



Parties agree to cap PM's term at 10yrs

Reach consensus on independent police commission

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and MD ABBAS

Political parties have agreed that no individual can serve as prime minister for more than 10 years during their lifetime.

On the 19th day of the second phase of political dialogue, held at the Foreign Service Academy in Dhaka yesterday, they also agreed, in principle, to the formation of an independent police commission.

However, the discussion over the fundamental principles of the state in the constitution turned into a heated debate, as four leftist parties strongly objected to the National Consensus Commission's new proposal on the matter.

During the talks, consensus commission Vice-President Prof Ali Riaz said all the parties have reached an agreement on capping the number

- Leftist parties oppose changes to basic principles
- Draft National Charter to be sent to parties today
- Consensus reached on 12 issues: Ali Riaz

of years someone can serve as prime minister to 10 during their lifetime.

The commission first proposed that no individual can be prime minister for more than two terms. Disagreeing with the proposal, the BNP proposed that a person can serve more than two terms, as long as there is a break after two consecutive terms.

On June 23, all the political parties, except the BNP and two others, agreed that an individual cannot be the prime minister for over 10 years. On that day, BNP leaders did not support the 10-year cap. But they have changed their minds.

Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Maulana Rafiqul Islam Khan and National Citizen Party (NCP) Member Secretary Akhtar Hossen said their parties supported the 10-year cap.

POLICE COMMISSION

On the proposal to form an independent police commission, Prof Riaz said, "We will now hold discussions on its structure and formation process," adding that the police commission will ensure transparency,

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Teachers returning school bags and other belongings that children left behind during the tragic jet crash at Milestone School & College in Uttara's Diabari. A week after the crash, the campus remains closed, and the decision to reopen is yet to be made. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Education at Rohingya camps in disarray

Fund crunch leads to suspension of classes, reduction in class hours at 6,400 learning centres

PORIMOL PALMA, MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and MOKAMMEL SHUVO

More than 400,000 Rohingya children now face uncertainty over schooling, as around 6,400 NGO-run informal schools at refugee camps in Cox's Bazar have either suspended classes or drastically reduced class hours due to a fund

crunch.

UNICEF and Save the Children, which supervise the informal schools known as learning centres, on June 3 suspended classes for students from kindergarten to class 4. The decision came after hundreds of teachers protested the dismissal of 1,100 colleagues amid aid cuts affecting over a million

refugees in Cox's Bazar.

Of the 8,000 teachers employed at the centres, 3,900 were Bangladeshi nationals and the rest Rohingyas.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, \$72 million is required to cover educational expenses this

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Dhaka plans to buy 25 Boeing jets as trade talks enter final phase

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA and RASHIDUL HASAN

Bangladesh has expanded its plan to buy Boeing aircraft from 14 to 25 in a last-ditch effort to persuade the Trump administration to lower tariffs on its exports ahead of the August 1 deadline.

A high-level delegation led by Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin is scheduled to depart for Washington today for a final round of trade negotiations. The three-day meeting with the United States Trade Representative (USTR), beginning Tuesday, is aimed at securing a favourable duty structure for the country, whose exports to the US exceed \$8 billion annually.

The other members of the delegation are Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman, National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman and an additional secretary of the commerce

Biman is not aware of the purchase of 25 aircraft from Boeing.

ABM Raoshan Kabir, Biman's general manager of public relations

ministry. Some private sector entrepreneurs, including garment exporters, may also join the delegation, but they will not be inside the negotiation room.

The aircraft purchase plan is the centrepiece of a package offered by Dhaka to narrow a trade deficit, with US imports standing at \$2 billion. But Biman Bangladesh Airlines said it has no clue about the developments.

In a significant move on July 20, Bangladesh signed an agreement with US Wheat Associates to purchase 700,000 tonnes of US wheat annually for the next five years. Bangladesh has also agreed to increase imports of LNG and cotton, and offered zero import duty on some US goods.

Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman
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Makeshift stalls have taken over the pavement of Mirpur Road outside the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases in the capital. This inconveniences patients and their relatives entering and exiting the hospital and pedestrians. With several other public hospitals located along the same stretch, the pavement sees heavy foot traffic daily. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

EXTORTION ALLEGATIONS SAD suspends activities of all committees except central

Umama says rot runs deep

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students Against Discrimination (SAD), the platform that led last year's mass uprising, has suspended activities of all its committees across the country, except its central committee, amid extortion allegations against some of its leaders and activists.

SAD President Rifat Rashid announced the decision at an emergency press conference outside the National Museum in Shahbagh yesterday evening.

"We have observed several incidents, including yesterday's [Saturday], where individuals tried to misuse the SAD banner for unethical activities," said Rifat.

"We had warned from the beginning that such actions would not be tolerated. Unfortunately, under the influence of political parties, some members engaged in corrupt practices, which have now become nearly impossible for us to control," he added.

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Road crashes, deaths unabated as laws, guidelines ignored

6.26 lakh unfit vehicles threaten road safety

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Anarchy and indiscipline continue to plague the transport sector, largely due to the non-implementation or poor enforcement of laws, regulations, and government directives. This makes roads increasingly hazardous and causes thousands of deaths and injuries each year.

A few lakh unfit and outdated vehicles are operating across the country while drivers, many of whom do not have licences, often engage in speeding due to lax monitoring and enforcement of the law.

7TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROAD SAFETY MOVEMENT

At least 6.26 lakh vehicles did not get their fitness certificates as of July 24 this year, according to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) data.

On the other hand, 80,309 vehicles, or 27 percent of total registered commercial vehicles have already exceeded their economic life, according to BRTA data updated on July 16.

With a large number of unfit and outdated vehicles still on the roads, road crashes and fatalities have continued unabated.

Against the backdrop, the country is going to observe tomorrow the seventh anniversary of the road safety movement, when

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 12

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Crackdown worsens, thousands accused

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

By July 28, more than 2.13 lakh people—most of them unnamed—had been accused in nearly 200 cases filed with police stations across the capital in connection with the recent violence centring the quota reform movement.

Almost all the cases were filed by the police themselves. Records showed that in at least 16 of those cases, between 5,000 and 10,000 individuals had been accused. Over the preceding 12 days, law enforcement agencies arrested more than 2,500 people, including political leaders, activists, and students, from various parts of Dhaka, according to court documents.

However, the actual numbers of arrests and cases were likely much higher, with police continuing raids across different neighbourhoods of the capital.

The country had witnessed violence on an unprecedented scale in the week prior. What began as peaceful demonstrations turned deadly on July 15, when members of the Chhatra League attacked protesting students on several university campuses. In the days that followed, the violence escalated across Dhaka and beyond, resulting in the deaths of at least 162 individuals.

Amid these developments, six organisers of the quota reform movement—held in custody by the Detective Branch (DB) of police—announced the withdrawal of their protest programmes. The announcement was made via a video message circulated to media outlets from the DB office on Minto Road in the capital.

Nahid Islam, one of the key organisers, appeared in the video alongside five other coordinators. However, the statement drew immediate rejection from another coordinator, Abdul Kader, who accused the DB of coercion.

Speaking through WhatsApp, Kader strongly condemned the “scripted statement” and claimed it had been made “at gunpoint at the DB office.” He declared that protest rallies would be held across the country the following day and reaffirmed the movement’s commitment to its demands.

Meanwhile, a seventh organiser was also allegedly picked up by DB officers. According to his younger sister, Umme Khair Hridi, around 4:00am, eight to

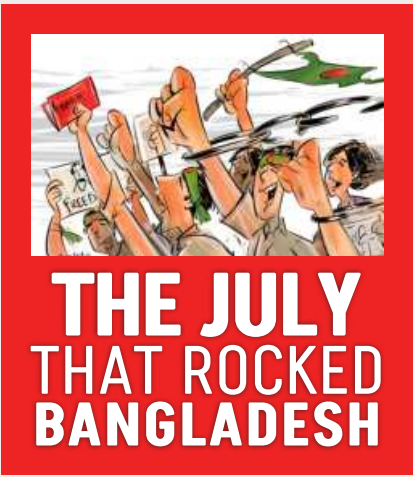
ten men in plain clothes—identifying themselves as DB officials—detained Arif Sohel, a student of international relations at Jahangirnagar University, from his home near the campus.

Then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina vowed to bring those responsible for the recent violence to justice. While distributing financial assistance to the families of 34 victims at Gono Bhaban—including Abu Sayeed, a student of Rangpur’s Begum Rokeya University—she said, “My effort will be to find those involved in these murders. They must be punished.”

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan provided the first official death toll during a press briefing at the Secretariat, stating that at least 147 people had lost



Jhunu Begum, 65, wails outside a Narayanganj court after her grandson Arif Hossain, 19, was taken away in a prison van. She pleaded that he was innocent and not involved in politics.



JULY 28, 2024

their lives in the violence related to the quota reform protests. The victims, he said, included students, professionals, law enforcement officers, and Awami League leaders and activists.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) assured the international community that those responsible for the violence would be brought to justice based on evidence. It emphasised that no reprisal or harassment would be tolerated against protesting students or innocent civilians. Law enforcement agencies, it said, had been given clear instructions in this regard.

Meanwhile, mobile internet was partially restored after more than ten days. However, major social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, and YouTube remained inaccessible.

MILESTONE JET CRASH

Health ministry revises death toll down to 33

4 critically injured receiving treatment at burn institute ICU; 2 more released

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health ministry revised down the Milestone jet crash death toll twice in six and a half hours yesterday, putting the number at 33 – two less than the previous day’s count.

Four critically injured survivors were being treated at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, which released two other people injured in the crash yesterday, bringing the total number of discharged patients in the incident to four.

The latest discharged patients are Kazi Amzad Said, 20, and Sabuja Begum, 40, the institute’s Director Prof Dr Nasir Uddin said at a press briefing around 3:00pm.

Amzad was injured while trying to rescue others during the crash, while Sabuja Begum worked as a caregiver (Aya) at the school.

TOLL REVISION

The ministry revised the death count at 10:17am for the first time. Through its public relation officer, the ministry gave a second revised number at 4:50pm.

In the first revision announced on Facebook, the ministry said the update followed a correction from the Combined Military Hospital (CMH).

According to the CMH, its morgue received 15 body bags on July 21, the day of the crash. Turag police conducted inquest on 11 full bodies, two partial bodies, and body parts from five others, the statement said.

Of the 11 complete bodies, nine were identified. Eight of them were handed over to their families on July 21, and the remaining one the following day.

On July 22, a forensic team from police’s Criminal Investigation Department (CID) collected DNA samples from the two unidentified full bodies, two partial bodies, and body parts of five others. Based on DNA analysis, five additional individuals

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Parties agree to cap PM’s term at 10yrs

FROM PAGE 1
accountability, and public service orientation within the force.

In the proposal presented in the morning session, the consensus commission said the police commission will be led by a chairperson, who must be a retired judge of the Appellate Division and not over 75 years old. The member secretary will be a retired police officer, not older than 62 and who had served at least at the additional inspector general rank.

In addition to these two, the commission will have seven other members, one representative of the leader of the house, one representative of the leader of the opposition in parliament, one representative of the Speaker, and one representative of the deputy Speaker (from the opposition).

Other members will include a retired government official who had served as a secretary or ranks above, a retired judge who served at least as a district judge, and a human rights activist with a minimum of 10 years of experience in a registered human rights organisation, either domestic or international. At least two of the commission members must be women. Key objectives of the police commission will be to ensure that the police can carry out its duties competently and within the bounds of the law.

The commission will also serve as a mechanism to resolve complaints raised by police members themselves as well as those filed by citizens against police personnel.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

The four parties that opposed the proposal on basic principles of the state are the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (Basad), Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (Marxist), and Bangladesh Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Bangladesh Jasad).

In the proposal, the consensus commission said that regardless of which fundamental principles remain

in the constitution, “equality, human dignity, social justice, democracy, and religious freedom and harmony” must be included as core constitutional principles.

In its counter-proposal, CPB General Secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince suggested that “equality, human dignity, social justice, and religious freedom and harmony” could be added to the four principles in the 1972 constitution: nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism.

During the discussion, BASAD General Secretary Bazlur Rashid Firoz and BASAD (Marxist) leader Masud Rana voiced their support for the CPB’s stance.

They asserted that they would not accept any form of consensus, even one accompanied by a note of dissent, and warned they would withdraw from the process if any decisions were made regarding the basic principles.

Firoz reminded Prof Riaz that he had defined “consensus” as “an agreement that must include all parties.”

Speaking to reporters during the lunch break, Prince said, “It’s not possible to achieve national consensus on the fundamental principles of the constitution through this process, as participants represent diverse ideological backgrounds. The matter must be placed before the people. Political parties should declare their positions publicly, and the people should decide.”

Prince further warned that manipulating or altering the constitution’s core principles by dint of majority would constitute a betrayal of its Liberation War roots.

“If this continues, our regular participation in the commission’s dialogue will be at risk,” he said, warning that such moves could derail the entire consensus-building effort.

Several political parties, including the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, NCP, and Khelafat Majslh expressed support for the commission’s proposal.

On state principles, BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin

Ahmed said his party disagrees with the current version adopted through the 15th amendment to the constitutions and prefers the earlier one under the 5th amendment, but has no objection to adding “equality, human dignity, social justice, and religious harmony” as proposed.

Jamaat wants to restore “absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah” as a core principle of the constitution, said party Assistant Secretary General Maulana Rafiqul Islam Khan.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Chairman Shahadat Hossain Selim said, “Most political parties agree that a return to the 1972 constitution is not practical, as socialism has become globally outdated.”

NCP Member Secretary Akhter Hossen also welcomed the proposal, saying, “We support the commission’s draft and do not wish to revisit past ideological debates.”

On June 25, the consensus commission placed new proposals regarding basic principles of the constitution. The Constitution Reform Commission had previously proposed “equality, human dignity, social justice, democracy, and pluralism” as the basic principles of the constitution.

Due to the division among the parties, the revised version has now replaced “pluralism” with “religious freedom and communal harmony.”

The BNP, Jamaat, and several other Islamist parties were against “pluralism” as a basic principle.

WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION

No consensus was reached on the final topic of the day: women’s representation in parliament.

The commission proposed maintaining the existing 50 reserved seats for women and requested political parties to nominate women candidates in at least one-fourth or one-fifth of the 300 general seats.

The BNP proposed that parties nominate women in at least 5 percent of the 300 general seats in the next election, and gradually raise it to 10 percent.

“This would ensure 80 seats for women when combined with the existing 50 reserved seats. This can begin as a gentleman’s agreement and be formalised later through constitutional amendment,” Salauddin said.

Rafiqul said Jamaat supports a 400-seat parliament with 300 general and 100 women’s seats, with women’s representation determined proportionally based on party votes under a proportional representation (PR) system.

On July 14, the commission proposed abolishment of the current system of reserving seats for women. It recommended that parties contesting for at least 25 constituencies nominate women in one-third of these seats under the first-past-the-post system, where the highest vote-getter wins.

This issue has been discussed repeatedly during the reform talks, but parties remained divided.

Initially, the commission had proposed increasing the number of reserved seats for women from 50 to 100 and suggested direct elections to these seats.

In his opening speech yesterday, Prof Riaz said a preliminary draft of the National Charter will be sent to political parties tomorrow and it would not be discussed during the dialogue unless there were significant objections.

“If there are fundamental disagreements, we will bring it into the discussion. Otherwise, we will not. Any feedback from your side will be incorporated. The preliminary charter will include background, context, and areas of commitment,” he added.

He also informed that a specific day would be allocated in the dialogue to officially sign the National Charter.

The commission aims to conclude the dialogue by July 31.

So far, consensus has been reached on 12 issues. Discussions on seven remain incomplete, while three topics have not been talked about yet, Riaz said.

However, following a wave of state-organised violence in late 2012, the Myanmar authorities confined many Rohingyas to “open-air prisons”, denying them access to university or completion of education. They were permitted to study only at understaffed and under-resourced schools.

As a consequence, there is a high level of illiteracy among the Rohingyas, with about 73 percent self-identifying as illiterate, the report said.

Nay San Lwin, co-founder of Free Rohingya Coalition, said the 47 Rohingya students who had been admitted to Yangon University were barred from continuing their education after the 2021 military coup.

“In reality, no Rohingya students are currently allowed to study at the university... Without good education, their risk becoming a lost generation,” he added.

Road crashes, deaths

FROM PAGE 1
thousands of people, mostly students, demonstrated for over a week, demanding safer roads.

On July 29, 2018, two students were killed after being run over by a bus, which was racing with another, in the capital’s Kurmitola, sparking an unprecedented movement across the country for safe roads.

Following the movement, the then government enacted the Road Transport Act-2018 and promised different initiatives but those were not implemented fully.

At least 2,943 people were killed in 3,039 road crashes in the first six months of this year, according to BRTA data. The number of deaths and road crashes was 5,480 and 5,856 last year.

However, the number of road crashes and deaths reported by various non-governmental organisations is higher.

Transport expert Prof Shamsul Hoque said the BRTA, as the regulatory body, lacks the capacity and professionalism to enforce laws and regulations due to its structural weaknesses.

“BRTA is a very weak agency. Its shortcomings have contributed to the growing problems in the transport sector, and resolving them has now become extremely difficult,” he told The Daily Star on Saturday.

He said while discussions on road safety are ongoing, new challenges – such as a sharp increase in the number of motorcycles and three-wheelers – have added to the existing issues, making roads even more hazardous.

Responding to a question, Prof Shamsul, also the director of Buet’s Accident Research Institute, said it is very unfortunate that no visible positive change has taken place, even after the political changeover last year. BRTA had an opportunity to bring changes but failed to capitalise on it, he added.

BRTA Chairman Abu Momtaz Saad Uddin Ahmed could not be contacted for comments.

Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, adviser to the road transport and bridges ministry, said the government is working to gradually implement the laws and directives.

He said a pilot project is already underway on a route to operate buses under a franchise system, where all drivers and staff must be formally appointed.

In addition, they have launched a drive against outdated vehicles, but transport owners and workers have threatened to go on strike in response.

“In reality, they [transport owners and workers] take a stand against the initiative,” he told this correspondent yesterday.

He added that the authorities would hold talks with transport leaders to resolve the issues, as public suffering would rise if vehicles are taken off the roads.

NON-EXECUTED LAWS, DIRECTIVES

The Road Transport Act-2018, which came into effect in November 2019, clearly states that no one can be recruited as a driver without being issued an appointment letter by the transport owner.

A high-powered taskforce, formed during the previous government

to reduce road crashes and restore discipline in the transport sector, repeatedly decided in its meetings that transport workers must be provided with appointment letters.

However, both the law and the taskforce’s decisions have largely been ignored.

Instead of issuing appointment letters or setting a fixed salary structure, many transport owners continue to hire drivers on a daily basis and pay them based on the number of trips.

As a result, especially in the capital, drivers often engage in reckless competition to pick up more passengers and earn more fare, a practice widely seen as a major contributor to crashes.

When the road transport act was enacted in September 2018, it also incorporated a demerit points system for driving licences aimed at curbing traffic rules violations and improving road safety.

Under the system, each driver would be allotted 12 points, with one or two points deducted for each violation. A licence would be revoked if all points were lost.

Nearly seven years have passed, yet the system has not been implemented. A BRTA official said the system is almost ready and that they have already held discussions with police, but it has not been introduced.

In May last year, the government introduced the Motor Vehicle Speed Limit Guideline 2024, aiming to curb speeding, one of the leading causes of road crashes.

According to the guideline, which came into effect the same month, the speed limit for cars, buses, and minibuses on expressways is set at 80km per hour, while it is 60kmph for motorcycles and 50kmph for trucks.

On the national highways, the limit is 70kmph for cars, buses, and minibuses, 50kmph for motorcycles, and 45kmph for trucks and articulated lorries.

Anyone violating these limits faces punitive action under the road transport act, including up to three months’ imprisonment, a Tk 10,000 fine, or both.

However, the guideline has largely been ignored over the past year, with limited enforcement seen only on select roads like the Dhaka-Mawa Expressway, Dhaka Elevated Expressway, and Dhaka-Chattogram highway.

The operation of locally made, slow-moving three-wheelers alongside high-speed vehicles on highways is widely regarded as a major cause of road crashes. This concern has been reflected in reports by various road crash probe bodies and non-government organisations that compile road crash data.

In August 2015, the road transport and bridges ministry imposed a ban on three-wheelers on 22 major highways to help reduce road crashes.

The High Court in January 2017 ordered imposing a ban on such improvised three-wheelers on highways across the country to reduce the number of road crashes.

However, these vehicles remain on highways – backed by influential individuals who see them as an easy way to make a quick profit.

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GOPALGANJ VIOLENCE
High Court seeks
probe report on
detained children

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday sought a probe report on the overall conditions of the children detained in connection with the violence in Gopalganj centring NCP's road march on July 16.

In response to a writ petition, the court ordered the government to form a committee to enquire whether the provisions of the Children Act, 2013 are being properly applied on the detained children and to place the report to it by November 5.

The HC also issued a rule asking the respondents to explain why their inaction to consider the Children Act and the UN convention on child rights in handling the arrested children should not be directed illegal.

Secretaries at the ministries of home; women and children; and law; inspector general of police; superintendents of police of Gopalganj and Jashore and superintendent of Jashore Pulerhat Shishu Unnyan Kendra have been made respondents to the rule.

The HC bench of Justice Kazi Zinat Hoque and Justice Aynun Nahar Siddiqua came up with the order and rule following a writ petition filed as a public interest litigation on July 21 by Supreme

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Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus presented the newly appointed Saudi Ambassador Dr Abdullah Zafer bin Abiyah with a collection of graffiti from July uprising as a gift when the latter paid a courtesy call on the chief adviser at the state guest house Jamuna in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: CA'S PRESS WING

DU set for major
overhaul with
Tk 2,840cr project

MAHATHIR MOHAMMED

Dhaka University is set to get new student dormitories and academic buildings after the interim government approved a project aimed at the holistic development of the university's infrastructure.

The Tk 2,840.39 crore project was approved yesterday at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Enec), held at the Planning Commission.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus chaired the meeting, according to a press release.

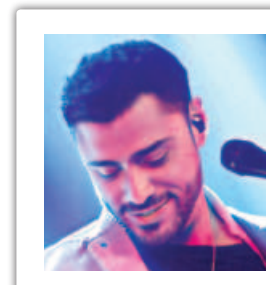
As part of a three-phase masterplan project, the first phase will see the construction of six academic buildings and nine residential halls. Of these, four halls will accommodate 2,600 female students while the remaining five will house 5,100 male students.

The project also includes the development of a playing field and the construction of five additional buildings, including a new administrative facility.

Several existing structures will be demolished to make way for the new facilities.

"A new administration took the initiative to create a comprehensive master plan for Dhaka University to resolve long-standing issues, including student and teacher accommodation, academic infrastructure, and recreational facilities," said Wahiduddin Mahmud,

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**AK Ratul,**
vocalist of
Owned,
no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

AK Ratul, vocalist and frontman of the renowned Bangladeshi rock band Owned, passed away yesterday. He was 34.

According to his bandmate Pritom Arefin, Ratul suffered a cardiac arrest while he was at the gym around 3:30pm.

He was rushed to a private hospital in the capital, where he was pronounced dead.

Ratul, along with his band Owned – formed in

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Dhaka lost 60% waterbodies,
half its trees in 44 years

Finds study by Change Initiative

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Between 1980 and 2024, Dhaka's built-up area expanded sevenfold, land surface temperature increased by 3 to 5 degrees Celsius, and the city lost 60 percent of its waterbodies.

These alarming findings were revealed in a new study by Change Initiative, based on 44 years of satellite imagery and urban heat mapping. The research highlights Dhaka's severe environmental degradation, driven by unplanned urban expansion.

The study was conducted by M Zakir Hossain Khan, chief executive of Change Initiative, with support from Sabrin Sultana and Md Fuad Hassan.

It was unveiled yesterday at a press conference held at a hotel in Dhaka.

According to the report, Dhaka's crisis is not merely a failure in urban planning but a violation of ecological justice and fundamental rights.

**WHAT DHAKA LOST**

- Built-up area expanded 7 times since 1980
- Land surface temp rose by 3–5°C
- Over 37 zones exceed safe population density

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Criminalise wetland and forest encroachment
- Reform DAP to include ecological buffers
- Plant 56.5 sqkm of trees in deprived areas

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Cancel the
current DAP
Institute of Architects
urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB) yesterday urged the government to cancel the currently gazetted Detailed Area Plan (DAP) 2022–2035.

At a press conference held at the Dhaka Reporters Unity, IAB leaders pointed out 12 legal and informational flaws in the DAP.

They called for a digital and easily accessible land use master plan to ensure proper and effective implementation of the laws under Rajuk and the Gazipur Development Authority (GDA).

They also demanded a participatory and updated mouza-based DAP that is resilient to both natural and man-made disasters, and subject to review every five years.

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BNP ready to work
with govt on US
tariff, security
issues: Khosru

UNB, Dhaka

Senior BNP leader Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday said his party will offer coordinated cooperation to the government on US tariff and security issues, aiming to help address the tariff imposed by the United States.

He made the remarks during a briefing to journalists at a hotel in Banani, following an exchange of views with business leaders concerning the US tariffs.

The BNP standing committee member emphasised that the livelihoods of 15 to 16 lakh people are linked to exports to the US market, and therefore, the tariff issue is a serious matter for Bangladesh.

Khosru said business leaders fear that the recent US tariff impositions will severely impact Bangladesh's trade and commerce.

He said the BNP is prepared to cooperate with the government in the ongoing discussions with the US, with the goal of achieving a pragmatic

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**WORLD HEPATITIS DAY**
One in five adult
Rohingyas infected
with hepatitis C

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, Cox's Bazar

Hasina, a Rohingya woman from Myanmar, fled to Bangladesh 10 months ago with her husband and four children. Diagnosed with Hepatitis C in 2020 during childbirth, she could not afford treatment back home.

Now living in Camp 8W in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, Hasina and two of her sons – Rashidullah and Rahimullah – recently tested positive during a large-scale screening by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF).

PCR tests confirmed active infections in Hasina and Rahimullah, while Rashidullah showed previous exposure. Hasina suspects the virus spread through unsafe medical practices in Myanmar, including untested blood transfusions and reused syringes.

Dr Sarwar Jahan, assistant medical coordinator at the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner's office, called the

**SUGGESTIONS**

- Raise awareness about transmission
- Ensure safe blood transfusion
- Use disposable, single-use syringes
- Promote safe shaving practices

infection rate "alarming". "One in every five adult Rohingyas is Hepatitis C positive. Around 100,000 adults are currently infected," he said.

Over 70 percent of the 5.5 lakh adult Rohingyas have been screened so far. Preliminary data

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7



CARRYING THE SEASON FORWARD. In the vibrant greenery of Rakudia village in Barishal, farmers take bundles of Aman paddy seedlings from seedbeds to nearby fields for transplantation -- a seasonal ritual of Shraban and Bhadra. The crop will be harvested during Agrahayan and Poush. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Arrest warrant
issued against
Naem Nizam

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday issued arrest warrants against former Bangladesh Pratidin editor Naem Nizam, its publisher Moynal Hossain Chowdhury and news portal Bangla Insider's Chief Editor Syed Borhan Kabir in a Digital Security Act case over publishing and circulating false, defamatory and offensive information.

Judge Md Nur A Alam of the Cyber Tribunal of Dhaka passed the order as the trio yesterday failed to appear before the tribunal as per its directions, Mohammad Rafiqul Islam, public prosecutor of the tribunal, told The Daily Star.

On June 2 this year, the tribunal issued summons asking Naem, Moynal and Borhan to appear before it yesterday.

On November 20 last year, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police submitted

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

AL leader dies in Munshiganj jail custody

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Munshiganj

Sarowar Hossain Nannu, 60, an Awami League leader and accused in a murder and explosives case, died in custody at Munshiganj Jail early yesterday.

A former joint general secretary of the Awami League's Munshiganj Sadar upazila unit, Nannu had been in custody since May 5 over the killing of one Sajal during the July uprising on August 4.

Around 3:30am, he complained of chest pain. Jail authorities provided initial treatment before transferring him to Munshiganj General Hospital, where he was declared dead at 4:30am.

Dr Ataul Gani, the attending emergency physician, said symptoms indicated a heart attack. Jail Super Md Enayet Ullah confirmed the sequence of events.

Munshiganj Sadar Police Station OC Saiful Alam said an unnatural death (UD) case was filed and an autopsy completed. Preliminary findings suggest natural causes. No complaints have been received from the family.

PRAYER TIMING	
JULY 28	
Fazr	Zohr
Asr	Maghrib
Esha	
AZAN 4:20	12:45 5:00
JAMAAT 4:55	1:15 5:15
6:55	8:45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION	



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Five family members, including three children without helmets, riding on a motorbike on Mirpur Road in the Shyamoli area of Dhaka yesterday. Such unsafe travel puts them at serious risk of accidents.

POLLS OBSERVERS EC invites applications from local orgs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday invited applications from private local organisations interested in registering as election observers.

According to a notice signed by Md Shariful Alam, director (public relations) of the EC Secretariat, applications must be submitted in the prescribed format by 5:00pm on August 10, addressed to the senior secretary of the EC Secretariat.

The call for applications comes after the Election Observation Policy 2025 was issued on July 17, which cancelled the registration of 96 observer organisations that were

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

3 more die of dengue, 409 hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least three dengue patients died and 409 were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

Of the deaths, two were reported in the capital and one in Rajshahi division, as per the Directorate General of Health Services.

With this, the death toll stands at 76 and the total number of cases rose to 19,529.

Among the total number of cases, 18,223 patients have been released, of which 14,398 were from outside Dhaka.

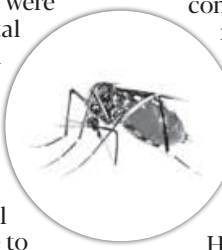
Currently, 1,230 patients

are undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country, of which 859 are from outside the capital.

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

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.



High Court

FROM PAGE 3

Court lawyers Uptal Biswas and Abeda Gulrukh seeking necessary orders.

Advocate Uptal Biswas told The Daily Star that nine children were detained from Gopalganj after the July 16 violence till July 21.

Later on, more children were arrested without any specific case, he said, adding that the provisions of the Children Act and the UN convention of child rights are not being applied on them.

Under the provisions, a particular officer must be assigned to look after and ensure the children's wellbeing and good health after any child is arrested.

When children will be brought to the children court, the lawyers and the police cannot wear their professional dress so that the children do not become traumatised, he said, adding that these provisions in respect of the children detained in Gopalganj are being violated.

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Dhaka lost 60%

FROM PAGE 3

stands on the brink of climate collapse. Cities like Singapore and Seoul maintain tree cover of 30 to 47 percent. Even Delhi and Jakarta are ahead.

Only Karachi ranks below us -- and we are headed in that direction fast."

He stressed the need to reverse this trend by adopting a nature-integrated development model inspired by cities like Singapore -- but adapted with local knowledge and equity.

"This is not about cosmetic greenery," he added. "We need a structural shift that recognises ecological rights as central to climate survival and urban sustainability. The state and citizens must act as guardians, not masters, of nature."

Dr Riflat Mahmood, associate professor of Geography and Environment at Jagannath University, emphasised the need for innovative, community-driven approaches.

"Transforming flyovers into vertical gardens, engaging youth through environmental education, and empowering communities with

stewardship models are essential. These not only enhance green space but foster shared responsibility for nature and long-term environmental resilience."

Reflecting on a recent ruling by the International Court of Justice, Change Initiative called for urgent, measurable actions, including enacting legislation to recognise the Rights of Nature, criminalising wetland and forest encroachment, reforming the Detailed Area Plan (DAP) to include ecological buffers and critical zones, limiting Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in environmentally sensitive areas, restoring waterbodies, and empowering communities as stewards of natural resources.

As part of a medium-term strategy, the organisation also recommended implementing targeted nature-based solutions tailored for Dhaka, prioritising low-income and densely populated areas for green investment, planting 56.5 square kilometres of trees in nature-deprived zones, and restoring wetlands to help reduce urban heat by up to one degree Celsius.

AK Ratul, vocalist of Owned

FROM PAGE 3

2007 -- played a vital role in shaping Bangladesh's underground music scene, leaning heavily towards nu-metal and grunge-inspired music. With their debut album "1" released in 2014, second album "2" in 2017 and the EP "Eighteen" released in 2021, the band garnered a huge following, owing to their fresh sound and particularly Ratul's unique vocal prowess.

Beyond his role as the Owned frontman, AK

Ratul was also known in the industry as a stellar producer, having created many hit albums and singles for other bands in the rock community.

He was the son of late legendary Bangladeshi actor Abul Khayer Jashim Uddin, better known as Jashim. His brothers, AK Rahul and AK Samee, are also prominent names in the country's rock music scene.

An air of shock and grief surrounds the music industry as Ratul, who was

Md Abdul Bari Sheikh no more

CITY DESK

Md Abdul Bari Sheikh, a politician, social worker, and writer, passed away at a hospital in Dhaka yesterday due to lung and cardiac complications.

He was 76.

He breathed his last around 9:45am at Labaid Hospital in Dhanmondi, said a press release.

Md Abdul Bari Sheikh left behind a legacy of service and compassion.



Mohammad Al Haroon passes away

CITY DESK

Mohammad Al Haroon, a former ambassador, passed away on Saturday. He was 79, said a press release.

He is survived by his two children, wife, and a host of relatives, friends, and well-wishers to mourn his death.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Azad Mosque, Gulshan, after the Zohr prayers on Tuesday.

A doa mahfil and qulqhwani will be held at his residence on Friday after Asr prayers.



Tk 89 lakh Pabna road repair work washed away within days

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Repair work on a six-kilometre stretch of the Pabna-Pakshey road, carried out by the Roads and Highways Department at a cost of Tk 89 lakh, has reportedly been washed away within days due to rain, leaving the road in a hazardous state.

Locals alleged that substandard materials were used to fill potholes, resulting in the entire repair work deteriorating within a week of completion.

The road is one of the busiest in the district as it connects the Pabna BSCIC industrial area, Pabna Mental Hospital, and Pabna Medical College.

"I need to travel to Pabna BSCIC twice a day, but now it's difficult because of the series of potholes," said Md Amirul Islam, a factory owner in the area. "When the repairs began weeks ago, we were hopeful. Unfortunately, there is no trace of the work now."



Residents said poor quality brick chips and sand were used in the repairs, which were washed away by rain within a couple of days.

"Repairing work was too substandard to last even a week. When it rained, the road returned to its sorry state," said Md Ziaul Haque, a resident of Chatiyani area.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Md Sadekur Rahman, sub divisional engineer of RHD Pabna, confirmed that Tk 89.18 lakh was allocated last month to repair the six-kilometre stretch.

"After the work was completed, there was rain, which damaged the repairs. We have already issued a letter to the bidder," Sadekur said. "The bidder has assured us that the road will be repaired again after the rainy season, and only then will the bill be paid."

According to RHD sources, Aminul Traders, a Naogaon-based construction firm, was awarded the work order.

This correspondent could not reach the contractor for comment.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)



International Labour Organization (ILO) Dhaka invites proposals from interested consultancy firm to raise awareness on enterprise formalization in Bangladesh through audio-visual documentation and media campaigns. The bidding documents can be downloaded from the **United Nations Global Market Place (UNGM)** at **https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/273598**

The deadline for submission of proposal is **Wednesday, August 13, 2025, by 04:30 PM (BST time).**



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e-Tender বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাওয়ার গ্রিডের "Dhaka and Western Zone Transmission Grid Expansion Project" শীর্ষক প্রকল্প দপ্তরের আওতাধীন নিম্নলিখিত দরপত্র e-GP পোর্টালে প্রকাশিত হয়েছে।

ID	Reference	Title of Works
1132934	27.21.0000.453.14. 001.25.79; dated: 21.07.2025	"Procurement of vehicle services, 2 Nos 8 seated Microbus for 28 months on monthly rental basis for Dhaka and Western Zone Transmission Grid Expansion Project.

আগ্রহী ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে www.eprocure.gov.bd সাইটের মাধ্যমে দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

মোঃ আবুল কাশেম

প্রকল্প পরিচালক (প্রধান প্রকৌশলী)

ঢাকা এবং পশ্চিমাঞ্চলীয় গ্রিড সঞ্চালন ব্যবস্থা সম্প্রসারণ প্রকল্প

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আমরা অত্যন্ত বেদনাক্লান্ত চিত্তে জানাচ্ছি যে, গত ২১ জুলাই ২০২৫: উত্তরার ডিয়াবাড়িতে অবস্থিত মাইলস্টোন কলেজের ছায়ী ক্যাম্পাস চত্বরে বাংলাদেশ বিমান বাহিনীর একটি যুদ্ধবিমান নিয়মিত প্রশিক্ষণরত অবস্থায় বিধ্বস্ত হয়। বিমানটি একটি বিস্তৃত বিশিষ্ট ভুল ভবনে আছাত হানে যেখানে বেলা ১.০০টায় ভুল ছুটি হয়ে যাওয়ায় ঝগ্ন সংঘাত শিক্ষার্থী অভিভাবকদের জন্য অপেক্ষারত অবস্থায় ছিল। মমাস্তিক এই ঘটনার আকস্মিকতায় মাইলস্টোন ভুল অ্যাড কলেজ কর্তৃপক্ষ হতবিস্ত্র, ভ্রু ও কিংকর্তব্যবিমূঢ় হয়ে পড়ে। মুহূর্তের মধ্যে মাইলস্টোন কলেজের শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকা, শিক্ষার্থীবৃন্দ, কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারীবৃন্দ ও এলাকাবাসী উদ্ধার কাজে ব্যাপিয়ে পড়েন। প্রায় সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই বাংলাদেশ সেনাবাহিনী, বাংলাদেশ ফায়ার সার্ভিস, বাংলাদেশ বিমান বাহিনী, বাংলাদেশ নৌ বাহিনী, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ ও র্যাবের প্রশিক্ষিত জনবল সম্মিলিতভাবে জীবনের ঝুঁকি নিয়ে এ উদ্ধার কাজে অংশগ্রহণ করেন।

জরুরিবিদ্যাক এই দুর্ঘটনায় মৃত্যুবরণ করেন (২৭ জুলাই, বিকেল সাড়ে চারটা পর্যন্ত) আমাদের ভুল শাখার ২৬ জন শিক্ষার্থী, ০২ জন শিক্ষক, ০৩ জন অভিভাবক এবং ০১ জন আয়া। গুরুতরভাবে আহত অবস্থায় হাসপাতালে চিকিৎসাধীন আছেন ৪৯ জন। এই আকস্মিক দুর্ঘটনায় মাইলস্টোন পরিবার স্তব্ধ, হতবাক ও বাকরুদ্ধ হয়ে পড়েছে। বেদনাক্লান্ত দুর্ঘটনায় নিহতদের পরিবারের শোকাহত সদস্যদের প্রতি আমরা গভীর শোক ও সমবেদনা জ্ঞাপন করছি। আহতদের চিকিৎসাসহ সকল প্রয়োজনে মাইলস্টোন কর্তৃপক্ষ সর্বদা পাশে রয়েছে।

আমাদের শিক্ষার্থী ও সন্ধান হারানোর এই চরম শোকসন্তপ্ত অবস্থায় অতর্কতিকালীন সরকারের মাননীয় প্রধান উপদেষ্টা, মাননীয় উপদেষ্টারূপে, বাংলাদেশ বিমান বাহিনী, স্বাস্থ্য মন্ত্রণালয়, শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, বিএনসিসি, রোডার ফোর্স, রেজিষ্ট্রেশন, অভিভাবকবৃন্দ, এলাকাবাসীসহ পুরো জাতি আমাদের পাশে এসে দাঁড়ায়। প্রত্যেকেই তাদের অবস্থান থেকে সহানুভূতি, সমর্মিতা ও সহযোগিতার এগিয়ে আসেন। স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর ও বাংলাদেশ বিমান বাহিনী আহতদের উন্নত ও সুচিকিৎসার ব্যবস্থা করেন। এ ব্যাপারে চিকিৎসা ও সেবাক্ষেত্র সমন্বয়ের জন্য একটি জরুরি সেল গঠন করেছে বাংলাদেশ বিমান বাহিনী।

দুর্ঘটনার প্রথম থেকে এ পর্যন্ত উদ্ধার, যোগাযোগ, সেবা, চিকিৎসাসহ প্রতিটি ক্ষেত্রে যারা মানবিকতার হাত বাড়িয়েছেন সেসকল ব্যক্তি, সংস্থা ও প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রতি আমরা গভীরভাবে কৃতজ্ঞতা জ্ঞাপন করছি। আমরা আন্তরিকভাবে কৃতজ্ঞতা জ্ঞাপন করছি সকল গণমাধ্যম ও সাংবাদিকদের প্রতি যারা মমাস্তিক এই ঘটনাকে মানবিক দৃষ্টিকোণ থেকে সকলের দৃষ্টিগোচর করেছেন।



মাইলস্টোন কলেজ

EIIN: 108572

৪৪ গরিব-ই-নেওয়াজ এডিনিউ, সেক্টর-১১ এবং ডিয়াবাড়ি, ভুরাগ, উত্তরা মডেল টাউন, ঢাকা-১২৩০।

Russia downs 291 Ukrainian drones

Warplanes strike drone facilities within Ukraine

REUTERS, Moscow

Russian air defence units downed 291 Ukrainian fixed-wing drones, the Russian Defence Ministry said yesterday.

"Air defence systems downed two guided aircraft bombs, three projectiles of Czech-made Vampire multiple rocket launch systems and 291 fixed-wing drones," the ministry said on its Telegram channel.

It added that Russian warplanes and drones struck drone production facilities and control centres within Ukraine.

Falling debris from destroyed Ukrainian drones disrupted railway power supply and train operations in part of the Volgograd region, the administration of the region in Russia's south said.

There were no injuries as a result of the attacks, the administration said on the Telegram messaging app, citing Governor Andrei Bocharov.

Russia prefers political and diplomatic



means to resolve conflict in Ukraine, but Kyiv and the West rejected that path, Russian news agencies reported yesterday, citing Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

"Our preferred route is through political and diplomatic means," Peskov said, according to TASS state news agency.

Peskov added, without providing evidence, that Moscow continues its military operation in Ukraine because "all proposals for dialogue were rejected, both by Ukraine and by Western countries."

Meanwhile, Russia said yesterday a major annual navy parade had been cancelled for "security reasons", without specifying the threat or concern.

"It has to do with the general situation. Security reasons are of utmost importance," said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, quoted by Russian news agencies.

The parade was meant to be the highlight of Russia's Navy Day, which falls on the last Sunday of July each year and honours the country's sailors.

But local authorities in the coastal city of Saint Petersburg, where the warships and submarines were scheduled to pass, said on Friday the parade had been cancelled without giving a reason.



Palestinians carry aid supplies that entered Gaza through Israel, in Beit Lahia, northern Gaza Strip, yesterday. Two Jordanian and one Emirati plane dropped 25 tonnes of humanitarian aid over the Gaza Strip, the Jordanian army said in a statement.

Israel commits to daily pauses in Gaza fighting

Announces secure aid routes for convoys; UN aid chief declares stepped-up efforts to feed Palestinians

REUTERS, Gaza

Israel said yesterday it would halt military operations each day for 10 hours in parts of Gaza and allow new aid corridors in the enclave, where images of hungry Palestinians have alarmed the world.

Military activity stopped from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm until further notice in Al-Mawasi, Deir al-Balah and Gaza City. The military also announced designated secure routes for convoys delivering food and medicine will also be in place between 6:00 am and 11:00 pm that started yesterday.

Dozens of Gazans have died of malnutrition in recent weeks, according to the Gaza Health Ministry in the Hamas-run enclave. A total of 127 people have died due to malnutrition, including 85 children, since the start of the war, the ministry said, adding that six more people have died of malnutrition in the last 24 hours.

On Saturday, a five-month-old baby died of severe acute malnutrition at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, health workers said.

"Three months inside the hospital and this is what I get in return, that she is dead," said her mother, Israa Abu Haleeb, standing next to the baby's father as he held their daughter's body, which was wrapped in a white shroud.

- Israel begins airdrops of humanitarian aid
- More than 100 food trucks head towards southern Gaza
- Six more people died of malnutrition in 24 hours

The Egyptian Red Crescent said it was sending more than 100 trucks carrying over 1,200 tonnes of food aid to southern Gaza through the Kerem Shalom crossing.

Hours earlier, Israel began aid airdrops in what it said was an effort to ease the humanitarian conditions in the enclave.

UN teams will step up efforts to feed Palestinians in Gaza during pauses in designated areas announced by Israel, UN aid chief Tom Fletcher said.

"In contact with our teams on the ground who will do all we can to reach as many starving people as we can in this window," he said in a post on X. Aid groups said last week there was mass hunger among Gaza's 2.2 million people and international alarm over the humanitarian situation in Gaza has increased.

Greece gets EU help to battle wildfires

AFP, Athens

Greece battled wildfires that have ravaged homes and sparked evacuations for a second day yesterday, with the help of Czech firefighters and Italian aircraft expected to arrive later.

Five fires were still raging yesterday morning in the Peloponnese area west of the capital, as well as on the islands of Evia, Kythera and Crete, with aircraft and helicopters resuming their work in several parts of the country at dawn.

"Today is expected to be a difficult day with a very high risk of fire, almost throughout the territory," fire brigade spokesman Vassilis Vathrakogiannis said yesterday.

Forecasters predicted the strong winds that fanned the flames would die down in most areas.

THAI-CAMBODIAN CLASH

Rivals agree to attend mediation talks

Says Thai govt as both sides accuse each other of launching fresh artillery strikes

REUTERS, Sisaket

The leaders of Thailand and Cambodia will attend mediation talks over their deadly border conflict in Malaysia today, the Thai government said, even as both sides accused each other of launching fresh artillery strikes across contested areas.

Talks are scheduled to begin at 3:00 pm local time (0700 GMT) today, with acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai leading the Thai negotiating team, the government announced in a statement last night.

Malaysia, which chairs the Asean regional cooperation forum, has informed the Thai government that Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet would also be attending the talks, the statement said.

Today's talks come after Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim last week proposed a ceasefire and US President Donald Trump said on Saturday that the two leaders had agreed to work on a ceasefire.

Tensions between Thailand and Cambodia have intensified since the late-May killing of a Cambodian soldier during a brief border skirmish.

ISOLATED BRAKE FIRE

US passenger plane evacuated in Denver

AFP, Washington

Passengers on a US domestic flight were forced to evacuate onto a runway due to a brake fire just ahead of the plane taking off in Denver, the airline said.

American Airlines Flight 3023 was departing for Miami on Saturday but "experienced a mechanical issue" while accelerating ahead of takeoff at Denver International Airport, the airline told AFP, adding all 173 passengers and six crew "deplaned safely".

One passenger sustained a minor injury and was taken to a hospital for evaluation, American Airlines said. Blown tires and the deceleration of the plane while braking resulted in an isolated brake fire, which was extinguished by city firefighters, according to the airline.

Social media videos published by US media outlets showed passengers frantically evacuating an American Airlines plane via an emergency slide as smoke billowed from beneath the aircraft.



People who fled their homes near the Cambodia–Thailand border gather to receive food on the grounds of a pagoda in Cambodia's Oddar Meanchey province yesterday. Thailand and Cambodia clashed for a fourth consecutive day before agreeing to Malaysia's role as mediator in the border conflict.

PHOTO: AFP

INDIA TEMPLE

Six crushed to death in stampede

AFP, Haridwar

At least six people were crushed to death at a popular Hindu temple in northern India's Uttarakhand state yesterday, officials said, after a massive crowd surge.

The stampede occurred on the stairway leading to the Mansa Devi temple in the Hindu holy city of Haridwar, on the banks of the Ganges river, and left many injured.

"Six dead and more than 10 injured are admitted to the hospital," senior city police official Parmendra Dobhal told AFP.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said relief and rescue operations were underway.

SAD suspends activities of all committees except central

FROM PAGE 1

He said an emergency meeting was convened to address the situation, attended by four members of the central committee. Based on their collective decision, all organisational activities across the country – except for the central committee – have been suspended with immediate effect.

Rifat urged law enforcement agencies to take legal action against those involved in such activities.

In a post on his verified Facebook page last night, Sarjis Alam, the chief organiser (north) of the National Citizen Party (NCP), said, "All committees of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement across the country, except the

central committee, have been dissolved."

In the comment section of this post, he wrote, "If anyone engages in extortion, lobbying, or case trading by claiming to be a 'coordinator' at any office, residence, or institution, catch them and hand them straight over to the police."

On Saturday, Gulshan police arrested five individuals, including SAD leaders and activists, for allegedly extorting money from the family of former Awami League lawmaker Shammi Ahmed.

According to police, the group had demanded Tk 50 lakh on July 17, identifying themselves as SAD members. As Shammi was not home at the time, they made the

demand to her husband, who handed over Tk 10 lakh that day.

When the group returned on Saturday to collect the remaining Tk 40 lakh, police arrested them from the Gulshan residence.

LEADERSHIP BLAMED

Umama Fatema, a former SAD leader, alleged that the arrested individuals were long known for "unruly behaviour" and had close ties with top leaders of the anti-discrimination movement.

In a Facebook post early yesterday, she said the five individuals had enjoyed access and protection due to their proximity to the platform's coordinators and were often seen escorting them to political events and government offices.

"These boys have long been seen providing protocol for the leaders – from the Secretariat to processions, meetings, and even clashes, they acted as the coordinators' right hand and left-hand men, moving around freely and without restrictions."

"Everyone pretending to be surprised is frankly a bit ridiculous. People are reacting as if they just discovered these boys are extortionists. The truth is, this is simply the first time they got caught."

She implied that the rot runs deep, adding, "If anyone cares to look, they'll see these roots go much deeper."

On June 28, Umama, the former spokesperson of SAD, officially announced

her withdrawal from the platform.

PREVIOUS INCIDENTS

Meanwhile, several past allegations of misconduct involving SAD members have also surfaced.

In May, activists in Mirpur allegedly brought a contractor to their Pallabi office, searched his phone, and demanded Tk 5 crore. They later claimed it was a personal dispute over unpaid dues involving a member's relative.

In March, police arrested 14 people, including a SAD coordinator, for allegedly looting Kabico Limited in Kalabagan. Claiming it was an Awami League office, they took Tk 3 lakh and four computers.



Bangladesh Open University
Engineering & Estate Division
Gazipur-1705, Bangladesh
Website: www.bou.ac.bd

বাউবির লিফট: সবার জন্য উন্মুক্ত কর্মমুখী, গণমুখী ও জীবনব্যাপী শিক্ষা

Ref. No. BOU/E&E/28(450)/2025/226

Dated: 24/07/2025

e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders is invited through e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by University Engineer, Bangladesh Open University, Gazipur-1705 for the procurement of work, which will be available at e-GP website from 30.07.2025, on 10.00am.

Sl No.	Tender ID, Ref. No. & Package No.	Name of work	Last selling date & time	Tender closing date & time date
01	Tender ID: 1132925 Ref. No. BOU/EE/Reno./VC's Residence/21/2025-2026 Package No. 21	Renovation of Civil & Sanitary work of Vice Chancellor's Office Building at BOU Campus, Gazipur-1705.	Date: 17/08/2025 Time: up to 14.00pm	Date: 18/08/2025 Time: at 14.00pm

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

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents can be deposited online through any bank's branches as per tender notice

Sd/-

Engr. Md. Shahriar Sahan
University Engineer
Bangladesh Open University
Phone: 02996691121

GD-1665

ছেলে হোক মেয়ে হোক
দুটি সপ্লানই যথেষ্ট

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Directorate General of Family Planning
Logistics & Supply Unit
6, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka 1214

Ref. No: 59.11.0000.302.07.073.2025-1937

Date: 27/07/2025

Amendment/Corrigendum No. 4

The following amendment is hereby carried out against Tender Reference No. 59.11.0000.302.07.073.2025-1538; Date: 04.05.2025 [Package No: CCSDP/GR-23, Procurement of Implant (01 Stick), Tender ID: 1103690].

Clause Reference of Tender Document/Invitation for Tender (IFT)	Existing Provision	Amended Provision
Tender/Proposal Document Last Selling/Downloading Date & Time	27-Jul-2025; 17:00	10-Aug-2025; 17:00
Tender/Proposal Closing Date & Time	28-Jul-2025; 12:30	11-Aug-2025; 12:30
Tender/Proposal Opening Date & Time	28-Jul-2025; 12:30	11-Aug-2025; 12:30
Last Date and Time for Tender/Proposal Security Submission	28-Jul-2025; 12:00	11-Aug-2025; 12:00

This amendment will be an integral part of the tender document. All other terms and conditions of the tender document shall remain unchanged.


(Md. Abdur Razzaque)
Director (Logistics & Supply)
Directorate General of Family Planning
Phone: 02-55012349
e-mail: dirisdgfp@gmail.com

GD-1662

AI election threat quite concerning

EC must implement effective safeguards to protect electoral integrity

It is reassuring to see the chief election commissioner (CEC) address the challenge posed by artificial intelligence (AI) ahead of the upcoming election, which he described as “more dangerous than [conventional] weapons” due to its capacity to spread misinformation and disinformation. “It is now possible to circulate content using my exact image and voice,” said AMM Nasir Uddin, calling the misuse of AI a “modern threat” capable of disrupting election campaigns and influencing the polls. He also mentioned other election-related challenges—such as the threat of illegal arms, restoring trust in the voting process, and ensuring voter turnout—but these are discussions for another day.

Knowing the problem, however, doesn't guarantee that meaningful steps will follow. It is vital that the Election Commission implements effective safeguards including establishing robust monitoring mechanisms to detect AI-generated content, collaborating with experts and media houses to minimise its impact, updating legal frameworks, and raising public awareness. Currently, the electoral code of conduct lacks clear directives on this issue, which must be addressed. While conventional measures meant to ensure a level playing field are important, it is far more urgent now to curb the misuse of AI. This necessity is underscored by both global and local experiences, with a report by *The New York Times* revealing in June that AI was used in more than 80 percent of elections in 2024. AI has already played a role in at least nine major elections this year, it added.

Locally, one may recall the circulation of fake content, including cloned voices of candidates, during recent elections. However, with AI now making such fabrications easier and more convincing, the threat has multiplied. For example, a recent investigation by Dismislab catalogued 70 AI-generated political campaign videos, including reels, between June 18 and 28. These videos, created using Google's Veo text-to-video AI model, portrayed entirely fictional individuals (e.g. rickshaw drivers, teachers, garment workers, Hindu and Muslim women, young people, etc) offering endorsements for different political parties. The initial waves of AI-generated messaging seemed to benefit Jamaat-e-Islami, but campaigners for rival parties such as BNP and NCP were not far behind. The widespread circulation of such emotionally charged, synthetic content raises serious concerns about its disruptive effect as we near the election.

Clearly, we need better safeguards against this trend. While it is impossible to completely eliminate the threat of AI-generated content—nor is all such content produced with malicious intent—the EC must do all it can to limit its misuse with the help of relevant state agencies, political parties, and social media platforms. It is crucial to learn from the experiences of other countries where AI has already disrupted elections. Without swift, informed interventions, Bangladesh too risks seeing its much-awaited election marred by such technologies.

Revive drug approval committees urgently

Govt must help pharma industry navigate LDC graduation challenges

It is quite concerning that over a year has passed since a sub-committee under the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA), responsible for reviewing new drug registration applications, last convened. Worse, the Drug Control Committee, responsible for the final approvals, has not met in two years. As a result, applications for 617 new medicines—including 15 costly biologic drugs—remain pending, according to a report by this daily.

This bureaucratic inertia could prove costly, especially as our pharmaceutical companies race against time. Bangladesh, as a Least Developed Country (LDC), currently enjoys a waiver under the World Trade Organisation's Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, allowing it to bypass patent enforcement on pharmaceutical products. This means local companies can produce many patented drugs at a fraction of the global price, making life-saving treatments more accessible.

For example, a cancer patient can now buy a locally produced immunity boosting drug for Tk 7,000-8,000 per pre-filled syringe, while the imported version would cost Tk 85,000-95,000. Experts note that local companies have kept biologic drug prices 30-40 percent lower than the global average. However, this advantage will end once Bangladesh graduates from an LDC to a developing country status in November 2026. Post-graduation, pharmaceutical companies will either have to pay hefty royalties or invest heavily to secure patent rights—costs that will inevitably be passed on to patients.

Bangladesh already bears one of the world's highest out-of-pocket health expenditures, much of which goes towards purchasing medicine. Medical expenses often push families into poverty. A projected 25-30 percent price hike in essential drugs could further deprive many of affordable healthcare.

Given these stakes, pharmaceutical companies must make the most of the limited time left to produce biologic drugs royalty-free. The government should be doing everything possible to support the industry during this crucial phase. Unfortunately, nearly a year after the political changeover, we are still seeing apathy within the responsible quarters. There can be no excuse for the delay in reconstituting or reviving these critical committees. The health ministry, already under heightened scrutiny for persistent irregularities in public healthcare, must act urgently. It has a mandate to safeguard public health, and that includes streamlining the drug approval process and taking measures so the pharma sector can meet the looming challenges of LDC graduation.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

World War I begins

On this day in 1914, using the assassination of Austrian archduke Francis Ferdinand as a pretext to present Serbia with an unacceptable ultimatum, Austria-Hungary declared war on the Slavic country, sparking World War I.

KHAIRUL HAQUE AND THE 13TH AMENDMENT JUDGMENT

A travesty of justice or a convenient scapegoat?



Barrister Khan Khalid Adnan is advocate at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, fellow at the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, and head of the chamber at Khan Saifur Rahman and Associates in Dhaka.

KHAN KHALID ADNAN

The arrest of former Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque from his Dhanmondi residence on July 24 has reignited a fierce debate surrounding his legacy, particularly his pivotal role in abolishing the non-partisan caretaker government system through the 13th Amendment judgment. While he currently faces murder charges linked to the tragic killing of teenager Abdul Kaiyum Ahad during the July uprising last year, the timing and nature of the cases raise critical questions. Is this truly about criminal accountability or is it political reckoning wrapped in legal formalism?

Justice Khairul Haque served as Bangladesh's 19th chief justice from September 2010 to May 2011, and later as the chairman of Bangladesh Law Commission until his resignation in August 2024, following the collapse of the Awami League regime. Now 81 years old and reportedly in poor health, he faces three separate cases—two in Dhaka's Jatra Bari area and one in Narayanganj—including charges of sedition and issuing a fabricated verdict. These developments are unprecedented, and while no judge should be above the law, the manner and motivation behind these cases demand closer scrutiny.

At the centre of this legal storm lies the 13th Amendment judgment, delivered by the Appellate Division in 2011, which declared the caretaker government system unconstitutional. Introduced in 1996 through the 13th Amendment to address rampant political distrust and ensure free and fair elections, the caretaker government system was largely successful in its early years. The elections of 1996 and 2001, both conducted under caretaker governments, were widely viewed as credible and peaceful.

However, the 2006-07 crisis, during

which the caretaker government overstayed its mandate and ruled under emergency powers, discredited the system. This became the pretext for challenging its constitutionality, eventually leading to the Appellate Division's verdict in 2011. The lead



VISUAL: MONOROM POLOK

judgment, authored by Chief Justice Khairul Haque, held that the caretaker government system violated the basic structure of the constitution by allowing unelected individuals to exercise sovereign executive powers.

Yet, controversy surrounds not just the substance of the judgment, but also the process. The final decision was split 4:3, with Justice Khairul Haque joined by justices Md Muzammel Hossain, SK Sinha, and Syed Mahmud Hossain, all of whom later became chief justices. In contrast, the three dissenting judges—justices Muhammad Imman Ali, Md Abdul Wahhab Miah, and Nazmun Ara Sultana—did not ascend to the top post. Whether this is coincidence or consequence remains open to interpretation.

What particularly raises eyebrows is the discrepancy between the short order issued by the court on May 10, 2011—just days before Khairul Haque's retirement—and the full verdict published over a year later in September 2012. The short order had allowed for the 10th and 11th parliamentary elections to be held under the caretaker government system, invoking legal doctrines of necessity and state safety. It even recommended amendments to exclude former chief justices or Appellate Division judges from leading the caretaker government, but did not abolish the system outright.

However, when the full judgment

emerged, it included entirely new directions. Most notably, it proposed that future elections be held under an interim government comprising elected members of parliament, with the sitting cabinet (albeit reduced in size) overseeing day-to-day governance. These modifications were not part of the original short order and were sharply criticised by Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah in his dissent, who called them “not in conformity with the short order.” These additions ultimately paved the way for the Awami League to hold three consecutive elections (2014, 2018, and 2024) under its own authority—elections widely criticised for irregularities and lacking credibility.

This raises profound constitutional

Why ESG standards matter now more than ever for Bangladesh



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ZUBAYER HOSSEN

The global investment landscape is no longer what it used to be. Today, investors are looking beyond profits; they want to know where their money is going and what kind of impact it is having. Is it helping clean the air, making workplaces safer, and encouraging fair treatment and sound governance? Such questions are being raised. This is where Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards come in.

For Bangladesh, ESG standards matter now more than ever. We will officially graduate from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) status of the United Nations on November 24, 2026. It is a significant step forward, but it also means losing trade preferences and access to concessional development finance that were arranged under the LDC status. As we enter a more competitive global market, the quality of our growth and how we earn investor confidence will be crucial.

Globally, ESG performance is becoming a key indicator for investment decisions. Countries that score well on ESG are seen as safer bets, more stable and future-proof. ESG is not just about image; it is about demonstrating a genuine commitment to sustainability, equity, and transparency.

Let us pause for a moment and break down the ESG concept. This is not some development buzzword. “E” stands for environment, covering issues such as climate resilience, clean energy, and pollution control. “S” refers

to social factors, including working conditions, community impact, and gender inclusion. “G” is governance, such as how rules are made, whether they are being enforced, and how institutions hold up under pressure.

Investors now treat ESG as a core part of assessing long-term risk. This means ESG is no longer a “nice to have”—it is a key factor in economic decision-making.

Bangladesh has taken some steps in the right direction. The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) has made ESG reporting in annual reports mandatory for listed companies, in line with the Sustainability Reporting Guidelines (SRG). The Bangladesh Bank has issued guidelines on sustainability and climate-related financial disclosures for all banks and financial institutions operating in the country. Moreover, several NGOs are voluntarily reporting on ESG performance. However, real ESG integration remains limited. Most businesses are still at an early stage, if they are engaging at all.

Awareness of ESG remains limited, particularly among small and medium enterprises. Even among larger firms, ESG reporting often reads more like a marketing effort than a reflection of measurable progress. There is no unified national roadmap, which has led to fragmentation.

Social and governance challenges remain serious. Issues such as child labour, workplace safety, and uneven enforcement of labour laws continue to attract negative attention. When

these are combined with slow judicial processes and inconsistent regulation, it becomes clear why many investors remain hesitant.

Another major hurdle is the lack of mandatory ESG disclosures. Most firms can simply choose not to report anything. Banks and financial institutions also do not consistently assess ESG risks. This allows weak practices to go unchecked. Agencies such as the BSEC, Bangladesh Bank, and various ministries are each working on parts of the ESG agenda, but rarely in coordination. Our financial sector also needs modernisation. Instruments such as green bonds and ESG-linked loans are still rare. Without them, companies have limited options for funding sustainable growth.

Globally, ESG performance is becoming a key indicator for investment decisions. Countries that score well on ESG are seen as safer bets, more stable and future-proof. ESG is not just about image; it is about demonstrating a genuine commitment to sustainability, equity, and transparency.

ESG is not just relevant for foreign investors; local companies also stand to benefit. Strong ESG performance can reduce operational risks, cut costs, and build better relationships with workers and consumers. With more Bangladeshi firms entering global supply chains, particularly in garments, pharmaceuticals, and leather, complying with international ESG standards is no longer optional.

What needs to happen? First, ESG reporting should be mandatory not only for listed companies but also

and political questions. Was the 15th Amendment, passed in June 2011 to abolish the caretaker government system, truly based on the 13th Amendment judgment, or was the judgment retrospectively edited to validate the 15th Amendment? The timeline is suspicious: the short order—still in force when the 15th Amendment was enacted—explicitly endorsed holding the next two elections under the caretaker government system. It never called for its outright repeal. That came only in the full judgment, published after the legal change had already been made.

If this was a judicial endorsement manufactured after the fact, it would represent not only a failure of process but a deliberate distortion of constitutional jurisprudence—a true travesty of justice. Khairul Haque's role, therefore, cannot be viewed in isolation. He was not a lone actor. Three other justices concurred with him. Yet, none of them face legal or political repercussions today. Why him, and why now?

The charges against Justice Haque, particularly the murder accusation, must be evaluated with utmost caution. Is it plausible that an 81-year-old former chief justice orchestrated a violent killing? Do the facts support such a conclusion, or is this a legally dressed act of vengeance? No matter how flawed or damaging his judgment may have been, the protections afforded to judges—such as those under the Judicial Officer's Protection Act of 1850—exist to guard against precisely this kind of political retribution. If he is to be held accountable, it must be under appropriate legal charges, not concocted ones. Any trial must be transparent, fair, and firmly rooted in the rule of law.

Justice, even when correcting injustice, must never become a tool of revenge. The arrest of a former chief justice is not an act to be taken lightly. It marks a significant moment in the country's legal and political history—a moment that should force us to reflect not only on Khairul Haque's controversial legacy but also on the integrity of our institutions, and the delicate balance between accountability and political vendetta.

For large private firms. Reporting must follow clear, internationally recognised standards such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) or the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB). When companies report in a comparable way, it builds trust and enables proper evaluation. This kind of transparency will foster real investor confidence.

Second, the Bangladesh Bank could do much more to encourage long-term thinking within financial institutions. If banks offer more ESG-linked loans or promote green bonds, businesses will have a stronger incentive to prioritise sustainability.

Third, small and medium-sized businesses need targeted support, including plain-language guides, workshops, and hands-on assistance, to help them begin the ESG transition.

Fourth, a national ESG task force, comprising representatives from business, government, and civil society, could help coordinate efforts and bring coherence to currently fragmented initiatives.

Finally, ESG must be integrated into national planning. It cannot be an afterthought; it needs to be embedded into our climate goals, industrial policies, and our very definition of progress.

Bangladesh is entering a new era. The choices we make now will determine how the world views us in the years ahead. ESG offers a way to rethink how we measure success. It brings people, the environment, and governance into the conversation—elements we too often treat as secondary but which, in truth, hold everything together. When these elements are ignored, progress tends to unravel. But when they form the foundation, we can build something more stable, more inclusive, and more humane.

ESG will not solve everything, but it gives us a framework to do better, if we choose to take it seriously. The path is there. It is up to us to walk it.

Reasons why the US lifted sanctions on Myanmar



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SYED RAIYAN AMIR

It slipped in quietly. No grand announcement, no televised press conference. Just a routine notice from the US Treasury: several Myanmar-linked individuals—business elites connected to the military junta—have been removed from the sanctions list. That’s it. No real explanation. For anyone who’s been following US policy since Myanmar’s 2021 coup, this looked off. Human rights groups were quick to call it “shocking” and “deeply troubling.” And fair enough—on the surface, it seems like the US just eased up on a regime responsible for mass violence and democratic backsliding. But here’s the thing: this move has very little to do with Myanmar’s domestic politics. It’s not about democracy or human rights. It’s about other geostrategic and geopolitical actors like China. It’s about rare earths. It’s about geography. And it’s about time.

Let’s back up a bit. The sanctions weren’t lifted in a vacuum. Two weeks earlier, Myanmar’s top general, Min Aung Hlaing, sent a letter to US President Donald Trump. In it, he praised Trump’s leadership, floated tariff reductions, and, importantly, asked for sanctions relief. The wording was deliberately flattering, almost performative. But also pragmatic. Myanmar wants access to US markets. It needs economic oxygen. And it knows how to talk to a White House that thinks in deals. Shortly after, the US Treasury removed several junta-linked names: businesspeople operating in defence logistics, tech, and supply chains. Some had

only been sanctioned recently. Again, no formal reason was offered. But nothing in geopolitics happens in a vacuum.

Myanmar’s value to the US isn’t rooted in ideology. It’s logistics, minerals, and map lines. Look at where it sits, wedged between Bangladesh, India, China, and the Bay of Bengal. It’s a perfect fulcrum point in what’s become the most contested strategic region today: the Indo-Pacific. From the US perspective, this isn’t just about what Myanmar is. It’s about what China is doing inside Myanmar. And the picture isn’t simple. Beijing has, for years, been investing in infrastructure, buying access, and forging relationships with both the military and insurgent ethnic groups in Myanmar. This includes groups that control key territories filled with rare earth minerals. That part is important. Rare earths are the raw ingredients in nearly every modern technology: batteries, jets, radar systems, smartphones, the whole stack. Right now, China processes more than 90 percent of global supply. Myanmar’s mines, most of which are barely regulated, are one of the few alternatives. But China is already embedded there too, refining the ore across the border and flooding global markets.

For the US, that’s a nightmare scenario. It means China not only dominates the processing game but is also securing the upstream supply chain. So if Washington wants to reduce dependency, it can’t just keep shouting from a distance. It needs to

be inside the room. That room, like it or not, includes people with close ties to the military.

Strategically, this starts to make sense. US grand strategy, as discussed by Hal Brands in *American Grand Strategy in the Age of Trump*, rarely prioritises ideals over positioning. It’s often reactive, improvisational, and focused on regaining leverage. Robert Kaplan’s *The Revenge of*

provides the grim rationale: in a zero-sum world, you engage where your rivals thrive, even if it means dealing with actors you’d otherwise shun. Michael Klare’s *The Race for What’s Left* adds the final piece: resources define 21st-century power. Controlling or disrupting rare earth supply chains is no longer just an economic concern; it’s a national security concern.

And still, even beyond the resource game,

this region from becoming a Chinese naval corridor is a high priority, even if it means taking uncomfortable steps. Another layer is regional diplomacy. Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka are watching. All of them are trying to balance relations with Beijing and Washington. The US, by engaging Myanmar, even symbolically, may be signalling that it can be pragmatic, offering carrots, not just sticks.

There’s also the issue of influence down the road. The Myanmar junta is under pressure, economically, militarily, and diplomatically. Ethnic armed groups are gaining ground. The economy is a mess. If things fall apart, and they very well might, the US will want contacts inside the country who aren’t just civil society activists or dissidents in exile. It’ll need people who know how things work on the ground, even if those people have, until now, been on the other side of the ledger. Lifting sanctions might be less about rewarding anyone, and more about rebalancing options. In diplomatic terms, this is keeping the door ajar without committing to a full pivot.

Of course, none of this will sit well with rights groups or Myanmar’s pro-democracy forces. It sends a confusing message: that the junta’s crimes can be overlooked if the timing suits. That may be true, but it’s also consistent with how international politics often works. Morality, unfortunately, is a variable, not a constant, especially when strategic minerals, shipping lanes, and regional influence are in play.

So here we are. The US lifted sanctions on some military-linked figures. It didn’t do it out of friendship. It did it to stay in the game—to push back, however subtly, against China’s tightening grip on Southeast Asia’s most strategic fault line. It’s messy, uncomfortable, and maybe even risky. But in the long run, it might be the only way to get a seat at a table that’s already being set, without Washington.



Myanmar’s value to the US isn’t rooted in ideology—it’s logistics, minerals, and map lines. FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

Geography helps explain why Myanmar matters regardless of its internal politics, because where it sits matters. Chokepoints like the Bay of Bengal are too important to leave open to adversaries. John Mearsheimer’s structural realism, outlined in *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*,

there are other layers. One is maritime control. China has been busy building its “String of Pearls”—a network of ports and naval facilities stretching from mainland China to the Horn of Africa. Myanmar’s coast, particularly the Kyaukpyu port, is a jewel in that string. For Washington, preventing

Addressing the crisis of child malnutrition



Dr Syed Abdul Hamid
is professor at the Institute of Health Economics in the University of Dhaka and convener of Alliance for Health Reforms Bangladesh (AHRB) and Network for Health Care Excellence (NHCE).

SYED ABDUL HAMID

Even after more than five decades of independence, Bangladesh grapples with the alarming reality of widespread child malnutrition. Nearly one in four children in the country is stunted, meaning their height is far below the standard for their age. Twenty-two percent are underweight, while 11 percent suffer from wasting, which is a form of acute malnutrition. One in 10 newborns has low birth weight, undermining their long-term physical health and cognitive development.

Adding to this grim picture is the lack of healthy dietary practices. Over half of all the children in Bangladesh are deprived of exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life, and 72 percent receive inadequate complementary foods. Only one in every five children enjoys a diverse diet, while the rest rely on one or two types of food daily, which is insufficient to meet even their basic nutritional requirements. This nutritional deprivation severely impairs children’s physical and mental development, resulting in poor educational outcomes, diminished productivity in adulthood, and greater vulnerability to illness. The cumulative economic loss is staggering—about \$1 billion annually—a significant drag on national progress.

This crisis is not only a health sector issue. Child malnutrition is a multidimensional, cross-sectoral challenge. Addressing it requires strategic coordination among local government, civil society, and the private sector. These three key stakeholders must work together to pave a sustainable path forward.

Child nutrition begins in the womb and remains critical through the first two years of life. Proper nutrition during pregnancy determines a child’s birth weight, growth, and immunity. Exclusive breastfeeding for six months provides essential nutrients and immune protection. After six months, children need age-appropriate complementary foods alongside continued breastfeeding up to two years or more.

To ensure healthy development, children’s diets must include adequate calories, protein, vitamins, and minerals. Clean water, safe sanitation, immunisation, and personal hygiene are equally essential. These measures support nutrient absorption and protect against infection. Well-nourished children contribute more productively to society as

adults. Investment in nutrition, therefore, is an investment in the future.

The roots of child malnutrition are deep and varied. Inadequate and undiversified food intake is a primary cause. Many children rely on staple carbohydrates like rice, with little or no protein or micronutrient-rich food. Lack of proper breastfeeding practices, either due to misinformation or sociocultural barriers, further compounds the problem.

Repeated occurrences of diarrhoea, pneumonia, and parasitic infections reduce nutrient absorption and appetite. Contaminated food and water, poor hygiene, and unsafe living conditions accelerate nutrient loss. Maternal undernutrition, both

This crisis is not only a health sector issue. Child malnutrition is a multidimensional, cross-sectoral challenge. Addressing it requires strategic coordination among local government, civil society, and the private sector. These three key stakeholders must work together to pave a sustainable path forward.

during pregnancy and lactation, leads to low birth weight and poor milk production, directly affecting child health.

Lack of knowledge among caregivers regarding feeding practices, widespread poverty, food insecurity, and social or gender discrimination also restrict children’s access to nutritious food. Together, these factors not only undermine individual potential but also erode the foundation of national development.

Local government institutions, including union parishads, upazila parishads, and municipalities, are uniquely positioned to lead nutrition efforts at the grassroots level. They can promote community awareness, monitor food safety, support school-based nutrition education, encourage

good agricultural practices, and expand immunisation coverage.

Yet, despite their strategic role, these institutions rarely allocate a budget for nutrition, particularly child nutrition. Government budget formats do not even list it as a category. The Right2Grow project, implemented in 40 unions across four coastal districts, demonstrates that targeted budget allocations and implementation can drive real progress in nutrition outcomes.

Civil society organisations and NGOs are vital partners in raising awareness, promoting breastfeeding, delivering nutrition to vulnerable populations, and supporting health workers. They can foster community engagement through participatory approaches and advocate for child nutrition at local and national levels.

One major barrier is political influence. For civil society to play an effective role, its work must remain impartial and driven by evidence, not agendas. Moreover, securing sustainable public financing for nutrition requires strong political commitment. Civil society must therefore lead robust advocacy to push child nutrition up the priority list of local and national governments.

Another critical role is budget tracking and monitoring. But insufficient access to data often hampers these efforts, threatening transparency and accountability in nutrition-related expenditures.

The private sector, too, has a transformative role to play. From producing and marketing safe and nutritious foods to funding school feeding programmes through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, businesses can influence both supply and demand. They can support awareness campaigns, partner with the government and NGOs to produce low-cost, nutrient-dense foods, and invest in research and development of fortified staples—such as rice, lentils, flour, and edible oils—as well as micronutrient-enriched biscuits and seeds. Strengthening supply chains and training local entrepreneurs to deliver nutrition solutions to remote communities are additional avenues for engagement.

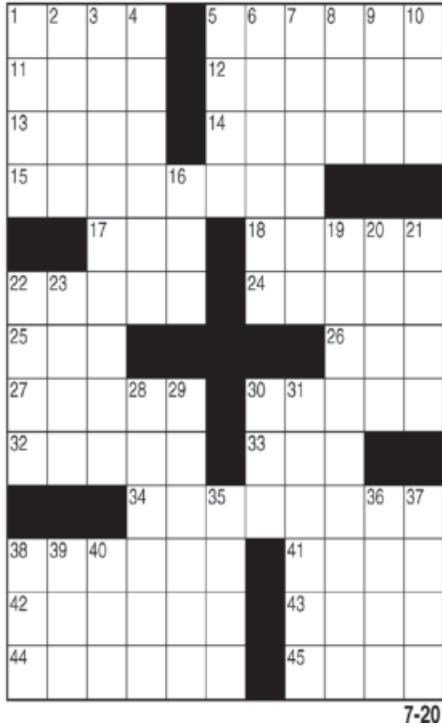
Through public-private partnerships, the private sector can also contribute to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and nutrition education, as well as introduce sustainable technologies that make healthy choices more accessible.

Child nutrition is not merely a health statistic—it is a national development imperative. It reflects our values, priorities, and commitment to the next generation. Only through coordinated, inclusive, and locally anchored action involving government, civil society, and the private sector can we ensure a healthier, smarter, and more resilient Bangladesh.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

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FRIDAY'S ANSWERS



WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO
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4 SAD leaders placed on 7-day remand

FROM PAGE 12
committee of SAD's combined private university unit, and SAD members Sakadoun Siam, 22, and Sadman Sadab, 21.

They were arrested at a flat on Road 83 in Gulshan.

The police had sought a 10-day remand for each after producing them before the court of Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Ziadur Rahman yesterday.

Amid tight security, the four arrestees were taken to the courtroom at 4:10pm. Upon seeing them, a group of lawyers began chanting slogans against them.

They shouted, "Extortionist! Extortionist!"

As the arrestees tried to cover their faces, several lawyers confronted them, saying, "Why are you hiding your face?"

One lawyer shouted, "You've sold out the spirit of the July movement for extortion!"

During the hearing, Additional Public Prosecutor Md Shamsuddoha Sumon said, "These are not ordinary criminals. Since August 5 of last year, this group has been making lists of homes belonging to Awami League leaders in Dhanmondi, Gulshan, and Banani and extorting money... We need to know who else is involved in these activities and in which locations."

Some people punched the arrestees when they were being taken

away from the court after the hearing around 4:35pm.

A 16-year-old SAD activist was arrested in the case and sent to the Children Development Centre in Gazipur by the Juvenile Court-8 of Dhaka, said a court staffer.

Siddique Abu Zafar, husband of ex-lawmaker Shammi Ahmed, filed the case with Gulshan Police Station, naming six leaders and members of SAD and accusing 10 to 12 unnamed persons.

The complainant alleged that on July 17, the accused, identifying themselves as members of SAD, went to their home and demanded Tk 50 lakh.

Since Shammi was not home, the demand was made to her husband.

"When I refused to pay, they labelled me an Awami League associate and kept pressuring me for the money. Eventually, I gave Tk 10 lakh to Abdur Razzak Riyad," he added.

Zafar also alleged that the group returned on July 19 and banged on the door, but left when he alerted the police.

"On July 26, Riyad and others came again. I was not home, but the security guard informed me. They demanded the remaining Tk 40 lakh and threatened to hand me over to the police if I did not comply. I called the police again, and five of them were arrested on the spot while another accused, Kazi Gourab, managed to flee," he added.

Russia starts direct flights to North Korea

AFP, Moscow

Russia yesterday began direct commercial flights to North Korea, in a further sign of closer ties with its Asian ally helping its offensive in Ukraine.

The first Moscow-Pyongyang flight, operated by Nordwind Airlines, was scheduled to take off at 1600 GMT and land in the North Korean capital some eight hours later, according to the carrier's website.

Nordwind Airlines -- a company that used to serve holiday destinations in Europe before the EU imposed a ban on Russian flights -- had tickets priced at 45,000 rubles (\$570).

Russia's state news agency TASS reported that the first flight going the other way, from Pyongyang to Moscow, would take place on Tuesday.

Russia's transport ministry said the route would be serviced once a month.

Russia and North Korea restored train links on June 17 after suspending them in 2020 during the Covid pandemic.

The two countries have been forging closer military bonds in recent years, with Pyongyang supplying troops and weapons for Russia to use in its military operations in Ukraine.

They signed a mutual defence pact last year, when Russian President Vladimir Putin visited North Korea.

Foreign debt

FROM PAGE 12
compounding concerns over its external financial position.

Bangladesh received 17 percent less in foreign loans year-on-year, amounting to \$8.56 billion in FY25, the lowest in four years.

Loan commitments by multilateral and bilateral lenders fell to \$8.32 billion in the last fiscal year, down 22 percent year-on-year from \$10.7 billion.

BNP's income

FROM PAGE 12
A delegation led by the party's Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi handed over the financial statement to EC Secretary Akhtar Ahmed at the commission's headquarters yesterday morning.

Speaking to reporters afterwards, Rizvi said that the BNP's total income last year stood at Tk 15,65,94,842, while its expenditure amounted to Tk 4,80,04,820 -- resulting in a surplus of Tk 10,85,90,019.

In comparison, the party's income in 2023 was Tk 1,10,80,151, with an expenditure of Tk 3,65,23,970.

For 2022, income was reported at Tk 5,92,04,632, and expenditure at Tk 3,88,33,803.

Under the Representation of the People Order (RPO), all registered political parties are required to submit audited financial reports of the previous calendar year to the EC by July each year.

This year, the EC issued letters to 50 registered political parties, excluding the Awami League as its registration is suspended, urging them to submit their audit reports.

Transport leaders

FROM PAGE 12
The announcement came within a week of the government launching a countrywide drive on July 20 against vehicles that have exceeded their economic lifespan. The campaign began about a month after the government set the economic lifespan of buses and minibuses at 20 years, and goods laden vehicles, such as trucks and lorries -- at 25 years.

According to BRTA data updated on July 16, a total of 39,169 buses and minibuses, and 41,140 trucks, lorries, and tankers have crossed their economic lifespan.

Saiful said the recent drives to remove vehicles aged 20-25 years have already triggered strikes in various districts, raising concerns of a complete transport shutdown. To address the issue, a joint meeting was held on July 20, where the transport leaders urged authorities to resolve the matter within 15 working days. After that time passed without a solution, they decided to enforce a three-day strike starting August 12.

He said the economic lifespan of commercial vehicles should be extended to 30 years. While supporting the government's aim of reducing environmental pollution, he argued that pollution is primarily caused by vehicles using substandard fuel and lubricants or failing to maintain them properly. Since all parts of a vehicle except the chassis, including the engine, are replaceable, any vehicle failing a fitness test or proven to cause pollution should be declared unfit, regardless of age.

Previously, expired vehicles were barred only from operating in metropolitan areas but were allowed in districts with valid BRTA fitness certificates. "This provision must be retained," he said.

He also demanded that BRTA suspend its ongoing crackdown on older vehicles until these issues are resolved.

Among their other demands is the amendment to sections 98 and 105 of the Road Transport Act 2018, along with several other recommended provisions.

ECNEC halts project revision

FROM PAGE 12

which declined to approve the hastily submitted revision proposal for the project.

"At this moment, no final decision has been made. For now, we're holding off," he said, adding that the investigation committee will include local and, if needed, foreign legal experts and urban transport specialists to review everything.

The project authority sought Tk 2,329 crore more and five additional years to complement the project aimed at building the country's first 20 km-long dedicated bus corridor between Airport and Gazipur to make communication between the two cities smooth and fast.

Formally known as the "Greater Dhaka Sustainable Urban Transport Project", it was approved in November 2012 and was originally planned to be completed by December 2016 at a cost of Tk 2,037.9 crore.

But the long delay was caused by issues relating to land acquisition, relocation of utility services, design changes, contractors running out of money, and the pandemic. Moreover, physical work was suspended twice.

As a result, the total project was revised thrice, taking its cost to Tk 4,268.3 crore, and the latest deadline was December 2024.

Once the dedicated rapid bus service comes into operation, it is supposed to allow people to reach Dhaka from Gazipur in 35-40 minutes, which can now take between one and a half hours and three hours.

Till June this year, the project saw 97.43 percent progress, according to

the progress report.

However, the project got a setback after miscreants damaged 22 escalators to be used for elevated stations on the route during last year's student movement in July.

After the political changeover in August last year, the adviser to the road transport and bridges ministry decided to reassess the project.

As per the assessment, the ministry proposed to extend the project deadline up to December 2029 and raise the cost to Tk 6,597.66 crore, which is Tk 2,329.33 crore more than the revised cost, the document shows.

Acquisition of more land for bus depots, additional civil works, hiring consultants for developing a bus operation model on the corridor, and some other issues are the reasons for the cost escalation, read the documents.

But, after the ECNEC meeting, the planning adviser said foreign experts who evaluated the project couldn't believe it. "They've seen similar systems in Jakarta and elsewhere but couldn't understand why the BRT lane was built down the centre of the road, blocking all east-west pedestrian and vehicular movement.

"Who designed this? Why wasn't it considered that BRT systems are meant for areas with fewer crossings and less foot traffic? This BRT has become a massive barrier, preventing people from crossing and increasing accident risks."

"Was a study done to assess the demand? We've decided to investigate who made the original designs and how the feasibility study was done. Such an unusual project demand assessment

would require asking: who will ride it? Even if there's demand from Uttara, major inconsistencies remain."

Regarding each station having escalators, Wahiduddin said, "In Bangladesh, these don't last long. Most public escalators stop working soon."

"The original project cost was about Tk 2,000 crore but now, completing everything will require around Tk 6,500 crore," he said, adding, "The project started in December 2012. If it takes another 4-5 years, it'll break the record for the longest-running mega project in Bangladesh."

"Around 3,000-4,000 crore has already been spent -- mostly from foreign loans. What do we do now? If we proceed and buy all the buses, how much more will it cost? The revised cost is about Tk 6,500 crores. Will the benefits be worth it?" he questioned.

Meanwhile, the adviser said they have problems with contractors and project directors.

"IMED is preparing a report. We want a full report. Why so many contractors fled. Proper investigations should be conducted to identify those responsible."

"How much money was wasted or embezzled? How accountable are the project directors and other officials?" he asked.

Contractors involved in projects worth Tk 890 crore under three state agencies -- Roads and Highways Department, Bangladesh Railway, and Local Government Engineering Department -- have fled, Kamal Uddin, secretary of Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) told reporters.

US, EU make trade deal

FROM PAGE 12

"We have a trade deal between the two largest economies in the world, and it's a big deal. It's a huge deal. It will bring stability. It will bring predictability," she said.

The deal, which also includes \$600 billion of EU investments in the United States and significant EU purchases of US energy and military equipment, will indeed bring clarity for EU companies.

However, the baseline tariff of 15 percent will be seen by many in Europe as a poor outcome compared to the initial European ambition of a zero-for-zero tariff deal, although it is better than the threatened 30 percent rate.

The deal mirrors parts of the framework agreement the United States clinched with Japan last week.

"We are agreeing that the tariff... for automobiles and everything else will be a straight across tariff of 15 percent," Trump said. However, the 15 percent baseline rate would not apply to steel and aluminium, for which a 50 percent tariff would remain in place.

Trump, who is seeking to reorder the global economy and reduce decades-old US trade deficits, has so far reeled in agreements with Britain, Japan, Indonesia, and Vietnam, although his administration has failed to deliver on a promise of "90 deals in 90 days."

Dhaka plans to buy 25 Boeing

FROM PAGE 1

confirmed the Boeing purchase plan. He said he was hopeful a tariff rate could be fixed between 15 percent and 20 percent for Bangladesh's exports. This would place Bangladesh on par with countries such as Japan (15 percent) and Vietnam (20 percent).

Reducing the trade gap and lessening over-reliance on Chinese products, especially industrial raw materials like fabrics for garment manufacturing, yarn, accessories, and machinery, are major conditions for Bangladesh in the negotiations.

After the second round of negotiations, held on July 9-11, the Trump administration asked Bangladesh to clearly state what kinds of trade benefits the country can offer the US and demanded zero duty for a series of products.

BIMAN'S RESPONSE

"Biman is not aware of the purchase of 25 aircraft from Boeing," ABM Raoshan Kabir, Biman's General Manager of Public Relations, told The Daily Star.

Top officials at Biman said they only learned about the potential purchase of 25 aircraft from Boeing through media reports.

"It's very surprising that Biman's top officials were not informed about the purchase of 25 Boeing aircraft," a top official of Biman told The Daily Star, wishing to remain anonymous. "Even our techno-financial committee is not aware of it. How is it possible to sign

an agreement bypassing Biman?" the official questioned.

Biman's current fleet includes four Boeing 787-8s, two 787-9s, four 777-300ERs, and four 737-800s. It also operates five De Havilland Canada DHC-8s (Dash-8 Q400).

Biman Managing Director and CEO Shafiqur Rahman recently told the media that they have received proposals from both Boeing and Airbus.

"Our techno-financial team is working on those proposals, and we will decide on buying the planes that will benefit us," he said.

Considering aircraft type and model, the price of a Boeing aircraft can range from \$250 million to \$300 million.

Aviation expert Kazi Wahidul Alam said, "Aircraft should be purchased based on Biman's fleet plan and market demand analysis. In the past, we have seen aircraft bought under external pressure without understanding Biman's real needs, which increased the financial burden."

"Biman needs aircraft at the moment. But they have spent the last three to four years just conducting assessments and are yet to make a decision," he said. "One day they say Boeing, another day Airbus. They are wasting time. A decision must be made quickly, and the price must also be competitive."

In 2023, during a visit by French President Emmanuel Macron, the then Awami League government committed to buying 10 new A350 planes from Airbus.

down to 33 from 34.

4 IN CRITICAL CONDITION

Total 34 injured survivors, including 28 children, remained admitted to the burn institute yesterday, Director Dr Nasir said.

Among them, four were in critical condition and receiving treatment at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), while nine others were in the "severe" category.

Six of the admitted patients have burn injuries covering over 30 percent of their bodies, the director said.

"Each day, unit heads talk to the patients twice and provide psychological support," Dr Nasir said, adding that more patients are expected to be released in the coming days based on their recovery.

Cancel the current DAP

FROM PAGE 3
The government published the gazette for the 20-year DAP on August 23, covering 1,528 square kilometres under Rajuk’s jurisdiction.
According to the Wetland Protection Act, the width of a river in the dry season is considered the wetland, and in the monsoon, the floodplain. However, the current DAP allows construction in floodplains, which IAB leaders said blocks natural drainage and will worsen waterlogging during the rainy season.
IAB President Dr Abu Sayeed Mostaque Ahmed

criticised the DAP for allowing temporary structures on agricultural land, warning that this could accelerate the loss of farmland.
He also pointed to discrimination in the allocation of Floor Area Ratio (FAR), saying high-rise buildings are permitted in posh areas, while other areas face the highest restrictions.
Architect Kazi Golam Nasir said they have long protested the DAP’s provision for conditional construction approval in flood flow zones, but the clause remains unchanged.
IAB also called for

the immediate creation of a modern, inclusive, and environmentally and socially responsible land use plan that meets international standards.
This plan should be based on the three-tier planning framework (Structure Plan, Urban Area Plan, and Detailed Area Plan) and cover the Greater Dhaka Metropolitan Area, including Gazipur, Savar, Keraniganj, and Narayanganj. It must also align with the government’s commitments to climate change, the SDGs, the Sendai Framework, zero emissions, and decarbonisation.

DU set for major

FROM PAGE 3
planning advisor to the government.
“We reassessed the student gender ratio and decided to prioritise residential facilities for female students, who are more vulnerable and disproportionately affected by the lack of housing.”
“We also mandated that additional space be found outside the main campus, if necessary,” he added.
Regarding infrastructure, he said, “There’s no extra space within the 350 acres of university land. To avoid congestion and environmental harm, we’ll demolish or replace low-rise buildings from the 1950s and ’60s with multi-storey structures built on the same footprint.”
Prioritising the construction of residential halls, which covers 34.36 percent of the total cost, the project also includes the construction of the Ducsu building, administrative building, central mosque, medical centre, and gymnasium, accounting for 16 percent of the cost.
A 15-storey female dormitory will be built to house 1,000 students by demolishing the existing Shahnewaz Hostel, currently occupied by male students from the Fine Arts faculty.
At Sufia Kamal Hall, two new buildings – one 10-storey and one 6-storey – will replace the current house tutor quarters and garage to accommodate 600 female students.
To house an additional 500 students, a 10-storey building will be constructed at Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall, replacing the provost’s bungalow and the three-storey Shikder Manowara Building.
Two more buildings – 11 and 8 storeys – will be built inside the Institute of Leather Engineering and Technology, replacing existing staff quarters, to accommodate another 600 female students.
For male students, the project includes dormitories to house 5,100

students with necessary facilities.
As part of the expansion of Shaheed Sergeant Zohurul Haque Hall, two new buildings – 12 and 8 storeys – will be constructed, replacing tin-shed extensions, to house 1,300 students.
The northern section of Surja Sen Hall will be demolished to make way for an 11-storey building accommodating 1,100 students.
At Shahidullah Hall, the Shaheed Ataur Rahman Khan Khadim Building and cafeteria will be replaced by two new blocks of 15 and 6 storeys to accommodate 1,200 students.
Haji Muhammad Mohsin Hall’s existing tin-shed and one-storey structures will be replaced with two new buildings of 12 and 6 storeys to house 1,000 students.
At Dr Kudrat-E-Khuda Hall, three new buildings of 10, 8, and 5 storeys will be built by demolishing the hall’s existing bungalow.
As part of the renovation masterplan, the Milkhet Police Outpost and the existing Press Building will be demolished to construct a new Press Cum Academic Building, comprising 11 and 5-storey structures.
An expansion project of the Dhaka University Central Library is underway, including the construction of two new blocks – 12 and 6 storeys – by demolishing the northwestern section of the current library.
The university’s one-storey central mosque, Mashzidul Jamia, will also be demolished and replaced by a four-storey complex.
Additionally, a six-storey building will be constructed for the medical centre, along with new residential facilities in the Shibbari area for fourth-class university staff.
Titled “Further Development of Dhaka University,” the five-year initiative under the education ministry marks the first phase of a 15-year, three-phase masterplan.

BNP ready

FROM PAGE 3
solution for the country.
In response to a question, Khosru pointed out that India and Vietnam are Bangladesh’s direct competitors in the international garment export market. If Bangladesh fails to reach a solution regarding the tariffs, these countries will gain a significant advantage in exporting to the US, which is a matter of great concern for local exporters.
He warned that Bangladesh cannot afford the risk of millions of job losses, the closure of industrial factories, and the collapse of thousands of backward linkage industries due to unresolved tariff issues.
Business leaders including BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan, BKMEA President Mohammad Hatem, former FBCCI President AK Azad, Chairman of Apex Tannery Ltd Syed Nasim Monzur, Chairman of Bangladesh Chamber of Industries Anwar-ul-Alam Chowdhury Parvez, and Chairman of Pran-RFL Group Ahsan Khan Chowdhury were present at the meeting.

One in five adult

FROM PAGE 3
show that 30 percent have the virus, with 20 percent confirmed to have active infections through PCR testing.
A project is underway to treat 100,000 infected individuals, with a goal to reach 50,000 by 2026. Treatment costs average Tk 90,000 per patient.
Dr Jahan also warned of rising infections among locals.
“We found a 2.3 percent infection rate among Bangladeshis in Ukhiya and Teknaf, against the national average of 1.1 percent,” he said.
He stressed the importance of awareness about safe medical practices – proper blood screening, disposable syringes, and single-use razors.
Shamsul Islam, a Camp 8W resident who arrived from Maungdaw in 2017, has been on Hepatitis C medication for a month. His wife also tested positive. He blamed reused syringes and shared blades in Myanmar.
Outside the MSF hospital, Nabi Hossain expressed concern after his mother-in-law and brother-in-law both tested positive.
“We’re now worried for

our three daughters and one son,” said his wife, Tahera. “Hepatitis is being detected in every house – it’s frightening.”
During a visit to the MSF treatment centre in Camp 8W, this correspondent saw volunteers conducting rapid diagnostic tests on all adults. Positive cases are sent for PCR testing, with results available the next day. Treatment starts immediately for confirmed infections.
Dr Wasim, health coordinator at MSF, said those with low infection levels undergo 12-week treatments, while those with higher levels require 24 weeks. Between 2020 and 2024, MSF tested 30,000 adults in the camps, identifying 17,000 positive cases. Over 10,000 have completed treatment, with a 95 percent success rate.
MSF now plans to treat another 30,000 patients over the next year through three hospitals serving nine camps.
Dr Wasim underscored the need for safe blood transfusions, single-use syringes, and hygienic shaving practices to curb the virus’s spread among both Rohingyas and locals.

Arrest warrant issued

FROM PAGE 3
a probe report before the tribunal against them after an investigation into the case.
The case was filed on February 15, 2022, by Barrister M Sarwar Hossain accusing Naem, Moynal, and Borhan; and the admin, narrator, video maker and technician of the Facebook page called Viral Protidin.
This arrest warrant was issued despite a declaration by Law Adviser Asif Nazrul that all cases under the DSA have been withdrawn.
Dr Nazrul made the statement while speaking at a roundtable on June 27.
Again, in November last year, while addressing the DRU-Desh TV Best

Reporting Awards, Asif Nazrul announced that with the repeal of the DSA, all speech-based offence cases would be dismissed automatically.
He reiterated the same later that month, declaring that speech-offence cases under the repealed Cyber Security Act would be withdrawn.
According to the case documents, Naem and Moynal on September 7 and 8, 2021, published two reports on the complainant in Bangladesh Pratidin which contained “false, defamatory, offensive and objectionable information”.
Borhan, on September 8 that year, published a report about the

complainant on his online portal, containing the same information.
Eight videos, which contained false, defamatory, offensive and objectionable information about the complainant, were published and circulated by the Facebook page, according to the case statement.
The seven accused published false and offensive information against Sarwar as he took part in the no-confidence petition against the final report that cleared Bashundhara Managing Director Sayem Sobhan Anvir from charges of abetting suicide of a college student, the case statement added.

EC invites applications from local

FROM PAGE 4
previously enlisted for the January 7, 2024 national election.
Under the new policy, organisations registered under Bangladeshi law and actively working to promote democracy, good governance, and human rights are encouraged to apply.
Registered organisations will be authorised to observe national and local elections for a five-year term.
Applicants must fill out Form EO-1 and submit it to

the EC Secretariat’s senior secretary by the deadline. The form is available at the EC’s public relations office (Room 105) and on its website (www.ecs.gov.bd).
To be eligible, an organisation’s constitution must have a constitution that includes a clear commitment to raising public awareness about free and fair elections.
Organisations will be disqualified if their chief executive or any board member is directly involved with a political party or plans to contest an election

during the application period. A sworn affidavit confirming non-affiliation with any political party must be submitted with the application.
Applications will also be rejected if the organisation’s name is identical or similar to that of another national, international, or regional organisation in a way that could cause public confusion.
In such cases, a no-objection certificate from the concerned entity must be provided.



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Gazipur-1705, Bangladesh
Website: www.bou.ac.bd

বাউবির দীক্ষা: সবার জন্য উন্মুক্ত কর্মমুখী, গণমুখী ও জীবনব্যাপী শিক্ষা

Ref. No. BOU/E&E/28(448)/2025/222

Date: 24/07/2025

e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders is invited through e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by University Engineer, Bangladesh Open University, Gazipur-1705 for the procurement of work, which will be available at e-GP website from 30.07.2025, on 10.00am.


Sl No.	Tender ID, Ref. No. & Package No.	Name of work	Last selling date & time	Tender closing date & time date
01	Tender ID: 1132930 Ref. No. BOU/EE/Reno./SOE/26/2025-2026 Package No. 26	Renovation & Tiles work in Toilet room of School of Education at BOU Campus, Gazipur-1705	Date: 17/08/2025 Time: up to 14.00pm	Date: 18/08/2025 Time: at 14.00pm

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


The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents can be deposited online through any bank's branches as per tender notice.

Sd/-
Engr. Md. Shahriar Sahan
University Engineer
Bangladesh Open University
Phone: 02996691121

GD-1663



Research & Innovation Center (RIC)
Gopalganj Science and Technology University (GSTU)
Enhancing Digital Government and Economy (EDGE) Project
Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC)
Information and Communication Technology Division
Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications, and Information Technology



Issue No. ICT/BCC/EDGE/RIC/GSTU/AA/01/2025/July-80


Date: 27/07/2025

Retender Notice (OTM)

e-Tender has been invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the tender. Details are as below:

Sl.	Tender ID	Procurement title	Tender document last selling date and time	Tender closing and opening date and time
01.	1134063	Supply of Goods and Equipment for the Establishment of a Hygienic Bulk Roti-Making Machine.	06-Aug-2025, 15:30	07-Aug-2025, 14:30
02.	1134060	Supply & Installation, Fitting & Fixing of FRP Disaster base Biogas Plant integrated with IoT based smart monitoring system and machine learning based operation	06-Aug-2025, 15:50	07-Aug-2025, 14:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


Dr. Md. Abdullah Al Asad
Chief Coordinator
RIC-GSTU
Mobile: 01719934193

GD-1659

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
EDUCATION ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
KUSHTIA.
Website: eed.kushtia.gov.bd

Memo No: EED/Kush/329-TSC/2025-26/02

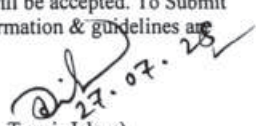
Date: 27/07/2025

e-Tender Notice No: 02/2025-26
Open Tendering Method


This is to notify all concerned that e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of following works. Details are given below:

SL No	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of Work	Document Last selling (Date & Time)	Tender Closing (Date & Time)
01	1134065	WD-296	Construction of 5-Storeyed Academic Cum Workshop With 04-Storeyed Administrative Building in/c. Sanitary, Electrification & Site Development and Installation of Deep Tube-well Including Under Ground Water Reservoir (Foundation Type: Shallow Foundation) at Kumarkhali Govt. Technical School & College, Kumarkhali, Kushtia.	25-Aug-2025 16:00	26-Aug-2025 13:00

The interested persons/firms may visit website (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) to get the details of the Tender. This is an Online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no Offline/Hard copies will be accepted. To Submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information & guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP Helpdesk; (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


(Md. Tanvir Islam)
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Kushtia.
Email: ee_kus@eedmoe.gov.bd

GD-1661



Bangladesh Bank
Common Services Department-1
(Equipment Section)
Head Office
Dhaka-1000
Website: www.bb.org.bd

Invitation for Tenders

Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka				
1	Procuring entity name	Bangladesh Bank		
2	Procuring entity code	Not used at present		
3	Procuring entity district	Dhaka		
4	Invitation for	Procurement of Original HP Black Print Cartridge (280A) for HP Laser Jet Pro 400 M401dn Printer of Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka		
5	Invitation Ref No.	CSD-1(Equip)69(9)/2025-07		
6	Date	27/07/2025		
KEY INFORMATION				
7	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method		
FUNDING INFORMATION				
8	Budget and source of funds	Own source		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
		Date		
9	Tender publication date	27/07/2025		
10	Tender last selling date	Not applicable		
		Date	Time	
11	Tender closing date and time	11/08/2025	03:00pm	
12	Tender opening date and time	11/08/2025	03:30pm	
13	Name & address of the office(s)	Address		
	- Receiving tender document	BB website		
	- Opening tender document	Common Services Department-1, 6th Floor. Annex-2 Building. Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
14	Brief eligibility of tenderer	Tenderers having 5 years overall business experience and minimum specific experience as Supplier in supply of similar Goods of at least 2(two) contract(s) of similar nature successfully completed within the last 3 (three) years		
15	Brief description of goods or works	Supply of 200 (Two hundred) PCs Original HP Black Print Cartridge (2804) for HP LaserJet Pro 400 M401dn Printer of Bangladesh Bank, Head Office		
16	Lot No.	Identification of lot	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)
	1	Original HP Black Print Cartridge (CF280A) for HP LaserJet Pro 400 M401dn Printer	CSD-1	Tk. 80,000.00
				Completion time in weeks/months from the date of contract signing/Award of Contract
				8 weeks
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
17	Name of official inviting tender	Swapan Kumar Goswami		
18	Designation of official inviting tender	Director		
19	Address of official inviting tender	Common Services Department-1, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka		
20	Contact details of official inviting tender	Tal: 9530148	Fax: 95301.20	E-mail: swapan.goswami@bb.org.bd
21	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all Tenders or annul the Tender proceedings			

DCP: 48/2025-1893
Date: 27-07-2025

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।


Swapan Kumar Goswami
Director (CSD-1)
Phone: 9530148
E-mail: swapan.goswami@bb.org.bd

GD-1666

Sandwip and the collapse of Portuguese ambition

Despite lying in the most cyclone-prone area of Bangladesh, the growing Bay trade from the end of the 16th century—especially the salt trade—made Sandwip’s maritime outlet an attractive trans-shipment hub for all. Even when the trade telescoped back into a coastal network, in 1838 some 500,000 maunds of salt were imported into the Dhaka region from Bhalwa, Sandwip, and Chittagong in no fewer than 160 sloops. Maghs and Chinese from Arakan’s southeast coast engaged in this trade.

RILA MUKHERJEE

In his analysis of the *Estado da Índia*, which was the official name of the Portuguese Empire, George Winius distinguished between the formal administration by the Estado’s headquarters at Goa over overseas possessions and the ‘informal empire’, which he called the ‘shadow empire’, that the Portuguese established in the Bay of Bengal. The shadow empire was a unique experiment carried out by sailors, merchant adventurers, pirates, and missionaries, with little formal sanction either from Goa or from Portugal.

The general perception of this informal/shadow empire is that it was formed of renegades. But Sanjay Subrahmanyam saw many of the ‘minor’ settlements of the informal empire as commercially very dynamic. The informal empire was surprisingly successful in extending trade from the Bay of Bengal to Melaka, Macau, and beyond. The careers of Domingos Carvalho and Manuel de Matos, which we have already outlined, that of Filipe de Brito de Nicote, the subject

Bengali vocabulary at this time.

However, many of these renegade Portuguese maintained contact with official Portuguese representatives, and they had the possibility of reintegrating into Portuguese society through pardons granted by the Portuguese authorities. Distinguishing oneself in a trading or political capacity was a sure-fire path to a pardon. At the beginning of the 17th century, the Bengal-based Portuguese supplied information and services that were crucial for territorial conquest. This reveals the importance of communication channels that were maintained between the official and non-official realms. In 1602, Domingos Carvalho and Manuel de Matos tried to take advantage of this factor in their conquest of Sandwip. Situated close to Chittagong, this island was ideally located to attack the city and permit entry into southeast Bengal.

The Coastal Dynamic

At the centre of the Meghna estuary, Sandwip lay in a harsh and unforgiving land. Bengal’s rivers are notorious for changing course almost overnight; this ensured that



Image 1: A Portuguese man, assumed to be de Brito, atop an elephant, c. 1600.

held separately from the political powers based in the interior. Some amount of negotiation with political authorities over the coast was inevitable. This would lead to friction, as we shall see.

Sandwip’s Growing Importance

Despite lying in the most cyclone-prone area of Bangladesh, the growing Bay trade from the end of the 16th century—especially the salt trade—made Sandwip’s maritime outlet an attractive trans-shipment hub for all. Even when the trade telescoped back into a coastal network, in 1838 some 500,000 maunds of salt were imported into the Dhaka region from Bhalwa, Sandwip, and Chittagong in no fewer than 160 sloops. Maghs (ethnic Arakanese) and Chinese from Arakan’s southeast coast engaged in this trade.

More than Chittagong, Sandwip was commercially important to Portugal at the end of the 16th century. Chittagong was frequently under Arakan’s control, but Dianga—Chittagong’s neighbouring port—was a notorious slave port with a small Portuguese settlement.

Portuguese-held Sandwip, functioning as a rival entrepôt (which Arakan destroyed only in 1617), was a key reason for Chittagong’s slow development under Arakanese administration.

Historian Michael Charney identified Sandwip’s commercial potential and strategic location as obstructing Chittagong’s trade at this time, thereby making Sandwip significant to both Portugal and Arakan. Jesuit chronicler Fernão Guerreiro estimated that, at the beginning of the 17th century, Sandwip had 60 Portuguese trading ships, compared to 30 at Mrauk U—the inland port capital of Arakan—and just ten at Chittagong.

in the Bay, with Syriam as the centre and chief port.

However, in 1607, the Portuguese were driven out of Dianga, the most important settlement after Chittagong. To stem the decline, Philip II sought to end the casual nature of Portuguese settlements along the Bay. In a letter dated 26 March 1608, he stated his purpose: “... and how I considered it convenient to grant jurisdiction to Filipe de Brito, its captain [of Syriam], to reduce to my obedience the Portuguese that are in Bengal.”

We have covered the first phase of Sandwip’s unique history from 1590 until 1603; let us now examine its second phase.

Sandwip 1603–07: Pivot between Lisbon, Syriam, Mrauk U

The career of de Brito (Image 1) shows that Philip II of Portugal was contemplating an end to the informal empire in the Bay. De Brito, in service under Arakan’s Min Razagyi from 1599, had by 1602 carved out a state for himself in the area stretching from the east of Chittagong, through a portion of Arakan, into Syriam (now known as Thanlyin), Lower Pegu, and Martaban. This made him an enemy of Arakan.

In 1602, Viceroy Saldanha married his niece to de Brito and appointed him commander of Syriam and general of the campaign for conquering Pegu. De Brito subsequently received the crown of Pegu ‘in the name of the King of Spain and Portugal’. Sandwip, by virtue of its location, became crucial to de Brito’s plans for expansion. Image 2 shows the places linked with de Brito’s small empire and their proximity to Chittagong–Sandwip.

The Lower Burma ports traded with ports such as Sandwip via the coastal route. This route is shown in

undertaking to bring the Portuguese renegades living there back into the service of the *Estado*. In a letter to the king of Portugal, he suggested that he should seize control of southeast Bengal and build a fort at Chittagong, which would allow him to bring the Portuguese desperados under Goa’s control. He became busy not only defending the new Portuguese possessions against neighbouring princes with force and diplomacy, but also in planning to expand the Portuguese empire in the Bay. His project envisaged making Syriam the main port of call in Burma, and Sandwip a subsidiary port to supplement Syriam’s activities.

He insisted to the king of Portugal that Syriam be well fortified and provided with men and ships, with which he could force all navigation between India and Melaka to stop at Syriam and pass through the Custom House there, bringing huge benefits to the Portuguese treasury. To this effect, he requested the king to issue necessary orders to Portuguese merchants to call at Syriam; the rest of the ships he would force with the fleet at his disposal. He also patrolled the Bay to stop smuggling and thereby enrich his (and Portugal’s) coffers.

To de Brito, the possession of a Portuguese enclave in the Bay was necessary for the *Estado*, not only because the monsoon system made it very convenient for shipping, but also because such a site was full of commercial advantages. But these plans were difficult to implement, and in 1605 de Brito faced a joint Arakan–Toungoo (Burmese) campaign to recapture Syriam. The campaign failed, but the wars against Arakan were taking their toll. Whether he could bring southeast Bengal under his control remained doubtful. In 1607, Arakan’s Min Razagyi attacked Syriam again, but the siege was inconclusive and left de Brito still in control.

But his grand schemes ultimately failed. The Portuguese king eventually did not support de Brito’s plans for the takeover of Sandwip. Nor did the Viceroy at Goa. De Brito never ruled over Sandwip.

Tragically, de Brito never received the support of Lisbon during his lifetime. Orders were sent by the king on 15 March 1613 for all Portuguese ships trading in the Bay to stop at Syriam and pay taxes, but by the time the letter reached, the Burmese had killed de Brito in Syriam.

Sandwip Abandoned

De Brito and his schemes were not universally welcomed, and his plans for expansion into Bengal were challenged by the Portuguese at Dianga. In 1607, they advised the Arakan king against handing over Sandwip to him. Although the Dianga Portuguese were chased out by Arakan that same year, this complicated the plans for the *Estado*’s acquisition of Sandwip. Manuel de Matos, sometime administrator of half of Sandwip’s revenues and leader of the Dianga Portuguese, died at Dianga in 1607 when Arakan attacked the settlement. Fateh Khan, a Muslim officer of Pero Gomes—to whom Matos had entrusted Sandwip in his absence—now decided to take control of the island.

Gomes appears to have been a very poor administrator, since the king refers to him as a ‘vile man of less substance than that of the conquistadores’. He told the Viceroy of India, Dom Francisco d’Almeida, that he should consider administering Sandwip directly if Matos continued to leave Gomes in a position of authority.

Usurping power from the unpopular Gomes, Fateh Khan had all 30 Portuguese traders on Sandwip, as well as their families, killed. All of the native Christians and their wives and children were also killed. Fateh Khan then raised a garrison of ‘Moors’ and Pathans and created his own fleet of 40 ships, which he maintained with the revenue from the prosperous island.

Fateh Khan felt he had a mission, and he displayed it prominently on his flag: ‘Fateh Khan, by the grace of God, Lord of Sandwip, shedder of Christian blood and destroyer of the Portuguese nation’. In the same year, Min Razagyi made a pact with the Dutch to hand over Sandwip to them. Affairs at Sandwip were now in chaos. At this point entered Sebastião Gonçalves Tibau, a salt trader who had come to Sandwip. Sandwip now became the site for the career of this extraordinary adventurer—but one with far less talent than de Brito. This would form the third and final phase of Sandwip’s unique history.

Rila Mukherjee is a historian and the author of *India in the Indian Ocean World* (Springer, 2022).



Image 2: Bellin’s map of the Kingdom of Siam, Indo-China, Pegu, Ava, and Arakan, 18th century.

Historian Michael Charney identified Sandwip’s commercial potential and strategic location as obstructing Chittagong’s trade at this time, thereby making Sandwip significant to both Portugal and Arakan. Jesuit chronicler Fernão Guerreiro estimated that, at the beginning of the 17th century, Sandwip had 60 Portuguese trading ships, compared to 30 at Mrauk U—the inland port capital of Arakan—and just ten at Chittagong.

of this article, and the career of Sebastião Gonçalves y Tibau, which we will examine later, show that these settlements lay somewhere in between ‘formal/informal’ and ‘major/minor’. Sandwip’s distinctive position as a minor, disputed island sheds new light on Portuguese ‘informal’ expansion in the northern Bay of Bengal.

Genesis of the Informal Empire

During the viceroyalty of Lope Soares de Albergaria (1515–18), private Portuguese interests paralleled official attention to the Bay. Men were allowed to leave official employment to seek their fortunes and conduct activities far from the reach of the Estado. Many thus left the Arabian Sea region, where Goa was situated and which was the area of official Portuguese activity, and went over to the Bay of Bengal region. Over time, others followed the same path after completing their service to the Portuguese crown, preferring to become rebels in relation to Portuguese authorities, or to settle in Asian territories rather than return to Portugal.

Bengal was one such territory, with bands of Portuguese men and communities of Luso-Indians born of unions with local women. Estimates from the end of the 16th and the middle of the 17th century suggest the presence of between 2,000 and 3,000 such people—merchants, pirates, and mercenaries in the service of local rulers. Jan Huygen van Linschoten saw these people as living “in a manner like wild men, and untamed horses, for that every man doth there what hee will, and every man is Lord,” i.e., they were not subject to any law or political power. Portuguese words like *almari*, *istri*, *ispat*, *chabi*, *balti*, *botam*, *janala*, *perek*, *alpin*, *toalia*, etc., entered the

few had succeeded in controlling this hostile land. But this demanding coast, patterned by creeks and inlets through which rivers emptied into the sea, was a positive factor in Portuguese expansion. Other than the local rulers, the unofficial Portuguese, designated *feringi*, were the first to try to patrol this land’s many waterways. Their informal empire was based on small islands and *chars* (sandbanks) in the marshy delta, with river channels providing the main means of communication. The many inlets and quick exit points through labyrinthine channels served as relay stations and stopovers to support plundering campaigns and provide supplies, as well as to permit ambushes.

The Portuguese operated with local support from bases in southeast Bengal, often as pirates but also hoping to participate in the local trade, including the slave trade. They benefited not only from the existence of the fluvial communication network, but also from an abundance of wood, which encouraged boat building. They profited from the numerous islands in the region, and tried at times to become de facto rulers of small, uninhabited but strategically located islands. The distinctive topography thus dictated sailing patterns which were largely coastal in nature.

Bengal’s dense fluvial network, resembling a high-tension spider’s web, therefore saw intense navigation facilitating contact between the coast and the interior. Because the northern Bay was subject to vicious cyclones, river ports with sheltered harbours were the norm, rather than open sea ports. Such a location meant a robust, effective, and durable relationship with the hinterland. River ports could not be

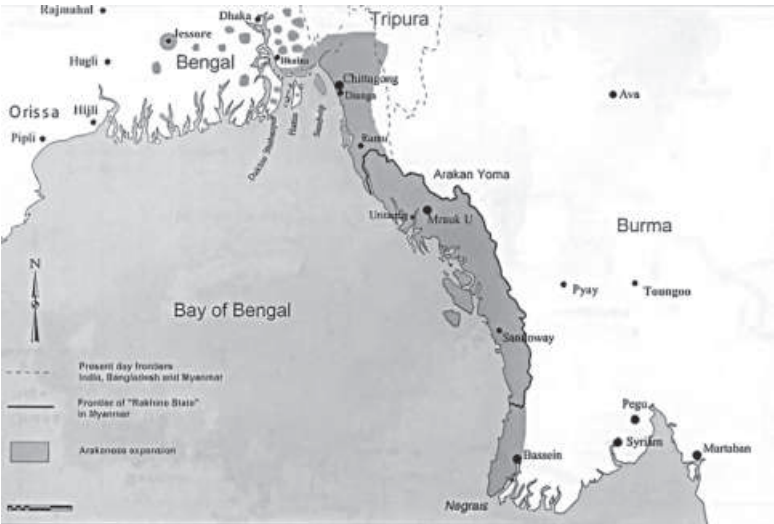


Image 3: The northern Bay coast, c. 1630, from Jacques Leider, *Le Royaume d’Arakan* (2004).

What was the significance of Sandwip to Portugal at a time when its expansion in the Bay was faltering? In Philip’s orders to the adventurer Filipe de Brito de Nicote dated 23 January 1607, Sandwip’s importance to the Portuguese was clearly underlined: “And because the conquest of Pegu and the island of Sundiva has the importance that you know, I charge you dearly with doing for them everything in your power...” Also, the king needed funds to finance Portuguese expansion. Chittagong’s treasure—which he referenced in a letter dated 20 February 1610—was considered worth taking.

De Brito’s career illustrates the different roles that Dianga and Sandwip played in Portuguese designs: Dianga was a slave and pirate port, while Sandwip, under de Brito, was to be part of a grand scheme of official Estado expansion

Image 3, which is a modern rendering of the coast as it was circa 1630. Because cyclones wreaked havoc on this coast, a safe haven like Sandwip was necessary.

Of a storm on the Burma coast in 1566–67, the Italian traveller Cesare Federici wrote:

‘Wherefore in this Shippe we departed in the night, without making any provision of our water: and wee were in that Shippe fowr [four] hundreth and oddde men: wee Departed from thence with Intention to goe to an I[s]land to take in water, but the windes were so contrary, that they wouldnt suffer us to fetch it, so that by this meanes wee were two and forty Dayes in the Sea as it were lost, and wee were driven too and fro...’

De Brito was promised jurisdiction over Bengal in return for his



PHOTO: REUTERS

Defiant India draw epic Manchester Test

From two for nought in the very first over to putting on a masterful batting display, India frustrated England till the end to draw the Manchester Test on Sunday and keep the five-match series alive. Record-breaking skipper Shubman Gill scored his fourth century of the campaign before Ravindra Jadeja and Washington Sundar also made hundreds. India batted over five sessions to save the game, ending with a satisfying result in the end -- especially after England skipper Ben Stokes wanted to call it a draw at the start of the final hour, only to be refused by milestone-approaching Jadeja and Sundar. England lead the series 2-1, with the final game to start on July 31 at the Oval.

- India ended their second innings at 425 for four in 143 overs, with Jadeja unbeaten on 107 and Sundar not out on 101.
- Sundar, who scored his maiden Test ton, scored India's 11th individual century in these four Tests, the joint-most for them in a series, alongside 11 against West Indies at home in 1978/79.
- Shubman Gill notched up a defiant century on the final day of the fourth Test, scoring 103 to become only the third captain in Test history to register four centuries in a single series -- joining Sir Donald Bradman and Sunil Gavaskar in an elite club.

BCB eyes NCL T20 performers for World Cup push

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is set to hold the upcoming NCL T20 tournament in September-October window before the BPL players' draft. Last year the tournament saw many younger players get an opportunity, and ahead of the T20 World Cup next year, it would be vital to remain on the lookout for talents.

Minhajul Abedin, BCB's head of programmes, believes that it would be ideal to approach the World Cup with a pool of 20 players. In that regard, he felt that the domestic T20 tournament would be a good gauge for performances.

The Tigers have won back-to-back T20I series against Sri Lanka and Pakistan. When asked what process would be required to find additions or better options for the current side, Minhajul

NCL four-day competition would begin from October 15 after the T20 tournament. This time, the tournament committee is thinking of including two foreign players -- a batter and a pacer -- in each side.



said: "It's difficult to say without the domestic T20 tournament taking place. If we get a few performers, we can build as they will have six months to prepare for the World Cup."

NCL T20 will be played from September 15 to October 4, BCB officials confirmed to The Daily Star. Three venues have been chosen and it is expected that sporting wickets will be on offer to better prepare players for major competitions. Meanwhile, proposals are being readied to add some variety and competitiveness to NCL's four-day first-class competition.

NCL four-day competition would begin from October 15 after the T20 tournament. This time, the tournament committee is thinking of including two foreign players -- a batter and a pacer -- in each side.

"From the technical committee, we will suggest this for the NCL longer-version," Minhajul told The Daily Star.

"We want the four-day competition to be more competitive and lively, which is why we will suggest these changes," he added, explaining why the NCL may see foreign players taking part for the first time.

There are, however, some predicaments to foreign players' availability during the October-November window as subcontinent players remain busy with their own domestic engagements during that time. BCL four-day competition is slated to begin in February next year and there is an ongoing discussion that a foreign team such as Sri Lanka 'A' or Afghanistan 'A' could play in the tournament as focus has shifted to improving the nature of domestic competitions across the board.

'Futsal was born in Bangladesh today'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh futsal team's newly appointed Iranian coach, Saied Khodarahmi, said that futsal was "born today in the country" as he addressed the media for the first time on Sunday, expressing hope to develop the sport.

The 59-year-old coach appears more focused on long-term futsal development in Bangladesh rather than immediate success in the upcoming Futsal Asian Cup Qualifiers, where Bangladesh is grouped with 13-time champions Iran, 76th-ranked Malaysia, and 97th-ranked UAE. The Qualifiers are scheduled for September 20-24 in Kuantan, Malaysia.

"It's my first visit to your country and I feel at home. My responsibility here is very tough," said Khodarahmi. "Today I want to ask the [BFF] president [Tabith Awal]: How many futsal stadiums does Bangladesh have? How many coaches, referees, and players? I think futsal was born in your country today -- congratulations to Bangladesh Football Federation."

"I may make mistakes -- inform me, and support us for improvement, not for failure. I promise to begin a long-term plan for 2026 if the [BFF] president agrees. Bangladesh futsal will become strong in South Asia," said Khodarahmi, who worked for five years in Myanmar's futsal system.

Although Bangladesh has played traditional men's football since its independence and introduced women's football in the 1990s, it lacks experience and infrastructure in futsal.



PHOTO: REUTERS

ENGLAND WIN SUCCESSIVE EURO TITLES

England's Chloe Kelly celebrates after scoring the decisive penalty in their win over Spain in the UEFA Women's Euro 2025 final in Basel, Switzerland, on Sunday. England beat Spain 3-1 in penalties after a 1-1 stalemate in the first 120 minutes to lift successive Euro titles, after winning their maiden trophy three years ago at home.

'Don't see young players coming thru in men's team'

Peter Butler, the successful coach of Bangladesh women's football team, bared all in a freewheeling interview with The Daily Star's Atique Anam. The former West Ham United midfielder spoke about his football methodology, plans for the future, the shortcomings of the federation, men's football, and the controversies he has found himself in. Following is the second and final part of the two-part interview:

The Daily Star (DS): After the 7-0 win against Bahrain in the Asian Cup Qualifiers, you had said you hoped people would finally notice women's football and that it's been all about men's football in Bangladesh. Would you elaborate that statement?

Peter Butler (PB): Honestly, what I've done has been groundbreaking. It's never been done before in women's football -- coming in, ripping it apart, facing controversy. That narrative has run its course now. I was never deterred.

With the men's team, I don't see young players coming through. Even when I ran the academy for four months, there were none being selected. As a coach, you have to be brave -- to pick young players, give them minutes, build a platform.

I think (Javier) Cabrera should be coaching the Under-23s and Under-20s. If you want a successful senior national team, the head coach should oversee youth programmes. I did it in Liberia -- it worked. Same in Botswana -- we reached 86th in FIFA rankings. But it's not easy.

DS: In Botswana and Liberia, you drastically reduced the squad's average age. Was that your ultimate aim?

PB: When I took over Botswana in 2014, the squad's average age was 27-29. Some were 35. One player -- Boitumelo Mafoko -- was 35 (33 in fact). He was a legend, super fit, lean. I ripped the squad apart, brought in young players from the U-20s and U-23s, and kept a few experienced leaders like Mafoko. They led by example.

DS: So, it's not all about age?

PB: Absolutely not. Age is just a number. It's about ability and attitude, on and off the

pitch. In Liberia too, a senior player told me, "Coach, if you need me as an impact sub, I'll do it. If you drop me, I respect it." That mentality is gold. The young players now excite me -- they are the future of this game.

DS: Talking about age and experience, you benched captain Sabina Khatun right after your very first match in 2024, against Chinese Taipei, and that caused quite a bit of backlash. What was the thinking behind this move?

PB: I couldn't play the system I wanted -- the type of football I wanted -- which was high intensity and high press. I couldn't include her in the team because she'd lost her legs. I'm very respectful of what she's done for the women's game in this country. I think she's been influential -- to a level. But if she had been willing to be an impact player, I could have involved her. She wasn't. So, I had to make a decision.

I've got no axe to grind. But what they did -- whatever it was -- was completely wrong. And they tried to take me on -- they took on the wrong person.

DS: So you're saying that the selection for the Asian Cup Qualifiers wasn't based on any sort of grudge?

PB: Oh no, never. I would never do that. The president asked me if I had a problem with bringing some of the girls back in. I said I'd take them into training, but they'd have to do fitness tests. I said I wanted Maria, I wanted Sheuli, I wanted Shamsunnahar, I wanted Monika, I wanted Ritu Porna, and I want Rupna.

DS: But the other seniors didn't even get to give the fitness test.

PB: No, they didn't, because they'd already

gone to Bhutan. But they weren't part of my plans.

DS: But before Asian Cup qualifiers, you did say Sabina could still play a part -- as an impact player or a mentor. And if Masura Parvin improved her fitness, there could be a chance.

PB: I think there was.

DS: Not anymore?

PB: No. You have to be realistic. Nabiran has really come to a level, and Kohati has come a long way. Sagorika, Tohura, Shamsunnahar, Trishna -- they're the new kids on the block. We have to acknowledge that.

DS: During the players' rebellion, there were allegations that you were very strict with the senior players and said things about them.

PB: Those were complete lies. No truth in any of it.

DS: But you did impose some restrictions -- like curfews and phone use?

PB: Yes. I wanted them in bed at a reasonable hour. Phones were collected -- no TikTok and all that. I told them to stay off social media. I never banned it, just told them to be sensible. I never did anything drastic.

DS: Let's talk about your football methodology. You have experimented with formation throughout your tenure. In the Asian Cup Qualifiers, you used 3-4-3 and 3-5-2 formations. In SAFF U-20s, you went back to four defenders. Which one is your preferred system?

PB: The only time I played a 3-5-2 was against UAE. It didn't fully work -- but there was a method behind it. I wanted to test their adaptability. My base formation is closer to a 4-1-4-1 or 4-3-3, depending on whether we're in possession or not. But I believe in exposing players to different systems. Systems don't make players; players make systems. I'm educating them to be flexible.

DS: How do you train your players for the high-line defence, knowing it can be a high-risk-high-reward approach?

PB: It takes a lot of work. We use positioning protocols -- like pressing triggers at 30 metres, the defensive "D," and the halfway line. It must be choreographed -- players must move in unison. You need forwards like Tohura, Shamsunnahar, Ritu, and Monika pressing aggressively. If the front doesn't press, the high line collapses. We drill this daily.

DS: But it can be counterproductive if defenders don't have the fitness that the system demands. In some matches in the qualifiers, especially towards the latter parts of the games, your defenders got easily outpaced by the opposition forwards.

PB: I disagree. I don't think we have a fitness issue at all. In fact, we often finish stronger than the other team. Sometimes games fall into what I call a "holding pattern," where both teams hesitate. That's not fatigue -- it's tactical. If we were unfit, we wouldn't





BUS RAPID TRANSIT LINE-3 Ecneec halts project revision, decides to probe

Revised proposal wants to extend deadline
to Dec 2029, raise cost to Tk 6,597.66cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Instead of approving the revised proposal for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Line-3 project on the Dhaka-Gazipur route, the government has decided to launch an investigation into the long-delayed scheme plagued by multiple issues and setbacks.

"We're in trouble with the Gazipur to Airport BRT project... The civil works are nearly complete. The plan was to have buses every three to five minutes, which requires a lot of buses. This unplanned mega project is beyond comprehension," Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud said yesterday.

"We've decided to investigate who made the original designs and how the feasibility study was done," he said after the meeting of the ECNEC (Executive Committee of the National Economic Council),

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



Due to a depression over the Bay, high tidal waves have caused erosion at several points along the Cox's Bazar beach. Over 1,000 jhau (tamarisk) trees along the beach have been uprooted. Efforts to prevent erosion placing geo-tubes have not worked in many areas in recent years. The photo was taken from Shaibal Point yesterday. PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUVO

Declare 'July Charter' or we stage sit in Says Nahid; Patwari's jibe at Babar sparks tension in Netrakona

STAR REPORT

National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam yesterday warned that if the "July Charter" is not declared by August 5, they will take position at the Central Shaheed Minar to realise the demand.

"We will return to Dhaka on August 3. We will not leave the Shaheed Minar [premises] without realising our demand [for the July Charter]," said Nahid while addressing a rally organised by the party's Sherpur district unit in the Raghunath Bazar area of Sherpur town yesterday.

He said the party wants the July Charter to bring about fundamental

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

BNP's income up 15 times in 2024

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) annual income saw a staggering surge in 2024, rising more than 15 times compared to the previous year.

The party earned over Tk 15.5 crore in 2024, a sharp increase from just over Tk 1 crore in 2023.

The BNP yesterday submitted its audit report for the 2024 calendar year (January 1-December 31) to the Election Commission.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

US, EU make trade deal

15% tariffs for European exports to US

REUTERS, Scotland

The United States struck a framework trade deal with the European Union yesterday, imposing a 15 percent US import tariff on most EU goods, while averting a spiralling battle between two allies that account for almost a third of global trade.

The announcement came after European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen travelled for talks with US President Donald Trump at his golf course in western Scotland to push a hard fought deal over the line.

"I think this is the biggest deal ever made," Trump told reporters after an hour-long meeting with von der Leyen, who said the 15 percent tariff applied "across the board".

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

DRIVE AGAINST OLD VEHICLES Transport leaders threaten strike from August 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transport owners and workers yesterday threatened to enforce a 72-hour nationwide strike from August 12 to press home their eight-point demand, including halting the ongoing crackdown on outdated vehicles and extending the economic lifespan of such vehicles by five to 10 years.

Leaders of three major associations -- the Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association, Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners' Association, and Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation -- made the announcement at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club.

Saiful Alam, secretary general of the Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association, read out a statement outlining their demands.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

EXTORTION ATTEMPT 4 SAD leaders placed on 7-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed four leaders and activists of Students Against Discrimination on seven-day remand in a case filed over extortion from the family of a former Awami League lawmaker in Gulshan.

The four are Ibrahim Hossain Munna, 24, SAD's Dhaka city unit convener; Abdur Razzak Riyad, 23, acting convener of the central

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



A Palestinian man, reportedly shot while seeking food aid at a distribution point run by the Israeli- and US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, is carried on a motorcycle in the Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Foreign debt servicing cost crosses \$4b

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's foreign debt servicing bill has crossed \$4 billion for the first time, marking a sharp rise in repayment pressure.

The country paid just over \$4 billion in the recently concluded 2024-25 fiscal year, a 21 percent jump from \$3.37 billion the year before, according to provisional data from the Economic Relations Division (ERD) released yesterday.

In local currency terms, the debt servicing cost surged 32 percent year-on-year to Tk 49,390 crore in FY25, which increased fiscal pressure on the government.

The growing strain of these repayments comes as Bangladesh receives less foreign assistance than in previous years,

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

Star INTERVIEW

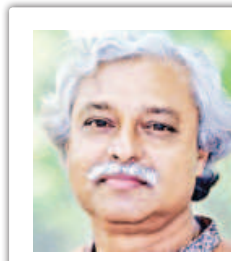
Reforms must be grounded in consensus, not imposed

Says CPB General Secy Ruhin Hossain Prince

MD ABBAS

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) General Secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince has warned that imposing controversial constitutional reforms without broad political consensus could not only derail the path to credible elections but also undermine the spirit of last year's mass uprising and the country's democratic aspirations.

"What we are witnessing now is a process that may delay, rather than advance, democratic transition. Many of the reform proposals, especially those concerning rewriting the constitution, run contrary to the ideals



of the Liberation War and are being pushed without a mandate," Prince told The Daily Star recently in an exclusive interview.

Prince said reforms must be part of a broader political consensus, not unilateral initiatives by the interim government.

"Reforms are not a one-day task. They are a continuous process. But without political consensus, no interim government should try to push through controversial changes."

He expressed concern over proposals that seek to alter the constitution's preamble by removing secularism and socialism while retaining Islam as the state religion

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

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COLD RUSH

Bangladesh's Ice Cream Boom

PRIYAM PAUL

The ice cream industry in Bangladesh has been undergoing a transformative boom, fuelled by rising disposable incomes, expanding urbanisation, and a growing middle class with a taste for indulgence. Once a seasonal luxury, ice cream is fast becoming a staple of year-round urban leisure, with brands racing to meet evolving consumer preferences.

Over the past decade, the market has witnessed remarkable growth, averaging around 15 percent annually. According to industry insiders, the market size now stands at approximately Tk 3,000 crore and is projected to reach Tk 5,000 crore by 2030, if current trends persist. Annual production hovers around 10 crore litres, reflecting an appetite that shows no signs of cooling.

Several factors contribute to this steady rise. As rural electrification improves and refrigerators become more common across households, consumption patterns are shifting. Consumers are increasingly opting for trusted national brands over small, unbranded local producers. Moreover, the desire for premium flavours and hygienically preserved products is on the rise, further cementing the popularity of well-established companies.

Rise of the Big Brands

Gone are the days when local, district-based producers dominated the scene. Today, brands like Igloo, Polar, Lovello, Savoy, Kwaliti, Za n Zee, and Bloop lead the industry with their nationwide distribution networks and investments in quality control,

branding, and cold chain logistics.

"Being a pioneer in the modern ice cream industry, Igloo places the highest priority on product quality," says ASM Mainuddin Monem, Managing Director of Igloo Ice Cream. "Over the past decade, Bangladeshi consumers have become more health-conscious, and Igloo has responded accordingly. We've also partnered with global companies such as YUM! Brands and Carl's Jr. to offer co-branded experiences."

These collaborations are not just branding exercises—they indicate the growing sophistication of Bangladesh's frozen dessert market, where international standards of taste, texture, and packaging are now the norm.

A Seasonal Sweet Spot

Despite its rapid growth, the ice cream industry remains highly seasonal. Summer months—particularly April, May, and June—account for nearly 60 percent of total annual sales. March, July, and August also record significant volumes. However, sales take a sharp dip during the winter months of December and January, making the industry sensitive to seasonal fluctuations in temperature.

Producers have long adapted their business models to this rhythm, deploying seasonal staff and tailoring marketing campaigns around the 'ice cream months'. Nonetheless, innovations in packaging and flavour variety are helping to expand consumption into off-peak periods.

Segments of Taste

The market is broadly divided into two key segments: impulse and family. The impulse category includes items such as cones, cups, and sticks—sold through ice cream carts and retail outlets. This category makes up approximately 70 percent of total sales.

SEE PAGE S2

BANGLADESH'S COOLEST LEGACY SINCE 1984



SWEET BEGINNINGS

In a land where sunshine reigns and celebrations are never complete without a sweet bite, one name has stood the test of time — Igloo.

A LEGACY REBORN

The journey of Bangladesh's most beloved ice cream began in 1964 under K. Rahman & Co. But it was after the Liberation War that Igloo truly found its heart. In 1981, visionary industrialist **Mr. Abdul Monem**, founder of Abdul Monem Limited (AML), took a bold leap and acquired the dormant factory. By 1984, Igloo was reborn with a mission to serve the nation something refreshingly world-class.

DRIVEN BY QUALITY

Mr. Monem's legacy was grounded in one powerful belief: "Whatever you produce, make sure it is of top-notch quality." This philosophy fueled Igloo's rise, as the brand used premium imported ingredients and global production standards, earning the love and trust of millions.

LEADING WITH PASSION

Today, Igloo is led by **Mr. A.S.M. Mainuddin Monem**, the current Managing Director of AML, who carries forward the same passion and integrity. Igloo's portfolio now boasts over 100+ product variants. With nationwide distribution across 64 districts and presence in over 50,000+ outlets, Igloo holds the leading market position with a dominant market share. Its excellence is consistently recognized, with eight Best Brand Awards and the Superbrands title for many years.

FUTURE-READY

Looking ahead, Igloo is embracing the future with confidence. A strong R&D team is preparing to introduce cutting-edge innovations, some never before seen in the region.

BEYOND ICE CREAM

From humble beginnings to industry leadership, Igloo is more than ice cream. A symbol of quality, joy and cool memories that only get sweeter with time.



8 BEST BRAND AWARD SINCE 2013-2024



IGLOO'S RECIPE FOR MARKET LEADERSHIP

Quality, Consistency, Innovation

ASM MAINUDDIN MONEM, Managing Director, Igloo Ice Cream



The Daily Star (TDS): How would you describe the current state of the ice cream market in Bangladesh?

ASM Mainuddin Monem (AMM): Currently, the ice cream market in Bangladesh is experiencing fluctuations due to the country's micro and macroeconomic environment, non-supportive regulatory policies, and untimely excessive rainfall. Despite these challenges, the ice cream industry in Bangladesh is progressing with an approximate compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 14.5%.

The current market size is estimated to be around BDT 3,200–3,500 crore annually. However, during super peak seasons, all local brands are unable to meet the required quantity demanded by consumers.

TDS: How has consumer preference for ice cream evolved in Bangladesh over the past decade, and how has your company adapted to meet those changing tastes?

AMM: Over the last few years, ice cream preferences in Bangladesh have shifted significantly—driven by rising incomes, increasing urbanisation, changing lifestyles, and the influence of global food trends.

In response, we at Igloo Ice Cream have remained steadfast in our commitment to ensuring the highest quality and consistency across all our offerings, while embracing innovation as a core driver of growth. Backed by rigorous R&D, our innovation efforts have

enabled us to introduce a diverse range of new products that cater to evolving consumer tastes. Products like Exotic, Kheer Malai, Icecafe, Doi, Blueberry Yoghurt, and Red Velvet reflect how our dedication to quality, consistency, and innovation continues to set us apart in the market.

TDS: With rising health consciousness among consumers, how is your company balancing indulgence with healthier options like low-sugar or dairy-free products?

AMM: As a pioneer in the modern ice cream industry, Igloo places the highest priority on product quality. Over the past decade, Bangladeshi consumers have become increasingly health-conscious, and Igloo has responded accordingly. We have also partnered with global companies such as YUM! Brands (a Fortune 500 company that operates Pizza Hut, KFC, Taco Bell, and Habit Burger & Grill) and Carl's Jr. to obtain compliance certifications for maintaining state-of-the-art hygiene and safety standards across our ice cream manufacturing processes.

As a first step, Igloo transitioned from using artificial colours to natural colours, even though the shift incurred nearly triple the cost. Following that, we made the decision to eliminate trans-fats from our products. While many manufacturers still use cheaper palm oil derivatives (palmitic origin), Igloo

exclusively uses lauric fats that contain no trans-fats.

Recognising the growing demand for sugar-free and vegan products, Igloo initiated extensive R&D efforts and is now close to finalising successful formulations. Although we have been producing and marketing sugar-free products for over 20 years, the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) recently decided to introduce a new standard for such products. As a result, we have temporarily suspended production until further guidance is received, which we expect shortly. Regarding vegan offerings, our valued consumers can expect to see exciting new developments in the market very soon.

TDS: What are the biggest operational challenges in producing and distributing ice cream in a tropical country like Bangladesh, especially outside major cities?

AMM: Ice cream is an extremely sensitive perishable item. From the production floor to the end consumer, it must be stored at -20 degrees Celsius throughout the entire process. Maintaining a consistent cold chain across all distribution channels is one of the most significant operational challenges we face. An uninterrupted cold chain is essential to preserving the correct shape, size, and taste of the product.

Once produced, ice cream is shipped

via freezer vans to our company depots or dealers across the country, where it is stored in cold rooms or freezers. From there, the products are transported—usually using insulated tri-cycle rickshaw vans—to retail stores, where retailers store them in freezers provided by manufacturers like us. This is the industry norm. However, even a minor temperature deviation at any stage can result in the consumer not receiving the product in its intended form. Therefore, we take every possible precaution to ensure the product is delivered as expected by our valued consumers.

In a tropical country like ours, where hot and humid conditions prevail for most of the year, maintaining the cold chain during handling and shipment poses substantial difficulties. Another challenge arises at the retailer level. Retailers often store products other than ice cream in the freezers, which violates the agreement set with them. This practice compromises the quality of the ice cream.

While electricity access outside metropolitan cities has improved considerably in recent years, load shedding remains common and severely impacts product quality. We typically experience natural calamities, such as cyclones, at least twice a year, which cause widespread power outages and result in significant product loss nationwide. Overall, we have to overcome

multiple challenges to distribute ice cream effectively across the country.

TDS: What are your expectations from the government to support the growth and improvement of this industry?

AMM: As a leading ice cream manufacturer, we have identified several regulatory issues that we believe should be reviewed and addressed to ensure the sustained growth of our industry:

- A separate HS Code should be introduced for the importation of raw materials and machinery specifically related to ice cream production.

- Business-friendly duty rates should be implemented, replacing the currently high duties on the import of raw materials.

- To sell ice cream, companies require sales-generating assets such as freezers. However, there is currently a 104% duty imposed on freezers (HS Code: 8418.30.00). Since there are no specialised ice cream freezer manufacturers in Bangladesh, a separate tariff line should be introduced for importing freezers exclusively for VAT-registered ice cream manufacturers.

- Ice cream is a milk-based product and contains added nutritional value. Given the significantly high production and distribution costs in the ice cream industry compared to others, the supplementary duty (currently 5%) imposed on ice cream sales should be withdrawn as soon as possible.

Bangladesh's Ice Cream Boom

FROM PAGE S1

Cones now account for around 40 percent of impulse sales, followed by sticks (30–35 percent), and cups. Interestingly, while cups previously led the category, cones have recently surged in popularity due to the variety of flavours and formats on offer.

The remaining 30 percent belongs to the family segment, typically comprising litre packs designed for home consumption. Within this, classic flavours like vanilla, chocolate, strawberry, and mango dominate, making up 70 percent of family sales. Dessert-style and premium value-added ice creams make up the remainder, a space where brands are experimenting with unique textures, toppings, and international flavour profiles.



Caramel, Mint, Mocha, and Red Velvet, we're committed to delighting customers."

Savoy has also entered the innovation race with its flagship 'Discone Ice Cream'—a fusion of taste, texture, and visual appeal. A Savoy spokesperson notes, "We always believed in Discone's potential. But seeing the audience champion it on their own—that's the real reward. They made it their own. They turned it into culture."

Chilled, but Dependent

Despite local manufacturing and distribution capabilities, the industry is heavily reliant on imported raw materials—nearly 95 percent of key ingredients and machinery are sourced internationally. Milk powder and milk fat come from Australia, New Zealand, and Europe, while chocolate and vegetable fat are mostly imported from Malaysia. Stabilizers, flavourings, natural colours, and nuts are procured from Europe, and packaging materials arrive from Thailand, China, and Turkey.

Locally sourced ingredients include liquid milk, sugar, and flour. This dependence on international supply chains makes the sector highly sensitive to global price fluctuations and foreign exchange volatility.

"High import duties on essential raw materials and equipment create unnecessary burdens," says Monem. "A separate HS Code should be introduced for ice cream-related imports, and more business-friendly duty structures are needed to support the industry."

Challenges and Opportunities

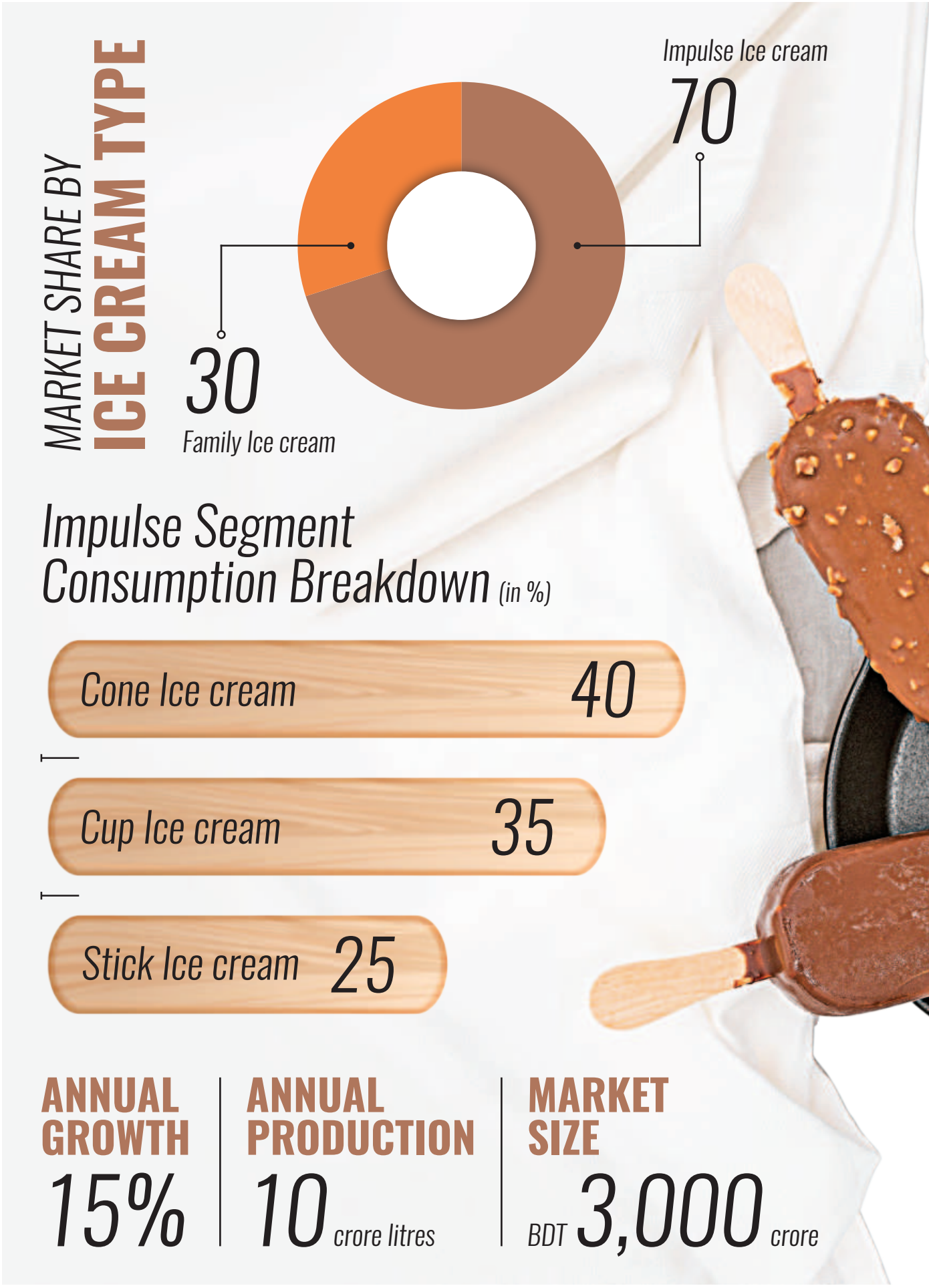
While the prospects are promising, the industry continues to face several challenges. Load shedding disrupts cold chain integrity, a shortage of skilled manpower hampers production efficiency, and underdeveloped transport networks limit access to remote markets. These structural issues, if addressed at the policy level, could unlock a new phase of growth for the industry.

With favourable government support, a stable energy supply, and continued consumer interest, Bangladesh's ice cream sector is poised to become a flagship example of how cold indulgence can drive hot profits—even in a tropical economy.

Innovation on the Menu

Innovation has become a key strategy for standing out in a competitive landscape. Polar, for instance, has led the way with creative launches under its Carnival cone series.

"Polar constantly evolves by listening to its consumers, exploring emerging trends, and delivering unique flavours and formats," shares an official from Polar. "From classic tastes like Malai and Doi to indulgent options such as Salted





FROM MALAI TO MOCHA A Taste Tour of Bangladeshi Ice Cream

AYMAN ANIKA

From schoolyard choc bars to tiramisu-infused gelato, ice cream in Bangladesh has undergone a full-blown identity crisis, but in the best way possible. What used to be predictable is now personal. The freezer isn't just cold storage anymore. It's a canvas of culture, memory, and mood.

And at the heart of this evolution are brands like Igloo and Polar, who've been shaping the nation's cravings for decades.

When the market gets hot, the ice cream gets smarter

Despite unpredictable weather and policy potholes, the ice cream business in Bangladesh is booming, growing at a rate that would make any economist do a double-take. But behind the scenes, the hustle is real.

"The market is facing serious fluctuations due to non-supportive regulatory policies and untimely excessive rainfall," says Sumit Chakraborty, AGM, Marketing at

Igloo Ice Cream. "Yet demand continues to rise, especially during peak seasons when even all the brands combined can't meet it."

That's not an exaggeration. Ice cream has officially outgrown its status as a seasonal treat. It's now an everyday indulgence, and the freezers can barely keep up.

Tastebuds are travelling: From malai to mint

Once upon a time, vanilla, strawberry, and chocolate had the stage all to themselves. Now? They're just the opening act.

Thanks to a new generation of flavour-hunters, the Bangladeshi palate has gone global without losing its roots. Today, you can walk into a corner store and grab a red velvet swirl, a doi-inspired gelato, or even something that tastes suspiciously like a chilled version of your grandma's shemai.

"We've introduced products like Exotic, Icecafe, Kheer Malai, and Blueberry Yoghurt to reflect evolving consumer tastes," says Chakraborty. "Innovation is our core."

Polar, too, is not just playing catch-up; they're setting the tempo. With flavours like Salted Caramel, Mint Mocha, and their Carnival hazelnut cones, they've taken Bangladesh's taste for novelty and spun it into joy. Their Robusto bar – a thick chocolate-coated stick – and Raffinato, a gelato-inspired premium line, are changing what it means to eat ice cream in a tropical country.

But don't be fooled. At their core, both brands still carry the flavours we grew up on – doi, kheer, malai – preserved not as nostalgia, but as pride.



Spoonfuls of guilt-free pleasure

Once upon a time, eating ice cream meant either enjoying it or feeling bad about it. Now you can do both. Or neither.

The modern consumer wants indulgence, but without compromise. Igloo has responded by eliminating trans fats, ditching artificial colouring, and developing vegan-friendly and sugar-free options – even if it means tripling their production costs.

"We've been offering sugar-free products for over 20 years," Chakraborty says. "And we're close to launching vegan ice creams, pending new BSTI standards."

Polar, too, has leaned into this shift with their dual-flavour litre packs and balanced formulas—clever combinations of value and variety for

families who want more choice without more sugar.

The result? A freezer aisle that feels like a wellness aisle with sprinkles.

Cold chains and hot headaches

But for every creamy, dreamy scoop, there's a war being fought backstage – a war against heat, humidity, and logistical chaos.

"Ice cream must be stored at -20 degrees Celsius from production to consumption," explains Chakraborty. "Even the slightest temperature deviation can ruin taste, shape, and customer trust."

In rural Bangladesh, this cold chain is a fragile miracle. Freezers double as storage for everything from fish to medicine. Load shedding doesn't ask for permission. Retailers

break protocol. Cyclones don't care about inventory.

That's why brands like Igloo and Polar are going heavy on infrastructure. In 2024, Polar moved its entire operation to a new state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Birulia, armed with European technology and built for scale. It's not just about making more—it's about making it last longer, taste better, and survive the heat.

The next flavour might surprise you
If you think you've seen everything ice cream can offer, brace yourself.

"Our R&D team is preparing to launch flavours the industry hasn't seen before," teases Chakraborty. "We're ready to surprise our consumers next season."

Polar echoes the excitement, hinting at more premium offerings and experimental combos. The message is clear: the war of the cones isn't cooling down anytime soon.

Ice cream is our love language

This isn't just about dessert. It's about who we're becoming as eaters, as dreamers, as Bangladeshis.

Ice cream in this country is layered with more than chocolate and syrup. It's layered with memory, mischief, and possibility. It's heritage in a stick. It's ambition in a tub. It's proof that something as simple as frozen cream can carry a nation's craving for comfort, innovation, and joy.

So, whether you're dipping your spoon into a familiar kheer malai or going rogue with tamarind sorbet, one thing's for sure—this is more than ice cream. This is who we are when we allow ourselves to feel good.

And that's a flavour we'll never stop chasing.



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STREET TREATS TO CAFÉ SEATS

Evolution of Ice Cream Culture in Bangladesh



PHOTO: COLLECTED FROM FACEBOOK

Local ice cream vans like these were a common sight throughout the 1990s, frequently stationed near schools and areas popular with children. They offered a variety of ice creams at affordable prices, typically ranging from as low as 50 poisha to BDT 1, 2, 3, or 5.

The distribution of ice cream in its modern form in Bangladesh can be traced back to the 1950s. In the early 1960s, Baby Ice Cream established an ice cream parlour in Dhaka's Gulistan.

MIPTAHUL JANNAT

There was a time in Bangladesh when the arrival of an ice cream van with its cheerful jingles meant pure joy. Children would run out clutching coins, eager to get their hands on a simple *kulfi* or a colourful popsicle. Today ice cream is no longer a street-side treat. It's an artisanal experience served in chic cafés, plated like gourmet desserts, and tailored to the Instagram generation.

The journey of ice cream in Bangladesh mirrors the country's own economic and cultural transformation.

What began as a seasonal indulgence sold from carts and roadside freezers has now become a year-round lifestyle product, backed by global influences, brand innovation, and evolving consumer expectations.

The humble beginnings

The distribution of ice cream in its modern form in Bangladesh can be traced back to the 1950s. In the early 1960s, Baby Ice Cream established an ice cream parlour in Dhaka's Gulistan, marking the first of its kind in the then East Pakistan. They also distributed ice creams in local areas and near schools through ice cream vans.

Following independence, branded companies like Igloo, Savoy, Kvality, and Polar began to dominate the market, though non-branded ice cream carts also remained popular in suburban and rural areas. "There was a popular stick ice cream we used to call *coconut malai*, which sold at just 2 poisha per piece in the 1970s," recalls Shamima, who was a schoolgirl at the time.

Since Baby Ice Cream eventually ceased production, Igloo remains the oldest operational ice cream brand in Bangladesh. Regarding the evolving nature of consumer preferences, Sumit Chakraborty, Marketing AGM of Igloo Ice Cream, shares, "Cup ice creams were widely popular once, but over the years we have observed a shift from cups to cones, which now capture the lion's share of the market."

Polar was established in 1987 as Dhaka Ice Cream Industries Ltd., introducing hygienically produced packaged ice cream to the market. "In 2009, the brand was relaunched with a fresh vision to spread happiness through delicious, quality ice cream

available to all," shares its company official.

Although Savoy has been around since 1950, the company was acquired by the Army Welfare Trust after independence. It was later revitalised by the Golden Group in 2014, which established a cutting-edge factory and expanded its product range.

Meanwhile, local vans continued to be a beloved part of neighbourhood life in the earlier days, offering ice cream at surprisingly low prices. These included locally made *kulfi*, coconut ice cream, and popsicles in a variety of vibrant colours. "Even in 1994, we could get a piece of coconut ice cream in exchange for two betel nuts. In taka, it cost about 50 poisha per piece," says Shahidul, who was a child at the time.

Enter the modern ice cream culture

Today, ice cream comes in all forms – cups, sticks, cones, sundaes, tubs, even ice cream cakes, and in every flavour imaginable, from plain vanilla to *kheer malai*, from the humble *jalpai* to exotic fruits like kiwi and peach. Ice cream is no longer bound by age, class, or season. It has become a thriving, innovative industry where tradition and trend coexist.

Dedicated ice cream cafés have replaced local vans, offering curated experiences to customers. Social media has played a transformative role in shaping how ice cream is perceived, especially among urban youth who crave unique visuals and flavours. Brands have quickly adapted to these changing tastes. And while the jingles of the old ice cream vans may have faded, their legacy lives on, in every colourful scoop, café table, and sweet memory made over ice cream.



Famous coconut ice cream from the 1990s, which used to be sold at eight annas (50 poisha) per piece.



Igloo Ice Cream van from the 1960s.

PHOTO: GEORGE WEBB / COLLECTED FROM FACEBOOK

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