and final T20I in Mirpur, Shoriful Islam, Bangladesh's last batter, justified his statement by depositing Hussain Talat for a six over long on in the 16th over.

That six had no impact in the fate of the match, as the Tigers lost by 74 runs, but it was significant nonetheless as with it, Bangladesh became the only Test-playing team to hit 100 sixes across formats in the current calendar year.

Bangladesh are also leading the six-hitting list in T20Is this year among Test-playing nations, with 91 sixes in just 12 games.

Bangladesh have won five T20Is out of 12 they have played this year, and four out of those five wins have come in a row this month in two bilateral assignments -- an away series against Sri Lanka followed by the just concluded home series against Pakistan -- both of which they won 2-1.

In Sri Lanka, Bangladesh bounced back from a defeat in the series opener with back-to-back victories. They carried that momentum into the Pakistan series, winning the first two matches before a defeat in the third ended their winning streak at four games.

Bangladesh winning four T20Is or more in a row is rare, as it has happened only four times before. But diving deeper into the team's batting performances in those four victories, an unprecedented pattern emerged.



In all those games, at least one Bangladeshi batter hit five sixes or more, which has never happened four times in a row for the Tigers in T20Is.

First, it was captain Litton Das, who deposited five maximums in Dambulla, opener Tanzid Hasan Tamim then followed it up with six sixes in Colombo, his opening partner Emon cleared the ropes five times in Mirpur and then Jaker Ali made it four in a row by smashing five sixes in the following game.

Four different batters going on a six-hitting spree in four games is testament to the fact that the current T20I side has some depth when it comes to hitting big shots.

And the fact that in all four innings, the batters hit more sixes than fours signals a psychological shift, as batters now have the belief that they can clear the ropes, which even a few years ago was missing.

In July of 2022, after getting outpowered by West Indies and losing a T20I series 2-0

in the Caribbean, Litton had said, "They [West Indies batters] can clear big grounds at will. We are not capable of it. We always think about hitting fours. They hit more sixes. This is the difference that always exists... We really can't play powerful cricket."

In a little over three years, Litton is now leading a Bangladesh team that is actively attempting to hit more sixes than fours, clearing the ropes more often than most teams and are not afraid to play "powerful cricket".

Even though consistency remains a big issue and big hitting alone is not sufficient to win matches, the bravery and the clear mindset shown by the batters is heartening. With the Asia Cup coming up in September and the ICC T20 World Cup next year, the challenge now would be to go strength-to-strength from here, not letting the team abandon their positive approach and once again take shelter in a cocoon of mediocrity.

Pak strengthen T20 squad after Bangladesh loss

AGENCIES

Following the T20I series loss against Bangladesh, Pakistan have strengthened their bowling line-up by going back to the experience of Shaheen Afridi, Haris Rauf and Hasan Ali for the upcoming tour of the West Indies, featuring three T20Is and as many ODIs, starting on July 31.

Shaheen returns to the T20I squad for the first time since March, when he struggled during the tour of New Zealand -- claiming just two wickets in four matches at an average of 66.50 and an economy rate of 10.23. The 25-year-old was left out of both T20I series against Bangladesh that followed.

The T20I matches will be played at the Central Broward Park & Broward County Stadium in Lauderhill, Florida, on Wednesday, July 31; Friday, August 2; and Saturday, August 3. Salman Ali Agha will continue to captain the side in the shortest format.

Faheem Ashraf retains his place in the squad after an impressive showing against Bangladesh, while pacers Salman Mirza, Ahmed Daniyal, and Abbas Afridi have been left out.

For the ODI series, which begins on Thursday, August 8, Pakistan have named a full-strength squad. The matches will take place at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Trinidad and Tobago on August 8, 10, and 12. Mohammad Rizwan will lead the side, with Babar Azam also returning to the 50 over format.

Uncapped batter Hasan Nawaz has been included in the 16-member ODI squad for the first time, offering a fresh option in an otherwise experienced lineup.

SHORT CORNER

World Cup winner Xavi applied for India coaching job

Spanish football star Xavi Hernandez wanted to coach India's national team, the country's football federation (AIFF) has confirmed. According to Times of India, the former Barcelona player and coach submitted an incomplete application via his personal email, missing key details like a contact number. However, a board member admitted they couldn't seriously consider him due to budget limitations.

Difficult to control feelings when you are unfairly offended: Neymar

Striker Neymar said it was hard to control his feelings when he was being insulted, commenting on a heated exchange he had with a fan after his late goal was ruled out and his club Santos suffered a 2-1 defeat that left them in the Brazilian Serie A relegation zone. "In the heat of the moment, it is difficult to control your feelings when you are unfairly offended," Neymar posted on Instagram late on Thursday.

Barca's Asia tour back on track

Barcelona's pre-season friendly against Japanese side Vissel Kobe is back on after the Spanish club and the promoter for the match resolved the contractual issues that earlier caused the game to be suspended, the LaLiga side said on Friday. The Spanish champions were on their way to Japan for Sunday's clash that will kick off an Asia tour.

Read full stories on The Daily Star's website.

ROOT CLOSES IN ON TEST SUMMIT

Joe Root has moved to second spot in overall Test runs, surpassing Rahul Dravid (13288), Jacques Kallis (13289) and Ricky Ponting (13387) with a century against India at Old Trafford on Friday. He had come to bat on Friday with 13259 runs. He was batting on 121 at Tea. Only Sachin Tendulkar is now ahead of him with 15921 runs.

Joe Root now has nine Test centuries against India at home -- the most by a batter against an opponent in home Tests, surpassing Don Bradman's eight against England.

* MOST TEST HUNDREDS

- >> 51 - Sachin Tendulkar
- >> 45 - Jacques Kallis
- >> 41 - Ricky Ponting
- >> 38 - Joe Root**
- >> 38 - Kumar Sangakkara

* MOST 50-PLUS SCORES IN TEST CRICKET

- >> 119 - Sachin Tendulkar
- >> 104 - Joe Root
- >> 103 - Ricky Ponting
- >> 103 - Jacques Kallis
- >> 99 - Rahul Dravid

Bangladesh likely to play in hockey's Asia Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite not qualifying through the AHF Cup in April, the Bangladesh national hockey team are likely to get an opportunity to participate in the upcoming Asia Cup, replacing Pakistan, who may withdraw due to security concerns.

The eight-team Asia Cup is scheduled to take place from August 29 to September 7 in Bihar, India. The tournament was originally supposed to feature the top two finishers from April's AHF Cup -- Oman and Chinese Taipei -- alongside six automatic qualifiers: India, Pakistan, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, and China.

However, recent international media reports suggested that Pakistan government unwilling to send teams to India in either of the tournaments to be held this year in that country -- the Asia Cup and the FIH Junior World Cup.

Bangladesh finished third in the AHF Cup after losing to Oman in the semifinals, marking the first time in 43 years that the four-time champions failed to secure an Asia Cup berth.



Col (ret'd) Riazul Hasan told The Daily Star yesterday, "We replied that we want to play if AHF permits us. We have also requested the AHF to confirm its decision soon so that we can start our preparation. We hope to receive a reply

by Monday," added Hasan.

Meanwhile, a 12-day fitness and conditioning camp for national players concluded on Friday, with around 30 of the 38 invited players participating. The camp was conducted by former national defender and BKSP coach Moshir Rahman Biplob at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

Coach Biplob informed that 38 players including all 35 who were in the camp for the AHF Cup were called for the fitness drills, but only 30 players turned up. Eight of the players skipped, owing to either exams or sickness or due to their training in services teams.

"After the AHF Cup in April, the players except the ones from the service teams have not been in action, so the fitness and conditioning training was arranged to bring them into shape," Biplob said.

"We went through two endurance tests and there have been some improvement in fitness, but we need to work more on that aspect," opined Biplob, who also conducted a match among the players on the last day of the camp in presence of selectors.



Former Bangladesh skipper Sabina Khatun, alongside Ritu Porna Chakma, Monika Chakma, and Matsushima Sumya, enjoy a 'picnic day', as stated by Sabina in her Facebook post on Friday. All four footballers, who are currently playing in the Bhutan National Women's League for Paro FC, were in a joyous mood during an outing arranged by their club.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

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Man stabs cops, 'drowns while fleeing'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A man's body has been found in a pond after he allegedly stabbed police officers at Saghata Police Station in Gaibandha.

Police said the man, Md Siju Mia, 21, from Baguria village of Gaibandha Sadar, died "after jumping into the pond" while trying to escape after attacking police.

Siju, a student of a local college, launched the attack on Thursday night reportedly after police refused to file a general diary over his lost mobile phone.

His body was recovered from the pond by Fire Service and Civil Defence personnel yesterday morning, said Mashiur Rahman, sub-inspector of Saghata Police Station.

Bidroho Kumar Kundu, additional superintendent of police of Gaibandha's A-Circle, said Siju first came to Saghata Police Station at 8:40pm on Thursday to file a GD for a lost mobile phone.

The duty officer asked him for some information, including the phone's IMEI number. He couldn't

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



Stacks of handcrafted boats, light yet sturdy, are being delivered to the local market as monsoon demand surges. Popular for transporting people and goods through rural waterways, each of these small boats sells for Tk 4,000 to 6,000. The photo was taken yesterday in Khulna's Terokhada upazila.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Hasina left us a dysfunctional state: Nahid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam yesterday said the spirit of the Liberation War must be protected from authoritarian politics.

Criticising past governments, Nahid said, "Mujibism has repeatedly tried to re-emerge in various forms. It represents one-party rule, corruption, religious insensitivity, land grabs from minorities, and subservience to India. We must protect the spirit of the Liberation War from such politics."

The NCP held a road march and a rally in Sunamganj town as part of its nationwide month-long programme, "July March to Rebuild the Nation".

During the rally, Nahid called for systemic reforms to rebuild what he termed a "dysfunctional state".

Speaking at the rally at Allat Square in Sunamganj town, he said, "We live in a country where buses lack fitness, planes lack fitness, and even people lack fitness. Sheikh Hasina has imposed on us a state without any fitness."

Nahid said the NCP was founded to "repair a state that has lost its fitness".



SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

Fossil footprints reveal different dinosaur species herded together

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Fossil footprints discovered in Canada show that different dinosaur species sometimes herded together, shedding more light on social interaction among the prehistoric beasts.

The footprints at the Dinosaur Provincial Park in Alberta, Canada, is the first discovery of its kind.



An analysis of the fossil site, detailed in the journal PLOS One, provides the first piece of concrete evidence of mixed species herding behaviour among dinosaurs, similar to how modern wildebeest and zebra travel together on the African plains.

Researchers, including from the University of Reading in the UK, say they were surprised to find fossil tracks of a pair of tyrannosaurs walking side by side and perpendicular to the multi-species herd.

Such multispecies herding could have been a defence strategy against common apex predators like T rexes, the researchers said.

The researchers found 13 horned dinosaur tracks from at least five animals walking side by side on the 30 square metres of the fossil site unearthed so far. They also noticed tracks indicating that an armoured dinosaur like the ankylosaurus walked in the midst of the herd.

Quarter of children in Gaza clinic malnourished

Warns MSF as 9 more die of malnutrition; French plan to recognise Palestinian state draws fire from Israel, US

AGENCIES

Doctors Without Borders charity said yesterday that a quarter of all young children screened at its clinics in Gaza were malnourished, blaming Israel's "policy of starvation".

The medical aid group known by its French acronym MSF said that "Israeli authorities' deliberate use of starvation as a weapon in Gaza has reached unprecedented levels, with patients and healthcare workers themselves now fighting to survive".

It said that its staff in the besieged and war-torn Palestinian territory were receiving growing numbers of malnourished patients.

"Across screenings of children aged six months to five years old and pregnant and breastfeeding women at MSF facilities last week, 25 percent were malnourished," it said.

With fears of mass starvation growing, Britain, France and Germany were set to hold an emergency call to push for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and discuss steps towards Palestinian statehood.

Gaza hospitals yesterday recorded nine new deaths due to starvation and malnutrition

over 24 hours, raising the total number of starvation deaths to 122. Meanwhile, Israel said it will allow foreign countries to parachute aid into Gaza.

In the ground, Israeli forces

States also recalled its delegation from the talks for consultations on Thursday, with US envoy Steve Witkoff accusing Hamas of failing to act in good faith in the talks.

Meanwhile, France intends to



4 aid seekers among 11 Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes

Truce talks expected to resume next week

yesterday killed at least 11 Palestinians since dawn, including four aid seekers, reports Al Jazeera online.

Gaza ceasefire talks are expected to resume next week following Israel's review of the response by Hamas, Egyptian state-affiliated Al Qahera News TV said yesterday, citing an Egyptian source.

Al Qahera said the Israeli delegation left one day after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recalled the negotiating team for consultations.

Close Israeli ally the United

recognise a Palestinian state in September at the United Nations General Assembly, President Emmanuel Macron said later on Thursday in hopes of bringing peace to the region, but the plan drew angry rebukes from Israel and the United States.

"True to its historic commitment to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, I have decided that France will recognise the state of Palestine," Macron said.

"I will make this solemn announcement at the United

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

MUGGING OF JOURNALIST 4 cops withdrawn over inaction Police negligence sparks outrage; 3 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A journalist was mugged in the capital's Mohammadpur area on Thursday night, where muggers attacked him with a machete and took his phone and wallet. The incident sparked public outrage after police initially showed negligence in responding to his complaint.

Amid the backlash, police later recovered the stolen phone and arrested three suspects - Yusuf, 26, Siam, 23, and Jahurul, 22.

Four policemen were withdrawn yesterday from duty for mishandling the case and failing to take immediate action, said Talebur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

They are Sub-Inspector Jasim Uddin, Assistant Sub-Inspector Anarul, and constables Majedur Rahman and Md Nurunnabi.

The incident came to light after Ahmad Wadud, a journalist at a Bengali daily, rushed to Mohammadpur Police Station, located just a few minutes from the crime scene.

In a Facebook post detailing the ordeal, Wadud described how he and his wife were returning home late Thursday night, around 11:00pm when a group of muggers attacked him with a machete and fled with his phone and wallet. His wife was not mugged, as she had been walking slightly behind.

According to Wadud, the initial response from the police was dismissive. When he reported the incident to Officer-in-Charge Ali Iltokhar Hasan, the OC reportedly showed him his inexpensive phone and remarked, "Even I, as the OC, use a cheap phone. If you carry such expensive devices, of course, you'll get mugged," Wadud wrote.

Wadud also described how he was belittled by Sub-Inspector Jasim for having his shirt button open, which

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

US lifts sanctions on Myanmar junta allies

The move comes after junta chief praises Trump, calls for easing of sanctions

REUTERS, Washington

The United States lifted sanctions designations on several allies of Myanmar's ruling generals on Thursday, two weeks after the head of the ruling junta praised President Donald Trump and called for an easing of sanctions in a letter responding to a tariff warning.

Human Rights Watch called the move "extremely worrying" and said it suggested a major shift was underway in US policy towards Myanmar's military, which overthrew a democratically elected government in 2021 and has been implicated in crimes against humanity and genocide.

A notice from the US Treasury Department said KT Services & Logistics and its founder, Jonathan Myo Kyaw Thaug; the MCM Group and its owner Aung Hlaing Oo; and Suntac Technologies and its owner Sit Taing Aung; and another individual, Tin Latt Min, were being removed from the US sanctions list.

KT Services & Logistics and Jonathan Myo Kyaw Thaug were added to the sanctions list in January 2022 under the Biden administration in a step timed to mark the first anniversary of

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2



Without halting at a designated stop, a BRTC bus drops off a visually impaired man in the middle of the road, showing blatant disregard for his safety. On Dhaka's busy roads, buses fail to provide basic accessibility for passengers with disabilities. The photo was taken on the Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

21 pushed in thru Sherpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Twenty-one people were pushed into Bangladesh through Sherpur's Nakugaon border in Nalitabari upazila early yesterday.

Lt Col Mahadi Hassan, commanding officer of Border Guard Bangladesh BGB 39 Battalion in Mymensingh, said believed to be Rohingyas, the five men, five women, and 11 children were pushed into Bangladesh around 1:15am through the Hatipagar area.

Quoting them, he said the families had initially taken refuge in the Ukhiya Balukhali camp in Cox's Bazar during the 2017 Rohingya influx but later crossed into India illegally.

They were working as labourers in hotels and houses the Jammu and Kashmir region of India. A month ago, they were arrested as illegal immigrants in a raid conducted by the Indian police.

Later they were handed over to the Border Security Force (BSF), who pushed them across the border into Bangladesh, the BGB officer said.

A BGB patrol team detained them and sheltered them at a local government primary school.

"Their identities are being verified," he said, adding that further legal steps will follow.



WHERE THE FOREST FEEDS AND FADES

Survival pushes locals into illegal fishing, foraging in Sundarbans, deepening the mangrove's ecological wounds

DIPANKAR ROY, KHULNA

As the morning mist lifts over the vast expanse of the Sundarbans, the rhythmic splash of oars fills the air. Small wooden boats, mostly paddled by women, glide through narrow canals and creeks of the mangrove forest. Their mission is simple but essential — catching fish, crabs, and shrimps from the forest's tidal waters to feed their families.

For generations, the women of Baidyamari, Joymoni, Keya Bunia, Telikhali, Gilar Khal, Gab Bunia, Madhya Holdi Buniya, and Purbachila — all under the Chadpai range of the East Sundarbans — have depended on the forest for their livelihoods. Whether it is fishing, crab collection, or harvesting honey and firewood, the forest has long been their lifeline.

But today, that lifeline is fraying.

The Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest and a Unesco World Heritage Site, is under growing threat. Overexploitation of natural resources, combined with population pressure and climate change, is pushing its delicate biodiversity to the brink.

The shrinking mangrove cover is now clearly visible. Frequent cyclones, rising sea levels, and saline intrusion are killing off key mangrove species such as Sundari, Goran, and Gewa. As the trees disappear, so do the habitats of countless species — from deer to crocodiles to Bengal tigers.

In villages like Joymoni in Mongla's Chila union, the story is painfully familiar. Of the 380 fishing cards issued in the area, only 40 have been given to women, despite the fact that most families rely on female labour for fishing and crab collection. Without official recognition, these women are excluded from government training, financial aid, and safety nets during fishing bans. As a result, they are often compelled to enter the forest illegally.

Monika Mondal, a fisherwoman and mother of two daughters, has been entering the forest with her husband since their marriage 21 years ago. "I never fished before marriage," she recalls. "But there's no other way to earn. We go out even during storms or tidal surges."

For Monika and others, the forest is not just a resource — it is survival. "We go into the small canals before sunrise," she says. "Sometimes we catch enough to feed the family. Sometimes we return empty-handed."

But fishing isn't just about sustenance —

it also comes at a cost. The use of fine-mesh nets indiscriminately traps juvenile fish, depleting fish stocks. Crab collectors often disturb mudflats where endangered species breed. Even honey collection, often done by cutting branches to access hives, damages the forest's regeneration.

"We know we are harming the forest in some ways," admits Khurshida Begum, another fisherwoman from Joymoni. "But what choice do we have?"

these measures often lead to tension.

The Bangladesh Coast Guard and Forest Department have ramped up joint operations across the forest's southern belt. Regular patrols, enhanced surveillance, and collaboration with local communities have helped reduce forest-related crimes.

Speaking to The Daily Star, the zonal commander of the Coast Guard's West Zonesaid in the past four months alone, 49 individuals were arrested and 35 firearms

monitoring and brought many such crimes under control.

Balancing enforcement with empathy remains a challenge.

"We understand these people depend on the forest. But unsustainable use will destroy both the forest and their futures," the commander added.

"The degradation is accelerating," says Md Noor Alam Sk, an environmental worker from Bagerhat. "Overfishing, illegal

"Mangroves act as natural barriers against storms. Without them, villages like Baidyamari and Joymoni are directly exposed to disasters," he said.

There are signs of hope.

Community-based organisations like Badabon Sangho are working to empower women by helping them acquire fisher ID cards and access training on sustainable practices. So far, the group has submitted applications for 152 women to receive official recognition as fishers.

"We teach them that harming the forest ultimately harms their families," says Mehedi Hassan, a representative from the NGO. "Only when the forest thrives can their future be secured."

Workshops are also teaching villagers how to use crab traps that do not harm juvenile species, and how to harvest honey without cutting tree branches. Some are being trained to rear crabs in enclosures rather than depending solely on wild capture. However, change remains slow.

"It's not easy," says assistant conservator Das. "People need alternatives. You can't just tell someone to stop fishing if you don't provide another source of income."

He said a list of 5,500 legitimate fishers from coastal upazilas has been submitted to the District Fisheries Office. He hopes that with adequate financial aid during ban periods, these fishers will refrain from entering the forest illegally.

According to the Forest Department, 3,236 fisherman and 54 honey collectors are currently listed in the Chadpai range under the East Sundarbans.

Fishermen report that catches are declining. Cyclones like Sidr, Aila, and Amphan have repeatedly exposed the growing vulnerability of the coastal belt.

"Look at this tree line," gestures villager Karim Sheikh, pointing to a thinning patch of forest. "Ten years ago, it was dense. Now half the trees are gone."

As the sun sets over the tidal waters of the Sundarbans, the dilemma remains stark. The forest feeds its people, but those same people — driven by poverty, necessity, and a lack of alternatives — are contributing to its destruction.

"We don't want to harm the forest," says Tandra Mondal of Joymoni village. "But if we don't fish, our children won't eat. If the forest dies, we die." This is not just the story of a forest or a community. It is the story of the fragile balance between human survival and nature's endurance — a balance that is dangerously close to tipping.



"Every year, the number of boats entering the forest increases," says Dipon Chandra Das, assistant conservator of forests, East Sundarbans. "Unscrupulous people are cutting more wood, collecting more fish and crabs. The pressure is unsustainable."

The journey from Mongla to Baidyamari involves crossing the Pashur River by boat and then an hour-long motorcycle ride through winding village roads. Life here is deeply intertwined with the tides of the Sundarbans.

"Earlier, one trip into the forest could earn enough for several days," recalls Rahim Uddin, an elderly fisherman from Gab Bunia village. "Now we have to go deeper and stay longer, but the catch is less."

Many villagers expressed frustration about increasing restrictions imposed by the forest department and coast guard patrols. While necessary for conservation,

recovered. "We are constantly exchanging views with local residents and working in coordination with the Forest Department to protect the forest," he said.

Illegal fishing, crab collection, unauthorised honey harvesting, tree felling, and deer poaching remain persistent threats. However, the increased use of routine and smart patrols has strengthened

wood collection, and honey harvesting are reducing the resilience of the Sundarbans. The mangrove is not just trees — it is a complex ecosystem protecting Bangladesh from cyclones and tidal surges."

He said excessive human pressure and lack of ecological understanding among forest-dependent communities are causing irreversible damage.



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED / THE DAILY STAR

THE VANISHING CROWS OF OUR CITIES

This is a textbook example of an ecological collapse. Crows were once seen as dirty. Ironically, their absence is making our environment filthier.

AFRINA MOMOTAJ

Once a staple of every morning in cities across Bangladesh, the unmistakable caw of the crow is now becoming a rare sound. These intelligent, adaptable birds—long associated with urban life—are quietly disappearing. While many once viewed crows as mere scavengers or nuisances, their decline is now raising alarms among environmentalists, city planners, and ecologists alike. The connection? Climate change. And its consequences ripple far beyond birdsong.

Crows: Nature's Unpaid Waste Workers

For decades, crows served as a silent force in waste management. In cities like Dhaka, Chattogram, and Rajshahi, they played a critical role in scavenging food scraps and organic waste from open bins and streets. Without them, organic waste now rots longer, attracting flies, rats, and disease.

Md Rafiq, a waste collector from Dhaka North City Corporation, laments, "Ten years ago, the garbage bins would be cleaned by crows before we arrived. Now the same bins overflow and stink by noon."

Crows play a natural role in reducing biodegradable waste, supporting a system already strained by rapid urban population growth and inadequate waste management infrastructure.

A Silent Collapse

According to data from Jahangirnagar University's Department of Zoology, Bangladesh's crow population has declined by more than 60% in major urban areas since 2010. The reasons are complex but interlinked:

Rising Temperatures: Heatwaves disrupt breeding cycles and reduce chick survival.

Habitat Loss: Urban expansion and tree-cutting reduce nesting areas.

Toxic Waste: Formalin-laced food, pesticides, and industrial waste poison birds indirectly through scavenging.

Air Pollution: Increased levels of airborne pollutants impair respiratory health in birds, especially in Dhaka, where PM2.5 levels regularly exceed WHO guidelines.

"This is a textbook example of an ecological collapse. Crows were once seen as dirty. Ironically, their absence is making our environment filthier," says Dr Rezaul Karim, ornithologist and conservation adviser.

A Broken Chain in the Urban Ecosystem

The crow is a keystone species in urban Bangladesh. Its decline has triggered a cascade of imbalances:

Increased Rat Population: In the absence of avian scavengers, rodents thrive.

Mosquito Breeding: Decaying waste becomes fertile ground for mosquito larvae.

Dog-Human Conflict: With crows gone, street dogs are turning to garbage for food, increasing their presence and often leading to more human-animal conflict.

Rise in Zoonotic Diseases: Unmanaged organic waste and greater contact with rodents and dogs increase the risk of disease transmission to humans.

Moreover, crows were natural pest controllers in rural areas, feeding on insects that damage crops. Their absence has led to greater pesticide use, further harming biodiversity and soil health.

Climate's Cruel Hand

Bangladesh has experienced a steady rise in average temperatures—1.3°C over the past 20 years. Rainfall patterns have become erratic, and prolonged dry spells are stressing urban greenery, which crows depend on for shelter.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS / THE DAILY STAR

"Extreme weather events like storms and sudden rain now destroy many nests before the eggs hatch," explains Dr Mahzabin Akter, an ecologist with IUCN Bangladesh. "Climate change is disrupting not only birds' life cycles but the entire urban food web."

Human Responsibility: Ignored for Too Long

Beyond climate change, human decisions have hastened the decline. In some areas, local authorities reportedly used poisoning or nest destruction near hospitals and airports to curb crow activity—moves that now appear tragically short-sighted.

Urban development rarely includes planning for biodiversity. Cement replaces soil, and ornamental plants replace fruit-bearing or native trees, leaving fewer food sources for birds.

What Can Be Done?

Rebuilding the crow population—and broader urban biodiversity—requires targeted action:

Plant Native Trees: Neem, mango, and banyan trees provide nesting areas and food.

Ban Open Waste Dumps: Shift to sealed bins and composting methods.

Regulate Harmful Chemicals: Control formalin, pesticides, and toxic food waste.

Raise Public Awareness: Educate citizens about the ecological role of urban wildlife.

Integrate Biodiversity into Urban Planning: Make space for nature in the city.

"We need to stop thinking of crows, or any scavenger, as pests. They are critical service providers. Nature gave us

free cleaners—we drove them away," says Dr Karim.

A Warning in the Silence

The disappearing crows are more than just an ecological footnote—they are a warning. Climate change does not just melt ice caps or flood coastlines. It disturbs the balance in our neighbourhoods, our streets, our daily routines.

As Bangladesh steps into a hotter, more unpredictable future, we must decide: will our cities continue to push nature away, or will we make space for the very species that have helped us survive?

In the eerie silence of crow-less mornings, the answer grows urgent.

Afrina Momotaj is a climate-smart agriculturist and animal rescuer.

Why not a new Bangladesh for labourers?

In conversation with Advocate AKM Nasim, a member of the Labour Reform Commission and former President of the Bangladesh Labour Court Bar Association.

The Daily Star (TDS): What is the current status of the Labour Reform Commission and its activities?

AKM Nasim (AKMN): The Labour Reform Commission submitted its report on 21 April 2025. The Chief Adviser welcomed it and pledged to implement its recommendations. The report reflected unanimous consensus among employers, workers, academics, legal experts, and other stakeholders—an outcome rarely seen in such diverse consultations. Despite differing priorities, both employers and workers agreed on most key issues, with no dissenting opinions recorded. Notably, employer representatives also supported the welfare and rights of workers. While the pace of implementation may vary, with workers demanding swift action and employers favouring gradual steps, this shared commitment signals hope for pragmatic, inclusive labour law reform in Bangladesh.

TDS: Could you share some of the key recommendations proposed by the Commission?

AKMN: Under the current labour law, at least 20% of a company's total workforce must be union members to form a trade union—a requirement that often complicates union formation. To address this, the Labour Reform Commission has recommended replacing this percentage-based threshold with a fixed number, such as 20, 40, or 50 workers. In other words, if a specific number of workers in a company unite to form a union, it should be eligible for registration. The exact number has not yet been fixed; instead, the Commission advised that it be determined through consultations with relevant stakeholders.

This approach aims to ensure freedom of association and simplify the process of forming representative trade unions.

Another significant recommendation concerns maternity leave, which is currently 16 weeks. The Commission has proposed extending it to six months, with the government bearing the financial responsibility for the additional two months.

Currently, employees in managerial, administrative, and supervisory positions are not classified as 'workers' under the law. The Commission recommends expanding

right to form trade unions. Although EPZ workers are governed by separate laws, the Commission emphasised that these laws should not offer less protection than those outside EPZs.

Lastly, the Commission has recommended bringing domestic workers under the purview of labour law by formally recognising them as workers. Given that the 2015 policy framework failed to provide adequate

special attention during the commission's discussions. The commission emphasised that, as a sending country, Bangladesh must establish a safe and well-regulated migration process while ensuring the protection of its workers in destination countries. It stressed the importance of making migration from Bangladesh legal, safe, and dignified.

The commission strongly recommended strengthening the role of Bangladeshi embassies in destination countries. Despite limitations in manpower and capacity, embassies must act more proactively and efficiently to address migrant workers' issues. However, the primary responsibility lies with Bangladesh as the sending country. Migration must be secure, legal, and well-structured from the point of origin to prevent harassment abroad. A preventive approach and an efficient migration management system are crucial.

TDS: What recommendations did the commission make concerning the informal sector, and how were issues like social protection and worker fatalities addressed?

AKMN: Currently, only about 15–16% of workers are in the formal sector, while the vast majority are employed informally. The commission recommended creating a national database covering all workers to ensure that everyone has access to legal and social protections.

It also emphasised that social protection should cover all workplace accidents and worker fatalities—not just major incidents like the Rana Plaza collapse or the Tazreen Fashions fire. The commission proposed that responsibility for social protection should be shared between employers and

the government.

TDS: What hurdles might arise in implementing the commission's recommendations, and how likely is their prompt execution?

AKMN: Some recommendations may increase the financial burden on employers. To address this, the commission has suggested phased or transitional arrangements through government or tripartite discussions, so that employers are not subjected to immediate pressure.

Currently, the Bangladesh government is in the process of amending the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006. For years, the government has been committed to aligning labour laws with international standards, and this amendment process presents a crucial opportunity for meaningful reform.

The following areas should be prioritised for immediate amendment:

- Freedom of Association — ensuring the right to form and join organisations.
- Collective Bargaining — strengthening workers' bargaining rights.
- Access to Justice — reforming the labour court system and introducing Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms.

- Maternity Benefits — ensuring protection and support for women workers.
- Tea Workers' Rights — forming a tripartite committee to resolve long-standing issues concerning tea estate workers.

If this opportunity is missed, the next chance to amend labour law may not come for another five to six years. Therefore, immediate action is needed to implement these long-awaited reforms and significantly improve workers' rights and protections in Bangladesh.

The interview was taken by Priyam Paul.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS / THE DAILY STAR

Labourers are waiting along a road in Mirpur, hoping to be hired by employers.

the definition of 'worker' to include these categories, thereby extending legal protections to them. However, they would not have the right to join trade unions but could form separate associations.

A key focus is ensuring that workers in Export Processing Zones (EPZs) receive the same rights as other workers, especially the

protection, the Commission proposed enacting a dedicated law to safeguard the rights and welfare of domestic workers.

TDS: What proposals did the commission put forward to improve conditions for Bangladeshi migrant workers?

AKMN: The issue of migrant workers

Why an Independent BBS is Essential for Bangladesh's Future

The cost of statistical mistrust is high: poor planning, misallocation of resources, and a citizenry increasingly disconnected from the government's narrative. In short, without restoring confidence in official data through institutional independence, the very foundation of data-driven governance in Bangladesh remains at risk.

HASINUR RAHAMAN KHAN

In an age where policy decisions must be data-driven and evidence-based, the integrity and independence of national statistics are paramount. Bangladesh's principal statistics agency, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), has always held a critical responsibility in shaping national understanding of issues ranging from GDP growth and employment rates to inflation and poverty incidence. Yet, despite its importance, the BBS has long operated under direct government oversight, specifically under the Statistics and Informatics Division (SID) of the Ministry of Planning. This structure, while perhaps administratively convenient, raises serious concerns about political influence and has undermined the credibility of official statistics for many years.

In Bangladesh, as in any other country, data is not just an administrative necessity; it has profound implications for national policy, economic forecasting, and public perception. GDP growth rates influence fiscal planning, budget allocations, and international credit ratings from agencies such as Moody's and Standard & Poor's. Inflation figures inform monetary policy decisions made by Bangladesh Bank and shape wage negotiations in both public and



How to ensure a truly independent BBS

- 1 Amend Act to grant BBS full independence in data collection, processing, and publication 
- 2 Establish National Statistics Commission through all-party parliamentary process 
- 3 Introduce legally mandated publication calendar for major indicators 
- 4 Task independent statistical audit body with reviewing statistical outputs 
- 5 Report directly to Parliament, not to any ministry 

Dialogue (CPD) indicated that over 60% of urban low-income households reported food insecurity during the same period, suggesting a disconnect between official data and lived realities. Inaccurate or delayed labour force surveys have also raised concern. While the BBS reported a national unemployment rate of around 4.2%, the youth unemployment rate—especially among university graduates—is estimated by independent sources to be well over 10–12%. These discrepancies point not only to methodological challenges but also to the potential consequences of political oversight in statistical reporting.

Without a fully independent and professionally governed BBS, such scepticism will continue to undermine the credibility of official statistics. Investors may turn to private research firms or international institutions for more “reliable” data, while domestic policy-making will suffer from distorted evidence. The cost of statistical mistrust is high: poor planning, misallocation of resources, and a citizenry increasingly disconnected from the government's narrative. In short, without restoring confidence in official data through institutional independence, the very foundation of data-driven governance in Bangladesh remains at risk.

Recent government initiatives, particularly the promulgation of a new policy instrument on 7 May 2025, titled the *Statistics Collection, Publication and Preservation Policy, 2025*, have sparked renewed hope for greater transparency and autonomy in statistical governance. The BBS Director General has now been entrusted with the authority to release major economic indicators such as GDP and inflation independently, albeit in consultation with a newly formed technical committee.

But while this step is welcome, does it go far enough? Is the current structure robust enough to prevent political interference, especially when elected governments return to power? Or will these policies become symbolic gestures—well-intended, yet vulnerable to reversal or manipulation? To answer these questions, it is essential to examine international best practices and the robust structural reforms required to truly empower the BBS as a sovereign, professional institution.

Under the newly announced policy reforms, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) will also function under the title of National Statistics Office (NSO). To enhance technical rigour and oversight, six independent technical committees have been formed, corresponding to the six major wings of the BBS. These committees include members from a mix of government, autonomous, and non-governmental institutions. While the Director General (DG) of BBS will be tasked with seeking advice and consultation from these technical committees prior to the publication

of key statistics, a significant limitation remains: there is no binding accountability mechanism if the DG, under pressure from the executive branch, chooses to disregard the committee's advice or deviates from the original findings or results.

What happens when some members of the technical committee are politically biased? If it becomes an echo chamber of government-aligned experts, it risks becoming a gatekeeper rather than a guarantor of objectivity. Without legislative safeguards to ensure the neutrality and expertise of this body, the independence promised in these reforms may remain superficial.

The Statistics Act of 2013, while laying some groundwork for statistical coordination and data collection, falls short of insulating the BBS from political pressures. The lack of binding mechanisms for independent publication schedules, data validation, and oversight has led to a culture of cautious reporting. For a country aspiring to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such uncertainty in official statistics can be detrimental to public trust and international credibility.

Without enforceable safeguards ensuring that statistical decisions are protected from political influence, the intended independence of the BBS risks becoming largely symbolic.

Moreover, questions remain about

(ONS), publishes data according to a strictly pre-announced calendar and adheres to the *Code of Practice for Statistics*.

The key principles of this Code of Practice are: (a) It is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR), a regulatory arm of the UKSA. (b) It emphasises the credibility, quality, and usefulness of statistics. (c) It ensures that producers of official statistics can operate entirely free from political interference. Oversight is maintained by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR), which ensures data are trustworthy, high in quality, and politically neutral. The UK government has no authority to delay, alter, or suppress statistical publications, clearly separating statistical operations from political control—something Bangladesh should seriously consider adopting.

Canada presents another successful model. Statistics Canada (StatCan), while reporting to a ministerial body, enjoys full operational autonomy under the Statistics Act. The Chief Statistician is empowered to release data without prior approval from political authorities, and a major legislative amendment in 2017 reinforced this by prohibiting any ministerial interference.

StatCan's reputation rests not only on legal safeguards but also on a well-established culture of transparency, regular auditing, and scientific rigour. Similarly, Australia's Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is governed by its own legislation—the ABS Act 1975—and the Australian Statistician is appointed by the Governor-General. The ABS reports directly to Parliament and operates free from executive intervention, in line with international best practices such as the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

Other countries in the region demonstrate partial progress towards independence. Sri Lanka's Department of Census and Statistics (DCS), under the Ministry of Finance, retains some professional independence through the Statistics Ordinance of 1935 (amended in 1947). Although still administratively linked to a government ministry, the DCS follows a dedicated code of ethics and is generally consistent in timely reporting.

The United States, on the other hand, has a decentralised system where agencies such as the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics function under different federal departments. While not protected by explicit legislation ensuring independence, these agencies are guided by a strong internal culture of professionalism and scientific objectivity. However, because this model lacks statutory enforcement, it may not be well-suited for countries like Bangladesh, where institutional cultures are still evolving and vulnerable to political pressure.

Bangladesh is not beginning from scratch. The Statistics Act of 2013 already laid an initial legal

framework for the coordination and dissemination of official statistics. However, to transform the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) into a truly autonomous and credible institution, deeper structural reforms are essential. The goal should be to ensure that statistical operations are not just professionally managed but also legally protected from executive interference, thereby fostering public trust and international credibility.

To achieve this, several steps are necessary. First, the existing Act must be amended to grant BBS full independence in data collection, processing, and publication. Second, a National Statistics Commission should be established through an all-party parliamentary process to guarantee neutrality and subject-matter expertise. Third, a legally mandated publication calendar for major indicators must be introduced to eliminate the possibility of politically motivated delays. Fourth, an independent statistical audit body, similar to the UK's Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR), should be tasked with reviewing the quality and objectivity of statistical outputs. Finally, and most importantly, the BBS should report directly to Parliament, not to any ministry, thus aligning statistical governance with the principles of transparency and democratic accountability.

The current interim government's decision to move towards statistical independence is laudable. But this should not be a one-off initiative. Rather, it must be the first step in a broader reform towards building a constitutional framework for data governance.

The Public Administration Reform Commission has already recommended the formation of a National Statistical Commission. If enacted, this could provide the institutional architecture for true autonomy. A commission empowered by law, accountable to Parliament, and staffed by statisticians—not bureaucrats—could ensure that the BBS stands above political pressures.

Statistics are more than numbers; they are the mirror of a nation's development, challenges, and aspirations. Inaccurate or manipulated data not only misleads policymakers but also deprives citizens of their right to know the truth. Bangladesh's journey to middle-income status, and eventually to a developed economy, will be guided by the quality of decisions it makes—and those decisions, of course, depend on the quality of data available. An independent BBS is not just a bureaucratic necessity; it is a democratic imperative—a nation's hope.

As we move forward, let us draw inspiration from global best practices and build an institution that can stand the test of political cycles. Only then can we say that Bangladesh has achieved not just statistical capacity, but statistical sovereignty.

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While the Director General (DG) of BBS will be tasked with seeking advice and consultation from these technical committees prior to the publication of key statistics, a significant limitation remains: there is no binding accountability mechanism if the DG, under pressure from the executive branch, chooses to disregard the committee's advice or deviates from the original findings or results.

private sectors. Employment data affects social safety net expansions and electoral narratives. In such a high-stakes political and economic environment, even the suspicion of data manipulation can lead to erosion of public trust, hesitation among investors, and weakened accountability of democratic institutions.

Statistical data in Bangladesh has, at times, drawn public criticism due to alleged manipulation or politically motivated delays. Several published reports and anecdotal accounts point to instances where statistical releases, particularly on inflation, poverty, or employment, were delayed or selectively presented to avoid undermining the political narrative of the day. While the BBS is largely staffed by professional statisticians, the absence of a statutorily independent framework and lack of accountability leave the institution vulnerable.

Recent trends illustrate why data independence is vital. According to the World Bank, Bangladesh's GDP growth for FY 2022–23 stood at 5.8%, a notable decline from the previous year's 7.1%. However, opposition groups, independent stakeholders, and economists questioned the assumptions behind these figures, especially regarding private investment growth and remittance inflows, which showed inconsistencies with other indicators such as declining import volumes and rising cost-of-living pressures.

Similarly, the BBS's inflation estimate of 9.7% in early 2024 appeared conservative to many analysts, as on-the-ground consumer prices for essentials like rice, lentils, and cooking oil rose by 12–20% in many districts.

A report by the Centre for Policy

Cashless society still a distant dream

Bangladesh's goal of a cashless future is colliding with failed projects, user mistrust, and an economy that thrives on cash

Managing a cash-heavy economy is very costly. The process of printing, handling, transporting, and storing currency notes and coins imposes a significant financial burden on the central bank and financial institutions alike

MD MEHEDI HASAN

In June, Sanzid Imran, a Dhaka-based software engineer, boarded a Dhaka-bound bus from Cox's Bazar after spending the last of his cash on a hotel checkout. It wasn't a reckless move. "I figured I could always get some cash if I needed it," he said, recalling the memory. In Dhaka, a cashless life was not just possible, but normal.

But when the bus pulled into a service station near Chattogram for its scheduled break, Sanzid descended, stomach grumbling, and scanned the rows of stalls for snacks—and for a place to pay. No ATM in sight. No bKash or Nagad agents. No QR code stickers. Just cash-only vendors, operating in the quiet comfort of Bangladesh's informal economy.

"That's when it hit me," he said later. "We keep talking about digital Bangladesh. But sometimes, one snack shop in the middle of nowhere can break that illusion."

That illusion, as it turns out, is shared by millions. While Bangladesh has invested heavily in building the infrastructure for a cashless future, the journey has been anything but smooth. The central bank has launched platforms set targets, and drafted visions. But in the humid stalls of rural markets and even the street corners of Dhaka, cash still clings to life, not just as a habit, but as a necessity.

In 2023, the Bangladesh Bank declared that 75 percent of all transactions would be digital by 2027. It was an ambitious goal, echoing India's success with its Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and China's



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



overwhelming dominance by Alipay and WeChat Pay. Even Bhutan and Nepal, countries with far smaller economies, have made quiet strides toward digitisation.

But in Bangladesh, the road is bumpy, potholed by poor infrastructure, patchy internet, reluctant banks, user mistrust, and a lack of incentives. With less than a year and a half to go, the central bank's goal appears increasingly out of reach.

The flagship initiatives—Binimoy, Bangla QR, and TakaPay—were meant to be the scaffolding of a digital revolution. Instead, they stand as cautionary tales.

Binimoy, launched in November 2022 at a cost of Tk 65 crore, aimed to emulate India's UPI—a platform to enable seamless, interoperable transactions between MFS providers and banks. Developed by the Innovation Design and Entrepreneurship Academy Project under the ICT Division, it was, on paper, an elegant solution. In practice, it failed to gain traction.

"Binimoy failed due to poor user experience, lack of promotion, and banks' unwillingness to integrate," said one senior BB official. After the political changeover in August 2024, the project was suspended indefinitely.

Bangla QR, introduced in January 2023, sought to standardise QR code payments across all platforms and banks. But two years later, it's still absent from most storefronts. "Many banks don't even have the digital infrastructure—like updated mobile apps—to support Bangla QR," said a central bank official. Instead, stickers of mobile financial service providers like bKash and Nagad dominate, and the unified system struggles to find a foothold.

And then there's TakaPay, a local currency debit card launched in late 2023 to reduce dependency on global payment networks like Visa and Mastercard. Despite being the first of its kind, only eight banks offer it. Most consumers haven't even heard of it.

Speaking to The Daily Star, BB Executive Director Aref Hussain Khan acknowledged these shortcomings. "We observed that cashless initiatives have stalled due to various reasons," he said. To counter this, the central bank now plans to mandate Bangla QR adoption by all banks within six months.

Additionally, the central bank is working with US-based tech firm Mojaloop—backed by the Gates Foundation—on a new interoperable digital platform to replace Binimoy.

Khan also pointed out the need for greater public awareness and mentioned plans to hold seminars to promote cashless adoption.

Experts say cash remains dominant in Bangladesh because it offers invisibility. For small business owners, street vendors, and even mid-sized retailers, cash transactions come with fewer strings attached—no VAT, no tax trail, no surveillance. Digital payments, by contrast, leave footprints that invite

scrutiny.

"If a transaction takes place through a bank, then VAT and tax matters become accountable or traceable. But if the transaction is done in cash, then VAT and tax can be avoided," says Mohammad Ali, managing director of Pubali Bank.

"So, there is no incentive, and on top of that, digital transactions bring VAT and tax implications," he said.

Managing a cash-heavy economy is also very costly. The process of printing, handling, transporting, and storing currency notes and coins imposes a significant financial burden on the central bank and financial institutions alike. Businesses also incur costs in cash handling, counting, reconciling, and depositing.

Bangladesh Bank's spokesperson Hossain reiterated that transitioning to a cashless society remains a top priority under the leadership of the current governor. "Bangladesh spends crores of taka each year just to manage cash. We have no alternative but to move forward," he said.



Ali echoed the same sentiment. "Managing cash is very expensive for banks, which is why increasing cashless transactions is essential to reduce the operational cost of a bank."

He estimates that a single Bangladeshi bank spends as much as Tk 260 crore each year just to manage cash—printing, transporting, securing, and storing it.

He also points out that there are no incentives like tax rebates or cashback offers to drive customers toward digital transactions.

"Another issue is that MFS providers have already onboarded most of the retail shops. From QR codes to everything else—the MFS companies have brought them under their umbrella."

Banks see that if they try to penetrate this space, it still ends up benefiting MFS providers more, given their mandate, he said, adding that they (MFS providers) have become more proactive in this regard.

MFS providers are also doing much more marketing at small retail stores

compared to banks. "That's why banks are lagging behind, particularly in terms of QR code adoption."

Stuck in Transition

Thirteen MFS providers operate in Bangladesh. Among them, only four—bKash, Nagad, Rocket, and Upay—hold a meaningful market share. In May 2025, MFS cash-out transactions reached a record Tk 44,355 crore, up from Tk 38,327 crore the previous month, according to BB data.

In comparison, merchant payments through MFS stood at Tk 7,433 crore, government-to-person (G2P) transactions totalled Tk 655 crore, and utility bill payments reached Tk 3,372 crore.

MFS platforms now offer services such as savings, peer-to-peer transfers, bill payments, merchant payments, mobile recharges, and G2P disbursements, reducing dependence on physical cash.

However, industry insiders said that while merchant payments and G2P transfers are rising, most users still use these platforms as glorified cash-out

scissors.

Bankers and industry players added that, alongside MFS, internet banking, agent banking, and digital wallets are contributing to building a cashless society, but overall progress remains slow.

Pubali Bank's Ali believes the transition won't happen through policy papers—it will require legislation and enforcement.

"For example, in India, a business can't renew its trade license unless it has a digital payment option. During the renewal, if they have a bank account, then they must have at least one digital terminal, like a QR code," he explained.

"If QR codes are made mandatory, they will be displayed. And if the QR code is displayed, customers who want to pay digitally using QR codes will be able to do so," Ali added. "If this is incorporated into our trade license system and all municipalities and upazilas implement it, then all shops will be forced to display their QR code."

The Pubali Bank managing director said this is the most crucial step, and if it isn't done legally, then "no matter how much we try to convince people, it won't work."

Citing another example, he said, "We have PI banking, and even my own officers weren't using it. Many of them. Then I told them that if they do not activate it within a month, their salary will be withheld. Now everyone has done it."

He also advocates for other restrictions, such as capping large cash deposits, limiting withdrawals, and forcing retail spaces to adopt digital terminals. The goal isn't just to nudge people toward digital—it's to make cash inconvenient.

"When you launch a new product, at first you need to be courteous and supportive to gain adoption," he said, adding that "once the product matures, then enforcement becomes necessary."

"If this goes under enforcement, then the cashless society goal will be achieved faster."

Calling for restricting one-time cash withdrawal and deposit limits, he said, "There are people who bring crores of taka in cash, bags full of Tk 1 crore, to the market. If the deposit limit is capped at Tk 10 lakh, they will be forced to think: what's the alternative?"

"Especially wholesale traders, back-office dealers, distributors—they'll think: I collect Tk 1 crore daily, and now I'll only be able to deposit Tk 10 lakh? So, should I start running around to four or five banks daily?" These complications will push them toward QR codes or other digital payment options, he pointed out.

Until then, people like Sanzid Imran will continue to live in a halfway world—digital in theory, but analogue when it matters most.

His story isn't rare. It's Bangladesh's story: a nation with the ambition to leap, but shackled by the very systems it hopes to transcend.