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Rappers are not
being given the
respect they
deserve: Shezan

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The ICJ ruling
can boost Global
South's voice on
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It's time to
modernise our
air force

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Complete reforms in 2yrs after polls

Political parties urged in draft July Charter; their opinions sought

MD ABBAS

The National Consensus Commission has called on political parties to pledge to complete all constitutional and legal reforms to be outlined in the July National Charter within two years of assuming office through the next general election.

It has prepared a draft of the long-awaited charter and sent it to the parties, saying they must also commit to ensuring long-term sustainability of these reforms. The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the draft.

Additionally, parties are urged to recognise and "enshrine the historical importance of the 2024 anti-discrimination democratic movement and popular uprising in the constitution with due prominence".

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, the commission's Vice-President Prof Ali Riaz said they sent the draft to the political parties so that they can go through it and review the language.

"After the completion of the ongoing

- Parties must commit to ensuring long-term sustainability of reforms
- They are urged to recognise, enshrine July uprising in constitution
- Caretaker govt formation, upper house issues remain unresolved

talks, we will incorporate the issues, on which there will be consensus, into the charter," he said.

As the commission is expected to finalise the charter by July 31, it asked the political parties to send their opinions by tomorrow.

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July being used as a moneymaking machine: Umama

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former spokesperson for Students Against Discrimination (SAD) Umama Fatema yesterday alleged corruption among the platform's leaders.

She said she was "used like a tissue paper or a doormat" and claimed all key decisions came from Hare Road, where the government's advisers reside.

Umama made the remarks during a Facebook Live from her verified account early yesterday. She spoke about the circumstances under which she joined SAD as spokesperson and what she experienced afterward.

She served as spokesperson for SAD's first committee, formed in September last year following the July uprising. She left the committee and the platform altogether in June this year.

Umama was also one of the key coordinators during the uprising. Earlier, she served as member secretary of the Bangladesh Students Federation's Dhaka University unit, a post she left before joining SAD.

In the 2.20-hour-long video, Umama described her time with SAD as a "tragic



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Political parties are yet to agree on the appointment process for key constitutional and statutory bodies, including the Public Service Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission, and the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Despite 20 days in the second round of talks between political parties and the National Consensus Commission, the structure of the caretaker government system is still unresolved. Only three days remain before the commission's July 31 deadline for finalising the "July Charter" ends.

Yesterday, Jamaat-e-Islami proposed a new method for forming the caretaker government. For the chief adviser selection, the party suggested that if a unanimous decision cannot be reached by the proposed five-member committee, the panel members can go for open ballot rank choice voting system, a method where voters rank candidates in order of preference.

According to Jamaat, this approach would reduce the risk of "horse trading" and promote greater transparency.

Meanwhile, the BNP walked out of the consensus commission

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

The BNP walked out of the consensus commission dialogue session yesterday, protesting the tabling of appointment of Ombudsman and formation of three key constitutional bodies. The party rejoined the talks around 12:30pm.

CONSENSUS TALKS

Parties still split over caretaker, PSC, ACC setup

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP walked out of the consensus commission dialogue session yesterday, protesting the tabling of appointment of Ombudsman and formation of three key constitutional bodies. The party rejoined the talks around 12:30pm.

Govt set to reshuffle admin ahead of polls

1.5 lakh cops to be trained; 60,000 army personnel to be deployed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will carry out key administrative reshuffles ahead of the upcoming national election and will provide specialised training to around 150,000 police personnel to ensure proper execution of polls duties.

The decisions were made yesterday at a meeting, presided over by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, reviewing the law-and-order situation and preparations of law enforcement agencies for the election.

It was also decided that around 60,000 army personnel will be deployed to bolster election security.

"They will act primarily as a striking force to maintain law and order," Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam told reporters after the meeting at State Guest House Jamuna.

Army personnel have been active in the field since early August and have magistracy powers, he said, adding that with robust coordination between the army, police, and civil administration,

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FILE PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

INSIDE THE JULY UPRISING

Women led, the nation followed

TANGILA TASnim

With clenched fists and fierce voices, a group of fearless women stood before the locked gates of their residential halls on the night of July 14, 2024. There were no commands, no central leader — only rage and a deep sense of injustice. They broke through the gates and poured into the streets.

"Tumi ke, ami ke? Rajakar, Rajakar!" Their cry ignited a fire that swept across

Dhaka University's women's halls. Male students soon followed, rallying at the Raju Memorial Sculpture.

There was no script. Yet from Ruqayyah Hall to Eden College, from garment factories in Gazipur to campuses in Chattogram and Sylhet, women marched, shouted, shielded, and led — and led.

This was no ordinary student protest. The July 2024 uprising has come to be seen as a landmark in women-led resistance.

Across cities, women weren't just present — they were pivotal.

"When the former prime minister called us — ordinary students — traitors, my blood felt like boiling," said Nasrin Akhter, a master's student at Ruqayyah Hall. "That night, we made our own decision. We broke the locks of our hall gate and came out. I felt there was no room for silence anymore."

The breakout unleashed a tidal wave. By dawn, the movement had outgrown

campus walls.

On July 15, students from Eden, Badrunnesa, Dhaka College, and City College gathered at the Raju Sculpture. The ruling party's student wing, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), had a separate rally, but the general students stood their ground.

"They came at us with hockey sticks and knives," said Lamia Raihan, a third-year student at Eden. "We were unarmed, but

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JULY 29, 2024

Protesters return, undeterred

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

On July 29, 2024, the Awami League-led 14-party alliance recommended that the government ban Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing, Islami Chhatra Shibir, citing their alleged involvement in anti-state activities.

On the same day, the High Court expressed strong displeasure

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ON THIS DAY LAST YEAR

Protesters return, undeterred

FROM PAGE 1

at the Detective Branch (DB) of police for taking six coordinators of the quota reform protests to its office and staging a media interaction showing them being served food. Amnesty International also weighed in, urging the Bangladeshi authorities to end mass arrests and arbitrary detention of student leaders and protesters.

Despite heavy police presence and widespread crackdowns, quota reform protesters took to the streets across the country, including major demonstrations in Dhaka and Chattogram. Law enforcers, however, dispersed many of the gatherings and detained at least 80 people nationwide. In several areas, ruling party activists reportedly obstructed protests as well.

In Chattogram, police detained at least 10 students after breaking up a protest in the Jamal Khan area. Later, another group of students near Andarkilla Shahi Jame Masjid hurled brick chunks at police, prompting a response with rubber bullets and more tear gas.

In Dhaka, law enforcers detained at least 70 people from various locations. The previous night, coordinator Abdul Kader had announced via social media that demonstrations would be staged at eight points in the capital, including Science Lab, North South University Gate-8, Jatiya Press Club, BNS Centre in Uttara,

Mirpur-10, ECB Chattar, Rampura, and Mohakhali.

Protests continued outside Dhaka as well. At Jahangirnagar University, students demanded the unconditional release of all detained protest leaders. Several JU teachers joined the demonstration to express solidarity.

At Dhaka University, teachers under the banner of the Anti Repression Teachers' Rally gathered at Aparajeyo Bangla, calling for an immediate end to the harassment and mass arrests of students.

Hundreds of Rajshahi University students blocked the Dhaka Rajshahi highway from 12:20pm to 1:00pm, demanding justice for the deaths of fellow students and accountability for those responsible.

At Barishal University, at least 15 students were injured when Chhatra League activists allegedly attacked protesters near the administrative building around 2:00pm.

Meanwhile, the six detained protest organisers—Nahid Islam, Asif Mahmud, Abu Baker Majumder, Hasnat Abdulla, Sarjis Alam, and Nusrat Tabassum—remained in DB custody. Their families were allowed to meet them around 2:00pm. The Detective Branch claimed the detention was necessary "to ensure their security."

In a significant development, 74 eminent citizens—including academics,



FILE PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

A young man screams and shows his ID card to prove he is a student while being dragged away by a policeman in a motorcycle helmet during a demonstration in front of the Independent University in the capital's Dhamondi-2 on July 29, 2024.

human rights defenders, and lawyers—called for an independent, UN-led investigation into all deaths, injuries, and reports of torture related to the recent protests.

In a parallel move, a group of leading citizens formed a National Mass Inquiry Commission to investigate allegations of legal and human rights violations

during the crackdown. The nine-member body, co-chaired by Justice Md Abdul Matin and human rights advocate Sultana Kamal, was composed of lawyers, teachers, cultural figures, and guardians. The commission issued a public call for evidence and information to help uncover the truth behind the recent violence, deaths, and mass arrests.

Complete reforms in 2yrs after polls

FROM PAGE 1

The interim government formed the consensus commission on February 12, with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus as the chair, to advance and solidify the overall reform process through national consensus.

The commission initiated its second round of dialogue with political parties on June 2, aiming to develop the July National Charter that will outline reform proposals mutually agreed upon by participating parties through the discussions.

CONSENSUS ON 12 ISSUES

In the second round of discussions, the commission deliberated on 20 issues and reached consensus on only 12.

The issues that were not resolved include the formation of the caretaker government and appointment process of the chief adviser of the caretaker government, fundamental principles of state policy, appointment committee for constitutional and statutory bodies, formation process and structure of the upper house, women's seats in the parliament and election process of the president.

So far, parties have agreed that lawmakers will be allowed to vote across party lines, except on no-confidence motions and finance bills. Opposition MPs will chair at least four key parliamentary standing committees. An expert committee will be involved in the process of delimiting electoral constituencies. Permanent High Court benches will be set up in every division, and the presidential clemency power will be regulated through a law.

Parties also agreed that the most senior judge of the Appellate Division, based on duration in service, will be appointed as the next chief justice. However, if a political party explicitly states in its election manifesto its intention to appoint one of the two most senior judges and subsequently wins the election, it will be permitted to proceed with that appointment.

BNP Standing Committee member Salauddin Ahmed said, "We accept that the most senior judge will be appointed as the chief justice. However, we will submit a note of dissent. Our election manifesto will include the option of appointing one of the top two senior judges."

The parties agreed to amend the constitution to ensure that the declaration of a state of emergency

cannot be misused for political purposes. The amendment will also aim to prevent the suspension of fundamental rights during emergencies.

Political parties agreed that any constitutional amendment concerning the caretaker government system must secure a two-thirds majority in parliament, followed by a referendum. They also agreed to this two-step process for making any changes to the constitution's preamble, article 8 (on basic principles), article 48 (on appointment and powers of the president), article 56 (on appointment of the prime minister), and article 142 (on constitution amendment procedures).

The majority of political parties, excluding the BNP and its allies, agreed that a party chief should not be eligible to serve as prime minister. Parties opposing this decision can submit a "note of dissent" to be included in the national charter, widely referred to as the July Charter. The BNP, LDP, Labour Party, NDM, and the 12-party alliance opposed the separation of the posts.

Parties also unanimously agreed on a proposal to form the Election Commission through a five-member search panel that will include the Speaker, the deputy Speaker (from the opposition), the prime minister, and the leader of the opposition in parliament.

They agreed that no individual may serve as prime minister for more than 10 years in their lifetime. They supported another proposal to form an independent police commission.

DRAFT CHARTER

In the wake of the July uprising, a historic opportunity has emerged to reconstruct a democratic state, the draft said.

It said the people aspired to establish a democratic state through the Liberation War of 1971, rooted in the principles of equality, human dignity, and social justice. Yet, even after 53 years, that aspiration has not been fulfilled.

The development of democratic processes and culture has repeatedly faltered. Over the last five decades, democratic institutions have neither been built on solid foundations nor functioned effectively, even if they existed.

These institutions have been rendered dysfunctional and complicit in impunity through the institutionalisation of partisan

influence aimed at securing one-sided control and misuse of power within the state apparatus.

Since 2009, a partisan government has governed the state and gradually abandoned democratic values, taking on an authoritarian character. By violating human rights, committing enforced disappearances, killings, repression, and persecution of political opponents and critics through fabricated cases and attacks, they established a regime of anarchy and terror.

The entire state machinery was dedicated to authoritarian personality and group worship. Over a decade and a half, the authoritarian Awami League government distorted the constitution through amendments to consolidate power against public interest, enacted repressive laws, destroyed the electoral system, politicised the judiciary and public administration, and looted state resources through rampant corruption, said the draft.

It said over 1,400 unarmed citizens including women and children were killed during the powerful anti-discrimination movement led by students.

In exchange for their sacrifice, and through the collective strength and resistance of the people, the authoritarian rulers and their allies were ultimately defeated.

"Consequently, a deep public resolve has arisen to reconstruct the state structure. This has created a historic opportunity for state reform -- particularly fundamental constitutional changes, restructuring of the electoral system, the practice of democratic governance, the establishment of an independent judiciary, and a well-governed, accountable, and corruption-free government system -- which it is our sacred duty to utilise," the draft said.

Parties will need to sign the charter and pledge that they will ensure full implementation of the charter.

"We pledge to undertake all necessary constitutional amendments, additions, revisions, drafting and redrafting, and changes to existing laws, or enact new laws, as well as issue new regulations or amend existing ones, to implement the proposals and recommendations contained in the charter concerning the constitution, judiciary, electoral system, public administration, police, and anti-corruption system," the charter read.

He made the remarks during a meeting in London with BNP acting chairperson Tarique Rahman, who suggested holding the polls before the month of fasting, which will begin in the third week of February.

Yesterday's meeting was attended by Home Adviser Lt General (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser on Home

me that money could be made from this [being spokesperson or coordinator]... I found out only after joining... It felt like clownery.

"July-August was a lived experience. So why on Earth would I use that as a money-making machine? But unfortunately, that's what it has become common, regular," she said.

"We wanted to change the system, not create a political party and become part of it."

Umama said she had stopped attending SAD meetings since January this year.

"It never once occurred to

Trump slashes Russia ultimatum to '10 or 12 days'

AFP, Turnberry

Donald Trump yesterday issued a dramatic new ultimatum to Russia to end the war in Ukraine or face tough new sanctions, as he met UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer in Scotland.

Saying he was not very interested in talking to Russian President Vladimir Putin anymore, the US leader also shifted his tone on Gaza, acknowledging there were signs of "real starvation" in the conflict-ravaged Palestinian territory.

Trump, sitting alongside Starmer at the US leader's luxury golf resort in Turnberry, south of Glasgow, said he was "very disappointed" with Putin over continued strikes against Ukrainian civilian targets.

He announced that he was reducing an earlier 50 day deadline for Putin to bring the Ukraine conflict to an end to "about 10 or 12 days", starting immediately.

"There is no reason in waiting," Trump said, adding he thought Putin would want to end things quick.

"I really felt it was going to end. But every time I think it's going to end he kills people."

"I'm not so interested in talking (to him) anymore," he added.

Ukraine swiftly praised the US president's stand and thanked Trump for "standing firm and delivering a clear message of peace through strength".

"When America leads with strength, others think twice," Ukrainian presidential aide Andriy Yermak said on social media.

The comments came after Trump and Starmer held a bilateral meeting that focused on ending the suffering in Gaza and reviving stalled ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas.

Women led, the nation followed

FROM PAGE 1

they beat us like animals. One of them said, 'So, you'll protest again, will you?' And then he hit me."

On July 17, Sanjida Anowar Chowdhury, a former DU linguistics student, joined despite growing threats. "If I die, send my body to my family," she said. "But I will not leave the street."

Women weren't just protesting; they were protecting. They formed shields, treated the injured, challenged authority with nothing but resolve. In return, they faced assault, harassment, and online vilification.

Tonni, a DU student, was attacked near the University Club. "Even as we tried to leave, they didn't spare us. I was left bleeding."

The state's response turned increasingly violent. Arrests, torture, and disappearances became daily realities. But fear failed to quell the uprising.

What began as resistance to quota policies in government jobs evolved into a full scale revolt. "This wasn't about quotas anymore; it was about justice," said Nusrat Jahan, a Stamford University student.

On July 31, Nusrat joined the March for Justice after her senior, Noor Hasan, was arrested outside the High Court. She stood in front of the prison van to block it. Her photo went viral. "I wouldn't let them take him without a fight," she said.

The movement soon rippled across society. Professors, workers, and homemakers stood beside students. In Gazipur, garment workers joined in.

"We saw our younger brothers and sisters shot," said Ambia, a garment worker. "We couldn't stay silent. The police threatened us, but we stood our ground."

At least 26 garment workers were killed, according to Bangladesh Garment Workers Solidarity. "The real number is likely higher," said its president, Taslima Akhter. "We're still verifying."

Dr Chowdhury Saima Ferdous, a Dhaka University professor and member of the Public Service Commission, said, "I had supported the students' demands since the 2018 quota reform protests, but when they were branded as Razakars, something inside me broke. Silence was no longer an option. I had to stand with them."

Saima recounted the days of chaos on the streets. "We witnessed brutal police crackdowns on campuses. Reports poured in of female students being tortured through the night. A small group of us, teachers, marched in protest through campus gates, to the Press Club, anywhere we could raise our voices."

"Nazrul's songs became my armour. I remember singing 'Karar Oi Louho Kopat' and 'Muktir Mandir Sopan Tole' while staring down riot police. We were ready for whatever came," she said.

She received death threats and anonymous calls, even handwritten letters warning she would be abducted.

"There were nights I wasn't sure I'd live to see the morning. But after seeing my students' blood spilled on the streets, retreat was no longer possible."

The July uprising was not isolated. According to a cross national study 'The Women in Resistance (WiRe)' by Erica Chenoweth and Zoe Marks of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in 2019, women's participation increases the chances that a resistance movement will succeed. This research tracked and documented women's roles in major resistance movements around the world. It includes 338 both violent and nonviolent movements from 1945 to 2014 in every country.

According to a global study on the Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 named "preventing conflict transforming justice securing the peace" conducted by Radhika Coomaraswamy in 2015, women's participation not only strengthens humanitarian response and boosts the success of peace negotiations, it also extends the durability of peace, spurs up economic recovery, and serves as a powerful force against violent extremism.

The July uprising also echoes a long and powerful history of women leading from the front in Bangladesh's most defining moments.

From the Language Movement, where figures like Sufia Kamal and Shamsunnahar Mahmud raised their voices, to the Liberation War of 1971, where women like journalist Selina Parveen, guerrilla fighter Krishna Member, and freedom fighter Lutfun

never stood on the sidelines. Their defiance continued through the anti-Ershad mass movement of the 1980s and resurfaced with renewed force on the streets in July 2024.

Shirin Sultana, a former student leader during the anti-Ershad movement, sees echoes of the past in today's defiance.

"Our movement wasn't spontaneous. It took years—'86, '87, '89—before we forced Ershad out," she recalled. "But this July movement, though sudden, burns with the same fire."

She remembers November 27, 1990—hours after Dr Shamsul Alam Milon was murdered. "Curfew was in place, army vehicles surrounded the halls, but we didn't care. When we realised the boys couldn't get out due to the army blockade, we organised the girls. We pushed open the main gates ourselves. We marched toward the boys' hall, hoping our presence would give them the courage to come out. And it worked."

She described how they led the march from the vice chancellor's residence to Mohsin Hall, then toward the Press Club—flouting curfew orders. "That was the point. We wanted to show we didn't acknowledge the regime's authority. The march grew to over 3,000 students. We stayed at the front—to protect the boys from being fired upon. We formed a human shield."

When authorities ordered the evacuation of female dormitories, she and a small group of 12-13 students stayed behind in Ruqayyah Hall for days, coordinating resistance. "One night, the army raided our hall. We hid in the washrooms. The next day, we left the campus and continued the movement from our local areas."

"In Basabo, I led torch processions every night. Soon they became victory marches."

Comparing past and present, she noted, "We were scared too, but we stepped up. Today's young women face a more brutal reality—surveillance, smear campaigns, political violence."

"But when I saw the girls of July 2024 marching out despite brutal attacks, I felt this regime cannot survive. Just like Ershad's couldn't. I knew then, history was repeating."

Earlier on July 9, Yunus ordered the authorities concerned to complete all polls preparations by December.

The polls are likely to take place in February or April, he told an earlier meeting with law enforcers.

On June 13, Yunus said the election could be held the week before Ramadan 2026 if all preparations are completed by then.

He made the remarks during a meeting in London with BNP acting chairperson Tarique Rahman, who suggested holding the polls before the month of fasting, which will begin in the third week of February.

Yesterday's meeting was attended by Home Adviser Lt General (retd) Jahangir Alami Chowdhury, Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser on Home

Affairs Khuda Baksh Chowdhury, the principal secretary, cabinet secretary, home secretary, and top officials of law enforcement agencies and the Armed Forces Division.

Several crucial decisions were made regarding law enforcement, administrative preparedness, and countering misinformation.

Yunus directed law enforcement agencies to identify potential election "hotspots" -- areas that could see unrest -- and make recommendations on steps needed to maintain order, said Azad.

The chief adviser also asked agencies to assess the situation in each area ahead of

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Terrorism has no place in Bangladesh

Yunus tells US diplomat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday reaffirmed his government's firm stance against terrorism, declaring that no terrorist organisation will be allowed to operate in Bangladesh.

"Combating terrorism is our top priority. We have zero tolerance for terrorism in Bangladesh. We will exert every effort to eliminate terrorists from our soil," said the chief adviser during a meeting with US Charge d'Affaires Tracey Ann Jacobson at the state guest house Jamuna in the afternoon.

The 40-minute meeting covered a range of bilateral issues, including the ongoing tariff negotiations between Bangladesh and the United States.

Jacobson expressed Washington's continued support for Bangladesh's reform initiatives and its democratic transition, which is expected to lead to national elections early next year.

Yunus also briefed the US envoy on the progress of the National Consensus Commission, which is working to unite political parties around key reforms. "I believe the commission is doing an excellent job. The members, led by Professor Ali Riaz, are working diligently," he said.

JULY KILLINGS

Hasina, top AL leaders sued in Gazipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Gazipur

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and other top leaders have been sued on charges of killing a person during the July uprising in Gazipur.

A person named Abu Sayed (Raju), son of Sekandar Ali, filed the case with Kaliakair Police Station on Sunday night, Officer-in-Charge Abdul Mannan told The Daily Star.

In the statement, the complainant said Ilim Hossain, 43, a trader from Rakhaliachala in Kaliakair, was shot dead while taking a stand in front of the Ansar VDP Academy in Shafipur while participating in the "Complete Shutdown" programme on August 5 last year.

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US Charge d'Affaires Tracey Ann Jacobson at a meeting with Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at the state guest house Jamuna yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Domestic workers still 'invisible' in labour laws

Speakers tell conference; call for legal recognition, protections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

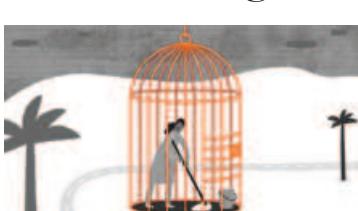
While domestic workers support the country's economy and social structure, those who perform the duties remain excluded from formal labour protections and social entitlements, said speakers at a conference yesterday.

They called for legal recognition, social protection, and systemic reforms to ensure the rights and dignity of domestic workers.

The remarks came at "The Domestic Workers' Conference 2025", held at Parjatan Bhaban in the capital.

The event was organised by six organisations -- Bangladesh Nari Sramik Kendra (BNSK), AVAS, Shobujer Ovijan Foundation, SOHAY, Ashar Alo Society, and Oxfam -- in collaboration with Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE).

Rasheda K Chowdhury, executive director of CAMPE, said domestic workers remain invisible



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recognise domestic workers under Labour Act
- Set up complaint desks at labour offices
- Ensure pensions, maternity benefits, welfare support
- Translate labour laws into accessible language
- Conduct survey to create domestic workers' database

in legal and policy frameworks. "We must develop provisions for out-of-court settlements

under Section 124 of the Labour Law and set up complaint desks within labour departments. Their protection, dignity, and access to justice are not optional," she said.

CAMPE Deputy Director Tapon Kumar Dash, who moderated the opening session, said the movement for domestic workers' recognition has been ongoing for decades. "These demands are not new. What is new is our resolve to ensure that they are no longer ignored," he added.

Khadija Akter Antora, programme officer at Oxfam in Bangladesh, shared insights from the "Empowering Women through Civil Society Actors in Bangladesh (EWCSA)" project, which has supported over 45,000 informal workers, including 13,000 domestic workers.

She said the project aims to build leadership among informal workers and ensure their voices are heard in policy discussions

TK 2.89CR GRAFT

ACC sues Rehana's son Bobby

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has filed a case against Radwan Mujib Siddiqi Bobby, son of Sheikh Rehana, on charges of amassing "illegal" wealth and conducting suspicious financial transactions through bank accounts.

ACC Deputy Assistant Director Abdullah Al Mamun filed the case yesterday with the ACC's Integrated District Office in Dhaka, said the commission's Director General Md Akhter Hossain.

He said, "No record of any business activity was found in his income tax documents."

According to the case statement, Bobby has been accused of amassing wealth worth Tk 2.89 crore beyond known sources of income.

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Bar AL, allies from contesting national polls

Gono Odhikar Parishad urges Election Commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Gono Odhikar Parishad yesterday urged the Election Commission (EC) to remain firm in ensuring that the Awami League and its allies are not allowed to participate in the upcoming 13th national election.

Party General Secretary Rashed Khan made the remarks to reporters following a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin at the EC headquarters in Dhaka.

"The last three national elections were disgraceful. The Awami League held a one-sided election in 2014, a midnight election in 2018, and a dummy election in 2024," he said.

He also demanded the cancellation of the registration of the allies of the AI-led combined 14 parties.

"Jatiyo Party has sympathy towards the Awami League. By participating in the election, the Awami League might attempt to return to power in guise of Jatiyo Party," Rashed said.

He added that the CEC assured them the EC would not take any steps that could bring back fascism in any form or name.

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A labourer, who worked with a firm to help set up the exhibition on July uprising, sits quietly in front of the displayed artworks and photographs at the National Art Gallery of Shilpkala Academy in the capital yesterday. After finishing up work, he takes a moment to reflect on the powerful visuals that depict the key moments and figures of the movement.

PHOTO: MONIR UDDIN ANIK

BIAM BUILDING BLAZE

Planned attempt to destroy key documents: PBI

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The fire at the office of the BCS (Administration) Welfare Multipurpose Cooperative Society inside the capital's BIAM Foundation building was deliberately set to destroy important documents, said the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) yesterday.

PBI officials said the arson was planned and carried out by a group that included staff members of the cooperative.

Two people, including a staffer of the cooperative society, have so far been arrested in connection with the case, which was solved using artificial intelligence (AI) to identify a key suspect.

The fire broke out following an explosion in Room 504 of the building around 3:20am on February 27. The blast gutted the cooperative office, burning official documents, including deeds, land transfer papers, and purchase agreements, as well as cheque books, electronics, furniture, and air conditioning units.

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AT A GLANCE

- Fire broke out on Feb 27
- Two suspects arrested
- Explosion killed 2 involved
- Some staff members linked to plot
- Probe on to determine contents of destroyed files

All govt primary headteachers set for pay upgrade

Ministry approves 10th-grade scale for them

REZAUL KARIM BYRON

All headteachers at government primary schools across the country will soon be upgraded to the long-demanded 10th-grade pay scale.

The finance ministry has already approved the proposal and sent a letter to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education to take necessary steps, a

New pay scale will require an additional Tk 453 crore annually. There are currently 65,502 headteacher posts, of which around 31,000 are filled.

Meanwhile, the primary and mass education ministry in a press release last night confirmed the development.

This decision fulfills the long-standing

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Review MoU with UN to open rights office in Dhaka

Salahuddin urges govt at Hefazat roundtable

DU CORRESPONDENT

BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed yesterday called for a review of the three-year agreement signed with the United Nations to establish a Human Rights Office in Dhaka.

Speaking at a roundtable at the Dhaka Reporters Unity in the capital, he urged the authorities to reassess the decision to avoid what he termed "international embarrassment" for Bangladesh.

Hefazat e Islam organised the event, where several other political and religious organisations also criticised the interim government's move to open the mission without consulting political parties.

Salahuddin said if the decision had been taken through broader political discussions, it would not have sparked controversy.

"The interim government's decision to allow the establishment of a United Nations Human Rights Commission office in Bangladesh, without any political dialogue, is not justified," he said.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Drive against old vehicles must persist

It is essential to reduce accidents and environmental risks

Of all the sectors that affect people's day-to-day life in Bangladesh, road transport remains one of the most chaotic and undisciplined. Any attempt to fix it has always fallen through, thanks to the strong resistance put up by transport owners and workers. According to a report by this daily, they have now threatened to go on a nationwide strike for 72 hours on August 12 if the ongoing drive against old, unfit vehicles is not stopped. Not only is this demand in direct conflict with the imperatives of public health and safety, but it also forces us to look deeper into the anarchy in this sector. We must ask: why are transport owners and workers so bent on disregarding any regulatory action meant to discipline the sector?

Per our report, three major road transport organisations made the above-mentioned demand while protesting the government drive, which was launched on July 20 aiming to curb road crashes and environmental pollution. Their eight-point demand also includes extending the economic lifespan of outdated vehicles by 5-10 years, amending the provisions in the Road Transport Act (RTA) regarding punishments for reckless driving and crash-related offences.

There is little doubt that these demands are unreasonable and dangerous. There are 6,26 lakh unfit vehicles currently operating across the country, according to BRTA data. Meanwhile, more than 80,000 buses, minibuses, trucks, lorries and tankers have already exceeded their economic life as of July 16. This being the reality, we are unable to comprehend on what basis the transport leaders are demanding an extension of these vehicles' economic lifespan, when these rickety old buses and trucks are responsible for fatal road crashes, not to mention toxic emissions. In their defence, they argued that proper maintenance and spare part replacement can fix the problem. But if that were the case, how come there are still so many unfit vehicles in the first place?

For years, attempts to fix the road transport sector have been frequently stonewalled by the powerful transport associations. The RTA, passed seven years ago following the road safety movement, remains stuck in limbo because they refuse to cooperate with the government and put public well-being above their own interest. Blatant disregard for the existing rules is commonplace, no matter the consequence. Undue political influence and rampant corruption have caused a rot in the sector, especially during the Awami League regime, and its remnants continue to haunt us to this day.

Things cannot go on like this. Transport associations must not be allowed to hold a vital public service hostage whenever they don't get their way. The government must be firm in employing any legitimate measure to sort out the mess that this sector has become. Meanwhile, more dialogues should be held involving all stakeholders to work out a way to resolve the impasse. But whatever the outcome may be, people's safety must never be compromised.

Don't stop Rohingya children's education

Adequate funding crucial to ensure their future does not derail

We are deeply concerned about the future of 400,000 Rohingya children who are facing uncertainty due to disruptions in their education. Reportedly, because of a shortage of funding, nearly 6,400 informal schools run by NGOs in the refugee camps of Cox's Bazar have either suspended classes or significantly reduced teaching hours. On June 3, UNICEF and Save the Children, which supervise the informal learning centres, suspended classes for students ranging from kindergarten to class 4. This is deeply worrying, as these centres not only provide education but also serve as safe spaces for the children.

The total budget requirement for the 1.2 million Rohingyas and 300,000 members of the host community is \$934 million this year, but as of July 12, only \$303 million (32 percent) has been secured. This means the refugees will now have to struggle even more to access basic rights, including proper nutrition and healthcare. The suspension of educational activities is particularly worrying considering its long-term impact. While \$72 million is reportedly required to cover the educational expenses of Rohingya children this year, less than \$10 million has been received so far. Hundreds of teachers at the learning centres have also lost their jobs as a consequence of the funding crunch, which was caused by a drastic reduction in humanitarian aid from the US.

Rohingya leaders and teachers of these centres believe that suspending classes from kindergarten to class 4 is not a good idea since most children are enrolled in grades below class 6. Teachers proposed reducing lesson hours for kindergarten to class 4 instead of full suspension, like the way other classes are receiving reduced hours—classes 5 to 7 are receiving lessons four days a month, and those in classes 8 to 10 five days a week. That way, teachers say, the children will not be deprived of their education. They also demanded that the suspended teachers be reinstated. These proposals are valid, and we hope the relevant authorities will consider them.

The learning centres have offered the Rohingya children a hope for a better future and their suspension threatens to rob them of that hope, which must not happen. We urge the government, international donors, and NGOs to work together to secure alternative funding to continue education projects in the camps, and prevent these children from becoming a lost generation.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



NASA established

On this day in 1958, criticised for allowing the Soviet Union to launch the first man-made satellite to orbit Earth (Sputnik 1, on October 4, 1957), US President Dwight D Eisenhower signed legislation that created NASA.

It's time to modernise our air force



Dr Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir is professor at the Department of Development Studies, University of Dhaka.

RASHED AL MAHMUD TITUMIR

The crash of a Bangladesh Air Force fighter jet into Milestone School on July 21, 2025 was a moment of national reckoning. It was not merely a tragic accident, but a visible consequence of accumulated neglect in planning. The human cost is now etched in our collective memory.

The crash exposed more than a mechanical fault. It revealed a strategic vacuum—a lack of alignment between the growth of the nation and the transformation of its air power. Against a backdrop of economic ambition, urban expansion, and regional volatility, the country's military infrastructure has not kept pace. This is not just a matter of decisive modernisation or equipment upgrades, but also a need to revisit the strategies guiding the country's airspace security.

Airspace security

Airspace is no longer an inert boundary, but rather a dynamic domain. Securing it requires layered surveillance, rapid response, and integrated command. For Bangladesh, the strategic urgency of airspace security cannot be overstated. It is bordered by India, a regional air power with robust force projection, and Myanmar, where militarisation and instability continue to intensify along the frontier.

The country's airspace is both congested and vulnerable—crowded with civil aviation, military operations, and increasingly unregulated drone traffic. These pose threats to critical installations and population centres. Sadly, what exists today is a patchwork system where reaction replaces anticipation, and gaps in coverage are filled with hope rather than capability.

The situation calls for Bangladesh to build a national airspace architecture with three pillars: persistent early warning systems, an agile interceptor fleet, and data fusion centres, enabling real-time coordination across military and civilian domains.

Power and politics

Air power is not a support arm, but



Securing sovereignty in the air requires clarity of doctrine, capability for deterrence, and commitment to modernisation.

FILE PHOTO: PID

rather a strategic determinant. It extends beyond the battlefield into the realms of diplomacy, deterrence, and doctrine. Countries project air power not only to defend but also to define their role in the geopolitical and geo-economic order.

This is evident across South Asia. India has expanded air bases in its northeast, not merely for national defence but for strategic signalling. It is integrating air capabilities with space-based intelligence and precision strike systems. Meanwhile, Myanmar's military junta, despite sanctions and diplomatic pressure, has invested significantly in combat aircraft to maintain internal control and regional posture.

Bangladesh cannot afford to remain static while its neighbours modernise. Air power is no longer about proximity. It is about presence and the ability to command the skies, matching the aspiration of a nation.

Whether in response to cross-border threats, humanitarian missions, or geopolitical deterrence, the ability to command airspace must be a central element of Bangladesh's progress and prosperity.

with data links and ground control. It invests not only in aircraft but in the operational ecosystem that makes the response effective. This is a lesson Bangladesh must heed: modern air power is not about numbers but about integration, agility, and the ability to act decisively.

Bangladesh's Forces Goal 2030 envisaged a shift in principle—a modern tri-service structure with strategic deterrence and interoperable capacities. But implementation remains sluggish. The Air Force is the slowest to modernise.

Without clarity of role, the Air Force becomes reactive. Without a broad employment strategy, procurement becomes piecemeal. Without credible deterrence, diplomacy is exposed to coercion. As regional air doctrines evolve towards integrated multi-domain operations, Bangladesh must not be caught in the inertia of past assumptions.

Beyond the budget

The idea that Bangladesh cannot afford air modernisation must be challenged. National security is not an abstract ideal. It is a public good, foundational to economic and social stability. A modern air force supports not only war

deterrence but also disaster response, border surveillance, counterterrorism, and civil-military coordination. It is both a shield and an enabler of development.

At one percent of GDP—which has declined in recent years—Bangladesh's military expenditure lags behind its developmental trajectory and the accelerated growth of regional counterparts. This is not an argument for excessive militarisation, but for smart allocation, prioritising capabilities that deliver strategic returns.

Modernisation is not about prestige purchases but about capability integration—including Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) platforms, long-range multirole combat aircraft (MRCA), anti-drone systems, and electromagnetic warfare preparedness.

Bangladesh must move beyond episodic procurement and towards platform synergies—linking aircraft, surveillance, command, and electronic warfare into a cohesive force.

A fractured fragmentation

Urban density in Dhaka has surpassed the thresholds for safe air operations. Military and civil aviation now operate in a dangerously overlapping airspace. Yet air base relocation proposals—from Kurmitola to Trishal, and the planned shift to Arial Beel—remain incomplete or indefinitely deferred. These failures are not logistical. They are political and institutional, reflecting a dearth of strategic prioritisation.

Even among military institutions, there exists turf protection, outweighing strategic coherence and breeding risks. Bangladesh's defence planning must encompass land, water, aerial and hybrid dimensions. There is also an urgency for institutional reform to facilitate at least biannual joint domain operations.

Mature modernisation

Securing sovereignty in the air requires clarity of doctrine, capability for deterrence, and commitment to modernise. A credible air force does not only defend the skies. It provides the reach, response, and resilience needed in a century where threats travel faster than ever before. It enables national development. It ensures that a growing economy is not hostage to security fragility.

The shocking event of July 21 marks a turning point not only in mourning, but also in meaning. Bangladesh must reimagine its defence thinking, reclaim its sky, and modernise with purpose—not merely to fly higher, but to think further.

How the Liangzhu model is challenging Silicon Valley's AI dominance



Dr Sayeed Ahmed is a consulting engineer and CEO of Bayside Analytics, a technology-focused strategy and management consulting organisation.

SAYEED AHMED

In a quiet suburb on the outskirts of Hangzhou, the capital of China's Zhejiang province, something amazing is happening. This modest village is at the heart of China's AI revolution, offering technological innovation that is distinctly different from what the world is used to seeing in Silicon Valley. Here, innovators and entrepreneurs spend hours discussing ideas over endless cups of tea. This is Liangzhu.

The Liangzhu model, as it is being called, represents something fundamentally distinct from what is seen elsewhere. While Silicon Valley operates on the principle of disruption through market forces and private investment, Liangzhu thrives on a blend of academic excellence, community collaboration, and strategic state support, creating an entirely new playbook for technological advancement. But how does it work?

At the core of Liangzhu's success is top-tier education, backed by nearby Zhejiang University. This university has nurtured some of China's most innovative tech leaders, including Liang Wenfeng, the founder of DeepSeek. His transition, from engineering student to AI pioneer, demonstrates how a strong technical education, combined with entrepreneurial spirit, can lead to breakthrough innovations. DeepSeek is one of the Six Tigers, China's leading AI startups, all of which are based in Hangzhou, emerging from the bustling

tea houses of Liangzhu.

Holding warm teacups, entrepreneurs exchange ideas, investors seek talent, and partnerships form through casual conversations. This informal networking fosters an ecosystem where knowledge flows through the community's natural social fabric. The tea drinking tradition is more than just a social ritual; it's a mindful act of slowing down that encourages deeper thinking and relationship-building. While Silicon Valley races ahead with an eye on the upcoming quarterly earnings report, Liangzhu advances through genuine human connection and long-term vision.

The Liangzhu model benefits from coordinated support from both large corporations and the government. Companies like Alibaba, SMIC and Huawei not only provide funding but also offer market access, technical expertise, and strategic guidance. This creates a virtuous cycle where startups have clear paths to grow, and established companies gain access to cutting edge innovation. Local authorities offer tax breaks and subsidies to attract tech startups, a strategy that has helped seed hundreds of companies. This nuanced policy support fosters innovation while allowing market forces to determine winners and losers.

DeepSeek embodies the sustainable mindset that the Liangzhu ecosystem

promotes. The company's success is not just about creating competitive AI models; it's about doing so effectively and sustainably. While US AI firms spend billions in venture capital, DeepSeek has delivered comparable results with far fewer resources. This efficiency-focused approach underscores the Liangzhu model's emphasis on sustainable innovation

While Silicon Valley operates on the principle of disruption through market forces and private investment,

Liangzhu thrives on a blend of academic excellence, community collaboration, and strategic state support, creating an entirely new playbook for technological advancement.

rather than pursuing growth at any cost.

The true strength of the Liangzhu model lies in its synergy with Shenzhen, a city in southeastern China in Guangdong province. While Liangzhu excels in AI research and development, Shenzhen offers a seamless supply chain and highly efficient production line. This creates a strong complementary relationship: AI innovations in Liangzhu's tea houses and university labs can be rapidly prototyped and mass-produced in Shenzhen's factories. This enables AI companies to bring products to market faster and more cost-effectively, while maintaining close control over their supply chains and intellectual property.

The Liangzhu model has profound geopolitical implications. It gives China the resilience it needs in the race for global technological dominance; it doesn't depend on foreign investment or technology transfer, reducing the impact of Washington's sanctions. This model signifies more than just a new idea; it embodies a different approach to innovation itself. While Silicon Valley champions the solo genius entrepreneur, Liangzhu stresses collective intelligence and teamwork. Whereas Silicon Valley focuses on market disruption, Liangzhu emphasises technological progress that supports broader social and economic objectives.

This difference in approach could be crucial in the AI race. Artificial intelligence requires substantial computational resources and expertise, and its success ultimately depends on integration with existing systems and societal acceptance. The Liangzhu model's focus on gradual, consensus-driven innovation might be better suited for deploying AI technologies that genuinely improve people's lives rather than merely generating investor profits.

The rivalry between Silicon Valley and Liangzhu will likely shape the next stage of global technological progress. The key question isn't which model will "win," but how both will evolve and what hybrid approaches might emerge. In an era of flashy IPOs and billion-dollar valuations, the Liangzhu model reminds us that the most meaningful innovations often occur behind the scenes, through careful and patient effort to create something lasting. As the AI race intensifies, this approach could become its most significant competitive advantage.

In 2006, archaeologists uncovered remains of a Neolithic civilisation at the site of Liangzhu. Is this 3,000-year-old civilisation making a comeback to reclaim its status as a global leader?



NASA established

On this day in 1958, criticised for allowing the Soviet Union to launch the first man-made satellite to orbit Earth (Sputnik 1, on October 4, 1957), US President Dwight D Eisenhower signed legislation that created NASA.

The ICJ ruling on climate action can boost Global South's voice

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SHAMIR SHEHAB and RIDWANUL HOQUE

On July 23, 2025, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) delivered one of the most important judicial opinions in the history of international environmental law. In a landmark advisory opinion, the World Court clarified the legal obligation of states to address the climate crisis the world faces. The UN General Assembly requested the opinion through resolution 77/276. It requested the court to answer two questions regarding climate change. The court commenced by first determining that the questions were legal in character and that providing opinions on them was under its jurisdiction.

The ICJ concluded that states have explicit legal duties to safeguard the climate system against anthropogenic (caused by humans) greenhouse gas emissions. These responsibilities are not merely abstract or theoretical but rather based on the laws of state responsibility, human rights, and the international environment.

The implications of the ICJ opinion are far from symbolic, even though it is not legally binding. However, the opinion is likely to change the global climate politics, litigation tactics, and diplomatic discourses. It also establishes the foundation for a reorganisation of international climate accountability.

The advisory opinion highlights several important points, including the following: first, states must take precautionary and equitable measures, such as regulating private sector actors whose emissions significantly contribute to climate change; second, states must prevent significant harm to the environment and climate system in the interest of both present and future generations; and, third, states may be held internationally responsible when significant environmental harm occurs, particularly if the affected parties include small islands, developing states, or vulnerable populations.

Despite arguments from major emitters of greenhouse gases such as the United States and China, the ICJ ruled that obligations to

protect the climate extend beyond the Paris Climate Agreement. This greatly supports future legal claims by establishing the binding authority of both customary international law and general international law norms (such as human rights law and the law of the sea rules).

The opinion represents the highest degree of legal consensus within the main judicial body of the United Nations, having been unanimously adopted by all sitting judges. Only five times in the 79-year history of the ICJ has an opinion been unanimously adopted, which is a remarkable indication of moral urgency and legal clarity.

Although the opinion clarifies and elevates current legal duties, it does not create a new law. Nevertheless, the clarity the court gave to the legal obligations of states in respect

just cut emissions as a result of this clear language. As a result, countries like the USA, Canada, Australia, and those under the EU are probably going to face more pressure. Even though some of these countries have made net-zero commitments, their delayed implementation and ongoing support of the fossil fuel sector risk being interpreted as breaches of their international legal duties.

Another important thing is that the ICJ opinion may serve as a legal foundation for a surge in climate litigation, particularly in European domestic courts. It will certainly add strong support to domestic decisions, such as in the Urgenda case in the Netherlands that compelled the state to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25 percent by 2020. ICJ's opinion will inspire and allow national courts to require more aggressive national

infrastructure or paying compensation to affected people. For small island and climate-vulnerable countries like Bangladesh, Chad, Ecuador, the Maldives, and other Global South states, this opinion offers a potent legal tool. With the support of the highest court in the world, these states can now contend that wealthier countries have a legal and moral obligation to take decisive action and support climate mitigation and adaptation, and loss and damage due to climate change.

Additionally, this could open the door for interstate climate litigation. The legal doctrines of transboundary harm and state responsibility may now give affected countries the confidence to file lawsuits against high-emitting countries. Their long-standing call for climate justice is now a matter of legal entitlement, thanks to the advisory

Even though the ICJ's opinion was presented clearly and legally, its application may give rise to some geopolitical tensions. At the UN's upcoming Conference of the Parties (COP) 30 in Belém, Global South nations will probably use this decision to push for faster climate finance, debt relief, and reparations. With wealthier countries unwilling to take on additional financial or legal responsibilities, this will exacerbate tensions.

breaches or inaction. In terms of corporate accountability, multinational fossil fuel companies may be subject to new lawsuits based on their complicity in states' failure to effectively regulate emissions. And states can be asked to regulate or/and stop their corporations from emitting greenhouse gases. These probable consequences of the opinion will energise global climate litigation.

Even though the ICJ's opinion was presented clearly and legally, its application may give rise to some geopolitical tensions. At the UN's upcoming Conference of the Parties (COP) 30 in Belém, Global South nations will probably use this decision to push for faster climate finance, debt relief, and reparations. With wealthier countries unwilling to take on additional financial or legal responsibilities, this will exacerbate tensions. The geopolitics surrounding fossil fuels are expected to intensify as the court's opinion subtly criticises the ongoing growth of fossil fuel production, rendering the climate policies of oil-exporting countries (such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Canada, and the United States) politically and legally open to questions. This might hasten future conflicts over resources and trade tensions among states in the backdrop of the rising protectionism and anti-globalisation wave.

The ICJ's advisory opinion is a watershed moment in international climate governance. It means that the Global South can shift its approach to climate justice from simply asking for assistance to demanding legal action. The ultimate success, however, will depend on how the wealthier nations with a greater emitting record respond to the call by the World Court.



The ICJ's clarification for the first time that states must both prevent and repair climate damage opens the door for legal demands for reparations or compensation.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

of climate change will be felt at several governmental and legal levels.

For example, in its opinion, the court names certain activities as possible transgressions of international law, including the production, subsidies, and exploration of fossil fuels. States are now under more pressure to dismantle fossil fuel industries rather than

climate policies. The opinion will act as new legal fuel for lawsuits against large polluters, both public and private.

The ICJ's clarification for the first time that states must both prevent and repair climate damage opens the door for legal demands for reparations or compensation, such as repairing ecosystems or damaged

opinion. The opinion may inspire formal legal cases by climate-impacted nations against high-emitting states, asserting breach of international law duty and seeking reparations.

Activists, lawyers, and civil society groups now also have a global legal standard to invoke when challenging national climate

Why Bangladesh needs a national maritime roadmap



Mohammad Raad Sarwar
is the director of Finance and Strategy at Prantik Group.

MOHAMMAD RAAD SARWAR

There is something quietly dignified about the way a vessel enters port. Precision. Momentum. Timing. A ballet of steel and water.

It's an apt metaphor for where Bangladesh stands now—on the edge of something far greater than what our coastal skyline presently reveals.

For a country crisscrossed by rivers, bracketed by the Bay of Bengal, and reliant on maritime trade for over 90 percent of its economic throughput, Bangladesh remains paradoxically ill prepared for the future of the ocean economy. Our ports are congested. Our vessels are outdated. Our policies are often detached from operational realities. And our systems, if they can be called that, function in fragmented silos, operating closer to analogue than digital. It is time for the story to change.

Bangladesh's coastline spans more than 700 kilometres. Our inland waterways stretch over 24,000 kilometres, forming one of the largest navigable river networks in the world. Chittagong Port, despite chronic backlogs, remains among the busiest in South Asia. Mongla and Payra sit strategically near regional trade corridors and domestic industrial zones. Matarbari, with deep sea capacity, will soon be able to berth mother vessels.

But geography, while a gift, is not a guarantee.

Without institutional will, policy coordination, and technological foresight, strategic location alone will not deliver the maritime future Bangladesh is capable of building.

This is why I am advocating for Bangladesh's first National Maritime Roadmap—a data-driven, institutionally coordinated, multi-phase plan to transform the country from a passive trade corridor into a strategic maritime nation.

This roadmap is not a wishlist of terminals and tugs. It is a long-overdue blueprint to align the moving parts of our maritime economy,

from ports and policy to people and platforms, under a single national vision.

It is built on eight strategic pillars, each informed by international benchmarks and real-world relevance.

A unified maritime authority

Fragmentation is our Achilles' heel. Core mandates such as port operations, shipbuilding policy, and maritime education remain scattered across disconnected authorities, while trade bodies, labour unions, and industry associations operate in silos, seldom aligned under a common strategy. To unlock the sector's full potential, we must consolidate these functions under a single, empowered entity that fosters coordination, transparency, and ease of doing maritime business. The establishment of the Bangladesh Maritime Commission—a one-stop authority for national nautical affairs, modelled after the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore or the Norwegian Coastal Administration—would provide the institutional clarity and unified leadership needed to drive meaningful, long-term execution.

Infrastructure that speaks to the 21st century

We must move beyond viewing ports as isolated assets. The objective is not merely capacity expansion, but the development of a networked maritime ecosystem: one that integrates digitised ports, high-throughput shipyards, and inland terminals seamlessly connected to coastal feeder routes, all underpinned by enabling regulatory frameworks. Initiatives such as the proposed Laldia container terminal and Bay Terminal signal a positive step towards decentralising vessel berthing capacity. Yet, this ambition must extend further, encompassing smaller-scale and inland infrastructure projects within a unified national strategy. The Netherlands and the UAE have successfully built such integrated systems. Bangladesh must do the

same with intention and urgency.

PPPs and maritime investment zones

Maritime growth is not the sole responsibility of the state. It is fundamentally a private-sector growth engine. To unlock its full potential, Bangladesh must attract and deploy international capital across shipyards, terminals, and logistics corridors through public-private partnerships, sovereign maritime bonds, and blended finance mechanisms.

Global players such as Red Sea Gateway Terminal, Maersk, and DP World have

committed and are in discussions to invest in

Bangladesh's maritime infrastructure, offering

optimistic signals of foreign direct investment appetite.

While the long-term success of these

models remains to be seen, the upside—capital infusion, technology transfer, and operational

through public-private partnerships, could provide long-term lending to emerging shipowners, enabling the growth of a truly diversified national fleet.

Increasing the percentage of trade carried on Bangladeshi-flagged vessels not only enhances economic resilience but also keeps freight earnings

and strategic control within our borders.

As India and China have demonstrated, enabling

domestic fleet expansion is both a commercial

and geopolitical imperative.

Digitisation of the maritime chain

The global maritime economy no longer runs on paper and neither should ours.

Bangladesh's ports must be fully integrated

through a Port Community System (PCS)—a

unified digital platform encompassing

berth planning, customs clearance, crew

management, vessel tracking, and intermodal

coordination. The transformative impact of

real-time data exchange between terminal

operators, customs authorities, and inland

transport networks on local commerce is

undeniable. At the heart of this shift lies the

digitisation of legacy systems, which forms the

backbone of any serious modernisation effort.

Asian countries such as Singapore and South

Korea are already deploying advanced artificial

intelligence to optimise port operations

through predictive analytics, while terminals

in China operate on fully paperless, automated

infrastructures.

Green shipping and environmental compliance

Regulations such as IMO 2020 are not abstract

ideals; they are non-tariff trade barriers in

disguise. As an illustration, without scrubbers,

ballast water treatment systems, and

compliant waste management infrastructure,

Bangladeshi vessels will increasingly be denied

access to regulated ports and markets. The

impact of environmental non-compliance is

already visible: our \$3 billion ship recycling

industry, which underpins critical domestic

supply chains such as steel re-rolling and

engineering, is facing mounting pressure to

modernise or be marginalised. Countries such

as Norway and Japan have embraced green

compliance not as a burden, but as a pillar of

national industrial policy.

Emergency maritime response and salvage

No country that moves the vast majority of its

trade by water can afford to improvise disaster

response. Bangladesh urgently needs a national

maritime emergency response framework:

anchored by strategically positioned depots, modern salvage equipment, and rapid-response teams based in Chittagong, Mongla, and Payra. The risks are not theoretical; we've seen the global consequences when a single vessel blocks a critical shipping lane. Our strategic posture must evolve from reactive to proactive. The US offers a compelling model through its National Response Framework, which coordinates oil spill containment, maritime firefighting, and search and rescue

through structured inter-agency collaboration between public institutions such as the US Coast Guard and private responders such as Resolve Marine.

Maritime education as economic strategy

The average age of marine engineers in Western economies is steadily rising. Bangladesh, with its youthful population, holds a clear demographic advantage—but only if we make the necessary investments in training, simulation, and certification. With the right infrastructure in place, we have a realistic opportunity to build a globally competitive maritime workforce. This means establishing new maritime colleges not only in major urban centres but across key coastal and riverine regions. High-quality training delivers long-term dividends: both for the individuals it empowers and for the country as a whole. A skilled maritime workforce working abroad sends back remittances that strengthen our foreign reserves, stabilise the economy, and reinforce our position in global labour markets. The Philippines and Indonesia have shown what's possible. Bangladesh has every reason and every resource to go further.

This roadmap does not call for miracle budgets; it calls for institutional courage.

We have the rivers. The coastline. The people. The market access. What we lack is not capacity, but cohesion.

Bangladesh is not a landlocked country, yet without strategic vision, we risk operating like one. The moment is ripe for both local and foreign enterprises to rise, invest, and deliver the maritime capabilities this nation urgently needs. We stand on thousands of years of maritime legacy, shaped by trade, craftsmanship, and resilience. Now is the time to build upon it. Not in theory, but in action.



'Taandob' to release on both Chorki and Hoichoi

Raihan Rafi's *Taandob* broke major records upon its theatrical release during Eid-ul-Azha. The star-studded film, featuring Shakib Khan, Jaya Ahsan, Sabila Nur, and Afzal Hossain, was widely loved by audiences.

The Shakib Khan-led *Taandob* is now set for a simultaneous release on two local OTT platforms — Chorki and Hoichoi. Both platforms made the announcement on Sunday, July 27. While they haven't revealed an exact release date, they confirmed that the film will premiere in August.

Director Raihan Rafi shared, *Taandob* was a completely different experience for me as a filmmaker. We aimed to bring freshness in every aspect — story, concept, visual style, and philosophy. Now, through OTT, viewers around the world will be able to experience our film."

Taandob marks the second collaboration between Shakib Khan and Raihan Rafi. The film also features an ensemble cast including Shahiduzzaman Selim, Fazlur Rahman Babu, Gazi Rakayet, Salahuddin Lavlu, FS Nayem, and Rosey Siddiqui. Tariq Anam Khan appears in a special role.



RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

Helping ignite a sense of hatred towards the authoritarian regime among youth with his fiery *Kotha Ko*, rapper Shezan was one of the most crucial cultural voices in the July Revolution.

A year removed, the rapper has now voiced his frustration in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star, about how hip hop artistes are being treated in shows organised in the aftermath of the July movement.

Shezan feels that the same community which helped mobilise a generation is being sidelined.

"I've said in the past that no one should contact me about any July-related shows. I meant it," Shezan said when we reached out to him.

"We follow street culture in our lyrics. We use local, unfiltered language, slangs, and speak out about what's happening around us. That has always led to a kind of bias. People used to assume that because it's raw, it's not 'worthy'.

But after *Kotha Ko* and *Awaaz Utha*, everyone

was listening. Even parents were listening. It changed the way people saw us."

Despite this cultural impact, Shezan maintains that

hip hop artistes are looked at with a biased lens. "We didn't do it for recognition. We did it as Bangladeshi musicians, as part of a larger collective resistance. When people say we used this moment to gain something, they miss the point. We stood up when it mattered, and now that the moment has passed, the very artistes who helped amplify the message are being pushed aside."

In his words, it's not about money. "Respect matters way more. We have been given performance slots just to tick a box. Most of the time it feels like we are being added last minute, only because the audience might want to see us. That's not real inclusion. That's tokenism. And that is painful."

He recalled the concert which was held

just after August 5, titled *Awaaz Uda - Kotha Ko*. Despite being named after their own music, Shezan and Hannan were only able to sing one song each. "We thought we would be given more time. But they blamed time constraints. In one show, I can understand. But when this keeps happening over and over again, it stops being a coincidence. It starts to feel intentional."

According to Shezan, hip hop now has one of the biggest audiences in Bangladesh. "Yet, not a single hip hop-centric concert has happened since the July movement. You could easily build a concert lineup with 20 to 30 hip hop artistes. That would have meant something. That would have motivated everyone. Instead, we're given 10 or 15 minutes, and if we speak up, organisers try to twist our words. They make it sound like we are disrespecting other genres or senior artistes, which is absolutely false.

There's no issue between artistes. The problem lies in the management. The discrimination comes from the way the events are run."



ILLUSTRATION: DOWEL BISWAS

Mofassal Alif to perform in New York's Battery Dance Festival

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Bangladeshi dancer and choreographer Mofassal Alif is set to make history as the first Bangladeshi artiste to perform at New York City's prestigious Battery Dance Festival. The festival, now in its 44th year, is New York's longest running free public dance festival and will take place from August 12 to 16 at Rockefeller Park in Battery Park City, with a rain date on August 17.

Mofassal Alif will present his solo piece titled *In Search of You (Moner Manusher Khonje)* on August 16 at 7pm EDT. This performance marks a significant milestone not only for Alif but also for Bangladesh's representation on the global dance stage.

"I am the first Bangladeshi to get the invitation to this dance festival, which is in its 44th edition," Alif shared. "I will be performing solo on August 16 at the festival."

The Battery Dance Festival 2025 will feature performances from eight international dance companies alongside eight New York-based groups, celebrating the universal language of dance through live performances, workshops, and immersive experiences for all ages. The free, outdoor event is known for bringing together diverse cultures and artistic expressions in the heart of New York City.

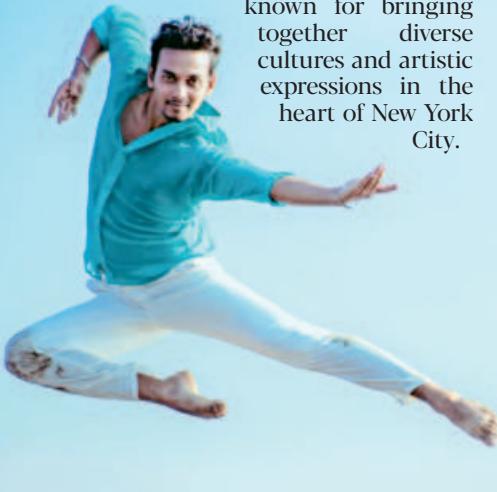


PHOTO: COLLECTED

NEWS

Israeli rights groups

FROM PAGE 12

needed to stave off starvation.

With Gaza's population of more than two million facing famine and malnutrition, Israel bowed to international pressure at the weekend and announced a daily "tactical pause" in fighting in some areas.

Egyptian leader Abdel Fattah el-Sisi yesterday publicly called on Donald Trump to use his influence to halt Israel's war on Gaza and ensure the entry of humanitarian aid into the besieged enclave.

In a televised speech, the Egyptian president said, "He is capable of stopping the war."

Trump, currently on a visit to Scotland, has addressed the war in Gaza, saying the time has come to "end it" and a ceasefire is "possible."

"I told Israel, I told Bibi [Netanyahu] that you're going to now maybe have to do it a different way," Trump said. "It's a tragic situation, frankly."

Speaking alongside British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Trump also

said people in Gaza need food and safety right now, a situation he said he would discuss with Starmer.

Israel imposed a blockade on Gaza on March 2 after talks to extend a six-week ceasefire broke down. Nothing was allowed into the territory until late May, when a trickle of aid resumed.

Now, the Israeli defence ministry's civil affairs agency says the UN and aid agencies had been able to pick up 120 truckloads of aid on Sunday and distribute it inside Gaza, with more on the way.

Jordan and the United Arab Emirates have begun air dropping aid packages by parachute over Gaza, while Egypt has sent trucks through its Rafah border crossing to an Israeli port just inside Gaza.

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, cautiously welcomed Israel's "humanitarian pauses" but warned Gaza needed at least 500 to 600 trucks of basic food, medicine and hygiene supplies daily.

No extortionist

FROM PAGE 12

A high-level government team recently visited Cox's Bazar to assess the progress of anti-narcotics operations and observed some positive results, he said.

"The number of drug seizures has increased -- we are catching more carriers. But we are not reaching the godfathers yet -- that's a serious concern."

Jahangir acknowledged that multiple agencies share responsibility for combating drugs.

"But not all are cooperating. I won't name them for now, but we are not getting support from everyone."

On election preparedness, he said changes to police superintendents and officers-in-charge are underway and will continue.

"Postings and transfers happen all the time. Whether any changes will be made specifically ahead of the election, you will see that in due time."

Police training programmes for election duties will begin in August, with officers rotating in batches until the national polls.

"One batch will go, another will come. This process will continue up to the election."

Without the uprising

FROM PAGE 12

Bangladesh, he said, adding that the families of those who were martyred do not ask for money but respect.

They want the ideals for which their loved ones sacrificed their lives to be realised, Nahid said.

Welcoming the initiative to form a Police Commission under the National Consensus Commission, he said: "We want a Bangladesh where the police are not politically biased, where the Election Commission is not politicised. We want the police to stand with the people."

A new Bangladesh must be brought forth through reforms, he said, adding that the reforms should be such that no single individual can monopolise absolute power.

The July Charter must be announced by August 5.

"Those who have not yet reached the consensus due to party interests come forward now for the sake of the countrymen."

News of SAD coordinators' arrest painful

FROM PAGE 12

youth wing, Jubo Dal, at Shabbagh.

Expressing regret, Mirza Fakhrul said even after a year, they still could not confidently say they were prepared to rebuild the country anew.

He added that internal conflicts could create an opportunity for fascism to return.

"It's really unfortunate that today we are arguing over many things and fighting among ourselves. This could hurt Bangladesh's progress. It could create an opportunity for the fascists to take control over Bangladesh."

Fakhrul said that even though senior party leaders were tortured at the DB office in July last year, they did not surrender or sign any undertakings.

"They had their toenails pulled out; their teeth broken. Sadly, while

the DB office incidents are shown in the media, the pictures of our tortured leaders are never published," he said, urging journalists to report such events.

"We don't see any reports or programmes about how Khaleda Zia, a woman who gave everything for democracy, was kept in prison. I urge the media to speak the truth and acknowledge her sacrifice," he added.

The BNP secretary general raised questions as to why the interim government could not fully start the trial of Sheikh Hasina, even though one year had passed.

He alleged that the government is indirectly blaming political parties for not cooperating in reform efforts, despite that "not being true".

Fakhrul said, "Where is Hasina's trial?... those who carried out killings

in broad daylight... BBC reports have exposed audio clips where Hasina is heard instructing to open fire... why have these matters not come up yet?"

"I urge the journalists to highlight these issues. You have done remarkable work. You have stood by the people of Bangladesh in their rightful, democratic struggle," he added.

Fakhrul said that those trying to corner the BNP by creating pressure will not succeed in their efforts.

"The current government is talking about reform every moment. They are indirectly trying to blame political parties, attempting to say that we are not cooperating. We have been constantly cooperating with their reform initiatives. We want to work together with everyone at all times."

Air base in Dhaka

FROM PAGE 12

The BAF organised the briefing to give updates on its activities following the jet crash at the Milestone School and College campus in Uttara's Diabari on July 21, which left 34 people dead, the majority of them children.

Air Commodore Mizanur Rahman, chief coordinator of the BAF coordination cell, began the briefing by paying tribute to the victims.

"We extend our deepest condolences to the students, teachers, guardians, the pilot, and others who lost their lives. Like the nation, we are shocked and saddened."

He said an emergency coordination cell, headed by an air commodore, has been working from the beginning to provide all kinds of assistance to the victims' families.

Two separate coordination cells were also set up at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery and the Combined Military Hospital (CMH), where most of the injured are undergoing treatment.

He said 45 injured are now being treated at different hospitals. Among them, 33 are at the burn institute, 11 at CMH, and one at the mental health institute.

Dr Maruf Islam, joint director

of the burn institute, said three are in critical condition at the intensive care units (ICU), and nine are in high-dependency units (HDU).

"We have discharged four patients -- two children and two adults. Nineteen others are in stable condition and will likely be released soon," said Maruf, who was also present at the briefing.

He added that experts from Singapore General Hospital, Harbin Medical University in China, and New Delhi have joined the treatment process alongside local experts and the chief adviser's personal physicians.

A new Bangladesh must be brought forth through reforms, he said, adding that the reforms should be such that no single individual can monopolise absolute power.

The July Charter must be announced by August 5.

"Those who have not yet reached the consensus due to party interests come forward now for the sake of the countrymen."

Death toll 34 as another student dies

FROM PAGE 12

With Ayan's death, the death toll is now 34.

Thirty-three survivors, including 27 children, are currently undergoing treatment at the burn institute. Three of them remain in critical condition and one of them was put on life support.

The nine-member probe body, led by former secretary AKM Zafar Ullah Khan, has been asked to submit its report on the aircraft crash within four weeks, according to Cabinet Division gazette issued on Sunday night.

The other members are a retired air vice marshal, three additional

secretaries from three ministries, Dhaka divisional commissioner, an urban planner, a professor of Buet's mechanical engineering department, and a lawyer.

The commission will examine the cause of the tragic crash, assess damage, and find out who is responsible, it added.

According to a gazette, it will assess the loss of lives and injuries suffered by students, teachers, and others, and determine the extent of all damage.

Additionally, it will review the construction of Milestone School, other structures near the airport, and

examine the legal and administrative aspects concerning the location and safety of the flying zone.

It will also make suggestions regarding the operation of training aircraft, the construction of buildings in flying zones, and emergency response protocols during terrible incidents.

The commission has been empowered to visit any location within Bangladesh and summon and question any individual.

It will carry out its investigation under the Commissions of Inquiry Act-1956 and the office of the divisional commissioner of Dhaka will provide secretarial support to the commission.

Hindu families living in fear

FROM PAGE 12

10:00pm that night, he added.

On information, police went there and arrested Ranjan on Saturday evening. Sub-inspector Shameem Ahmed has filed a case against him under the Cyber Security Act.

Ranjan was produced before a court on Sunday, after which he was sent to jail.

Around Sunday noon, several hundred people formed a human chain and staged demonstrations in the area, demanding Ranjan's punishment. Many of them later marched towards the Hindu neighbourhood and vandalised some more houses, OC Al Emran said.

They were infuriated at the police resistance as well.

Speaking to The Daily Star on Sunday, Ranjan's father Suman Roy claimed Ranjan did not upload any such post. "Rather, someone might have done this using a fake ID. It is a conspiracy."

Rabindra Chandra Roy, a resident of the area, said his house was vandalised and looted on Sunday afternoon.

"They took away my two cows and cash; they smashed chairs, tables and other furniture. We are panicking. I have sent two women and three children of my family to my relatives' home."

Subal Chandra Roy, another resident, said, "One of my cows and a goat were taken away. My furniture was broken. Police tried to stop them, but the attackers assaulted them too."



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

SHARTAJ AZIZ HOSSAIN

A few years ago, the idea of working alongside artificial intelligence (AI) may have sounded like something out of science fiction. Today, it's a workplace reality.

AI has moved beyond backend operations to become an active workplace assistant. It now crafts Slack replies, writes emails in Gmail and Outlook, summarises meetings via Otter.ai, and generates presentations through tools like Tome, seamlessly integrating into daily workflows.

Welcome to the era of AI as your coworker.

From tool to teammate: Rethinking our relationship with AI

AI has transformed from a passive tool into an active collaborator. Unlike traditional technology that simply follows commands, today's AI tools like GPT generate ideas, suggest next steps, and complete tasks autonomously. This creates a new kind of partnership: AI handles routine work, overcomes creative blocks, and adapts to your style through interaction. The result? Faster writing, sharper analysis, and better brainstorming, all with a teammate that's always available.

That's exactly how professionals like Sanjida Ahmed at Next Ventures are experiencing it in real time. "Working in the Community and Partner Department means staying curious, agile, and connected," she says. "Whether ideating strategies or mapping out ideas with Napkin AI, building automations with N8N, or using GPT to speed up planning, these tools make my workflow easier and more efficient, allowing me to focus on fostering stronger partnerships and creating meaningful community experiences." Her experience reflects a broader truth: AI isn't here just to do our work, it's here to elevate it.

Of course, one of the biggest concerns around AI in the workplace is job displacement. That fear isn't baseless, but it's also not the full story. Rather than replacing humans, AI is often augmenting them. Think of it as the intern who

never sleeps, the analyst who works in milliseconds, or the assistant who never forgets a deadline. Used wisely, AI takes over repetitive tasks like scheduling, data sorting, or formatting presentations, freeing up time for more complex, human-centred work like strategy, creativity, and relationship building.

Blending human skills and AI fluency: The new rules of work

Tasks that once consumed hours can now be done in minutes, sometimes seconds. Writers overcome creative blocks with AI nudges. Engineers debug with copilots. Designers turn ideas into visuals with a few prompts. The future of work is less about going step by step and more about fluid collaboration between human insight and machine speed.

But to thrive in this new dynamic, we need more than just access to tools. We need a mindset shift. As Iftekhar Rahman, HR Manager at Huawei Bangladesh, puts it, "AI is not our superior; it is our next-generation assistant." He suggests that AI isn't here to dominate, it's here to support. But only if we know how to use it responsibly and effectively.

Just as we once learned Excel or Zoom, we now need to learn how to work with AI. Across the globe, organisations like Klarna and Bain are hiring prompt engineers. In Bangladesh, startups are embedding AI-literate team members into content, data, and support functions. AI fluency is no longer niche; it's the new baseline. Iftekhar cautions, "Technology may seem like a threat when we lack the knowledge to use it wisely." Embracing AI is no longer optional; it's foundational.

Yet, as machines get smarter, human strengths are becoming more essential, not less. Emotional intelligence, cultural sensitivity, storytelling, and critical judgment can't be automated. These qualities set great professionals apart, and they're also the traits that help us use AI well. Systems thinking, ethical reasoning, and adaptability aren't just "nice to have". They're becoming core skills in the AI era.

That's why organisations are starting

to rethink hiring and training. Should prompt design be taught in onboarding? Should AI tools be introduced alongside traditional ones? Increasingly, the answer is yes. Because if we treat AI as just another tool, we miss its true potential. But if we see it, as Iftekhar suggests, as a way to "free ourselves to create greater value in our lives, our work, and our communities", then we move closer to what the future of work can truly be.

In the end, the most successful teams won't just be digital, they'll be deeply human and AI-fluent. That's the new rule of work.

New responsibilities, new ethics

Working with AI doesn't just change how we work; it transforms what we're responsible for. As AI becomes more deeply woven into everyday tasks, questions of accountability, fairness, and transparency are no longer theoretical; they're operational.

But what happens when the AI gets it wrong? Who takes the blame? How do we make sure algorithmic decisions don't unintentionally reinforce bias or exclude diverse perspectives? These are no longer philosophical debates. They're the new front lines of professional ethics.

And then there's etiquette in the AI age. If your AI coworker can summarise an entire meeting in seconds, should you still send that lengthy follow-up email? If a teammate uses GPT to deliver work faster, do you need to adopt similar tools just to keep pace?

Milky Mahmud, co-founder and COO of Shajgoj Limited, notes, "Leaders can't afford to stay vague about AI usage anymore." There's a growing need for clear norms: disclose when AI contributed to a deliverable, ensure human review for anything AI-generated, and distinguish between tasks where automation helps and where it harms.

Take hiring decisions or legal reviews, for example. AI can assist, but Milky stresses that "not every task should be automated". These sensitive areas still demand the kind of human judgment and nuance no algorithm can replicate.

Similarly, within teams, boundaries matter. In content, AI might support early drafts or idea generation, but the final message? That should always come from people who understand voice, tone, and context.

At an individual level, working with AI responsibly means more than just prompting well; it means prompting ethically. Structuring inputs carefully, verifying outputs, and avoiding shortcuts that might compromise integrity are now essential habits. If you're using AI to write a report, for instance, fact-checking and transparency around co-authorship aren't optional; they're part of the new professional standard.

Milky adds, "We're not just adopting new tools; we're building a new culture around how we work with them." That culture includes the expectation that humans stay in the loop, especially where judgment, empathy, or accountability are at stake.

But responsibility doesn't end with workers or companies. Are AI developers doing enough? While OpenAI, Google, and Microsoft have all published AI ethics principles, enforcement varies. Transparency around training data, model limitations, and inherent biases is still often lacking. As AI ethicist Timnit Gebru has pointed out, AI tends to reproduce power structures unless meaningful accountability is built in.

The future is collaborative

Ultimately, ethics in the age of AI isn't just about what the technology can do. It's about the culture, choices, and systems we build around it. Because in the end, it's not the algorithm that's responsible, it's us.

The question isn't whether AI will be your coworker. It already is. The real question is: Will you treat it like a competitor or a collaborator? Like any team member, AI has strengths and limitations. It thrives on clarity, context, and data. It falters in ambiguity, emotion, and ethics. But when paired with the best of human talent, it unlocks possibilities we've only begun to explore.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT



Save the Children

Manager, Finance

Deadline: August 3

Eligibility:

Prior experience in Finance, including 3 years in a management position.

Minimum experience: 7 years

British Council



Head, English & School Education

Deadline: August 17

Eligibility:

English teaching qualification with a postgraduate qualification in a related field and/or Diploma ELT (TEFL-Q).

Minimum experience: N/A



BRAC Bank PLC

Officer/Associate Manager, Trade Operations

Deadline: July 31

Eligibility:

Bachelor's/Master's degree from a reputed university with a satisfactory academic record. Degree in Business Administration, Economics, Bank Management, or a related field is preferred.

Minimum experience: 2-4 years

Aga Khan Academy Dhaka



Lead Visual Arts Teacher

Deadline: July 31

Eligibility:

Bachelor's/Master's degree in an education-related field, with professional teaching qualification.

Minimum experience: N/A

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.



“Man is not made for defeat. A man can be destroyed but not defeated.”
ERNEST HEMINGWAY

THE BOSSMAN

BY E. RAZA RONNY



Meta hires ChatGPT co-creator as SUPERINTELLIGENCE CHIEF SCIENTIST

NEXT STEP DESK

Meta has appointed Shengjia Zhao, one of the creators of ChatGPT, as Chief Scientist of its new Superintelligence Lab. Zhao, previously a research scientist at OpenAI, played a key role in developing ChatGPT, GPT-4, and several other AI models. He will now lead research at Meta's specialised AI unit, working directly with CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Meta's Chief AI Officer Alexander Wang.

Meta's newly formed Superintelligence Lab, led by executives including former Scale AI CEO Alexander Wang and ex-GitHub CEO Nat Friedman, will oversee multiple teams developing foundation models. The lab's primary focus involves creating more advanced AI systems, with particular emphasis on artificial general intelligence - AI capable of human-level cognitive abilities. Meta intends to make much of this research available as open-source technology.

Regarding the new hiring, Zuckerberg stated Zhao would set the research direction for the lab, particularly in developing AI reasoning models - an area where Meta currently lags behind competitors. The appointment comes as Meta ramps up hiring from competitors, offering large pay packages to attract top AI talent. Several researchers from OpenAI, Google DeepMind, and other firms have recently joined Meta's AI teams.

Running on empty? How to recharge before burnout hits

NEXT STEP DESK

Burnout doesn't always announce itself dramatically. It creeps in slowly. Maybe it's the Sunday morning dread, the constant fatigue, or the sense that even simple tasks feel heavy. If you're feeling drained but aren't ready to walk away, don't panic. You can course-correct before you hit full burnout.

First, know that exhaustion isn't a personal failure but rather, it's your body waving a red flag. As such, pushing through isn't sustainable. Identify what's draining you. Is it the volume of work, the lack of recognition, or feeling out of control of your schedule? From there, tackle the root cause and respond accordingly.

The next step is to reclaim your small pockets of energy. Block out 'focus time' to protect your working hours. Limit email checks to a few set times each day. These micro-adjustments create space for clear thinking and reduce the sense of being constantly 'on' at work.

Another thing you can do is redefine what 'good enough' looks like. Ask yourself, "What's the minimum viable version of this task?" Could a quick email replace a full



report? Could a shorter presentation still get the message across? Focus on what actually moves the needle.

Remember, small wins matter. Try starting your day with something you can finish quickly, for example, clearing one to-do or sending that email you've been avoiding. These tiny victories build momentum when motivation is low.

Don't forget to recharge outside of work. When your whole identity revolves around your job, burnout hits harder. Reconnect with hobbies,

even 20 minutes of reading, drawing, or walking without your phone can help you feel like yourself again.

If things still feel off, talk to your manager. Keep it constructive: "I'm committed to the role, but to keep performing well, I need to adjust X." A good manager would rather support you now than risk losing you later.

Burnout is real. But it's not inevitable. Slow down, reset, and give yourself space to sustain your momentum over the long haul.

Google's AI search summaries are reducing website clicks, study finds

NEXT STEP DESK

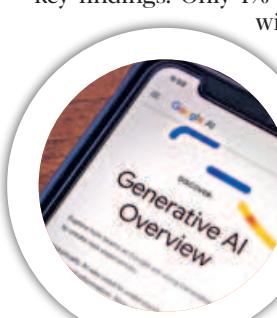
Google's AI-generated search summaries, part of its 'AI Overviews' feature, are significantly decreasing click-through rates to external websites, according to a new study by the Pew Research Center, a US-based think tank.

The research, based on 900 US adults' search behaviours, reveals that users click on traditional website links just 8% of the time when these AI overviews appear, which is nearly half the 15% click-through rate for standard search results.

The study, conducted on March 2025, revealed these key findings: Only 1% of users clicked on sources cited within AI summaries themselves; 26% ended their browsing session entirely after seeing an AI summary (vs 16% for regular results); and that AI summaries appear in 18% of searches overall, but much more frequently for long queries (53% for 10+ words vs 8% for 1-2 words) and questions (60% when starting with "who," "what," etc.).

According to the study, Wikipedia, YouTube, and Reddit dominate as sources, appearing in 15% of AI summaries and 17% of standard results. Government websites appear more in summaries (6% vs 2%), while news sites maintain equal presence (5%). Most summaries (88%) cite three or more sources and average 67 words, though lengths vary widely.

With 58% of users encountering at least one summary during the study period, the research suggests that Google Search's AI integration is fundamentally reshaping online information consumption habits.



Stokes' outburst and a draw worse than defeat

ASHFAQ UL ALAM

"You want to get a Test hundred against Harry Brook? If you wanted to score a century, you should have batted like you wanted to get it!"

Exhaustion coupled with frustration can make people do funny things. In the case of England captain Ben Stokes, it made him utter these two lines at India's Ravindra Jadeja in the final hour of the riveting fourth Test in Manchester on Sunday, and inadvertently reveal what actually led to his righteous rage that soured what otherwise was a brilliant game of cricket.

Stokes said this right as he handed the ball to Brook, a part-time off-spinner, for the 139th over of India's second innings following a row with Jadeja and his partner Washington Sundar after the duo refused to accept the draw with one hour of play to go.

Jadeja and Sundar, having batted for 50 overs to ensure the draw, were unbeaten on 89 and 80 respectively and with 15 overs left in the day, were in with a chance to reach the triple-figure mark.

England were not amused by this. Having already bowled 138 overs at a stretch, it meant they had to continue their pointless struggle with India leading by 75 runs.



So, handing the ball to Brook for the first time in the match made sense as Stokes later explained after the match, "It got to that point where there was obviously only one result and there was absolutely no chance I was going to risk any of my big fast bowlers."

Stokes' post-match explanation behind bringing in Brooks is creditable enough. Unfortunately for him though, his taunt at Jadeja for having to complete his century against a part-timer was caught on the stump mic.

Firstly, this sledge was nonsensical, as Jadeja did not bring Brooks into the attack, Stokes did. England's top bowlers had already thrown everything they had at the pair but could not break their resilience.

Jadeja and Sundar forced Stokes and Co to accept a draw, which for them, is worse than a defeat.

Under coach Brendan McCullum and captain Stokes, England have adopted the Bazball approach, and have practically sworn off against draws.

Since Stokes took over as Test captain in June of 2022, England have won 16 out of their 23 home Tests, lost five and drawn only twice, including the one against India.

The previous draw had come against Australia in 2023, also in Manchester, but that was a rain-induced stalemate.

This is the first time Bazball has failed to produce a result at home, something that did not sit right with Stokes, who himself had an incredible match as an all-rounder, with a century and a five-wicket haul in the first innings.

Stokes' taunt to Jadeja about not going for a century earlier was based on the frustration of India's ultra-defensive approach to save the Test.

But what Stokes in his indignation forgot, is that for India, drawing the Test and keeping the series alive at 2-1 heading into The Oval was the main goal, and Jadeja and Sundar's hundreds were the icing on the cake. Stokes' outburst at the end was nothing but misdirected anger, which he would be better served to use in the upcoming series decider.

FIH JUNIOR WORLD CUP SQUAD Sabit the lone outsider

SPORTS REPORTER

With domestic competitions irregular and district leagues long dormant, Bangladesh's national hockey teams at various levels have increasingly come to rely on current and former students of Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishtan (BKSP). In that landscape, Nazmus Sabit Mahmud stands out.

A centre forward, Sabit is the only non-BKSP player included in the preliminary U-21 national squad for the upcoming FIH Junior World Cup. A product of the Ostad Fazlul Haque Hockey Academy in Old Dhaka, Sabit captained Armanitola High School in the inter-school tournament and emerged as both top scorer and best player in the 2023 Second Division Hockey League.

Now a 12th grade student at Kabi Nazrul Islam College, Sabit is chasing a place in the final squad. Aware that every other player comes from BKSP, he sees the challenge clearly but says he's "mentally prepared for the fight."

"I know I am the only player who has been called up beyond the BKSP and I know it is going to be very competitive for me," Sabit told reporters before starting training on the second day at Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Sabit also has hockey in his blood. His father, Hazi Mohammad Selim Mahmud, played for Mauthtuli Club, and he shares a family



connection with national forward Rasel Mahmud Jimmy. The relationship goes beyond inspiration: Jimmy often gives him technical advice, especially for penalty corners.

Mehrab Hossain Samin, who captained the team at the AHF Junior Asia Cup, is equally eager to begin World Cup preparations.

"We're really excited to start preparing for the FIH Junior World Cup. We grew up watching our cricket team play on that stage, so it feels like a huge achievement for hockey to finally reach the World Cup too."

"We are practising wearing the jersey which has a photo of the World Cup trophy. This photo is fake but it has been a big thing for us," said Samin, adding that starting camp four months in advance will help build team chemistry, but match exposure remains crucial.

To strengthen their campaign, the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) plans to arrange at least eight practice matches abroad. General secretary Lt Col (rtd) Rizaul Hasan informed discussions are underway to tour Pakistan for four matches, followed by another four in a European country, but "nothing's finalised yet."

The BHF general secretary further informed Dutch coach Seigfried Aikman is expected to arrive in the first week of August to sign a memorandum of understanding before taking charge of the U-21 side in early September.

"Just speechless to win a fourth Tour de France. Six years in a row on the podium and this one feels especially amazing, and I'm super proud that I can wear this yellow jersey."

Slovenian rider TADEJ POGACAR after winning the Tour de France title for the fourth time



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Afra's quiet punch behind Afeida's football fame

ANISUR RAHMAN

Within Bangladesh's sports fraternity, Afeida Khandokar's name now stands out with prominence.

The captain of the Bangladesh women's football team has earned her recognition on her own terms, leading the team to international successes, including a historic qualification for the Asian Cup in Australia.

Yet, while Afeida shines brightly in the limelight, her elder sister Afra Khandokar has been quietly scripting her own story -- one that, until now, has largely remained out of the public eye.

Afra is not a footballer like her younger sister. Instead, she chose a different battleground: the boxing ring.

For years, she has been a consistent performer, winning gold medals in the Women's Junior Boxing Championship, Bangladesh Youth Games, Victory Day, and Independence Day tournaments.

But despite her steady success, boxing seldom draws the same media spotlight in Bangladesh as football or cricket.

That has begun to change during the 31st Men's and 7th Women's National Boxing Championships, where Afra's performances, coupled with the fame of her footballing sister, have finally brought her deserved attention.

Representing Bangladesh Ansar, Afra is now a semifinalist in the Women's 52kg weight category.

Afra's journey is intertwined with that of her sister's. While she is immensely proud of Afeida's achievements, her own path to sports began with a twist of fate.

"I wanted to be a footballer initially," Afra recalled. "I tried to get admitted to BKSP for football but couldn't. Later, through a talent hunt program and 15 days of training in Dhaka,

Afra's determination reflects in her steady climb. After a silver medal in her debut national

graduate in physical education and sports science, she believes in boxing's untapped potential in Bangladesh.

"Football and cricket dominate here, but boxing is progressing," Afra said. "If we get long-term training, we can bring results from abroad too."

Afra's determination reflects in her steady climb. After a silver medal in her debut national



I was admitted to boxing. At first, I regretted not playing football, but now there's no regret -- I'm doing well in boxing."

Their father, Khandaker Arif Hassan Prince, has been instrumental in nurturing their sporting ambitions. Their parents routinely travel to Dhaka from their hometown to support their daughters, whether it's on the football field or inside the boxing ring.

While Afeida leads Bangladesh's football revolution, Afra dreams of leaving her mark in boxing -- not only as a fighter, but eventually as a coach. A

women's championship, she's now within striking distance of gold.

For Afra, her younger sister's fame also illuminates her journey. "It's a matter of pride for me and my family. We are really happy for Afeida," she said.

In many ways, the Khandokar sisters represent two sides of the same coin -- one basking in mainstream glory, the other quietly punching through barriers in a less celebrated sport. But together, they embody a family's relentless passion for sports, rooted in Satkhira and reaching national prominence.

Deshmukh wins Women's Chess World Cup

FIDE

Divya Deshmukh, the 19-year-old International Master from Nagpur, Maharashtra, etched her name into chess history by defeating Grandmaster Humpy Koneru 1.5-0.5 in the tiebreaks to win the Women's World Cup in the Georgian city of Batumi on Monday.

She now follows in the footsteps of GM Alexandra Kosteniuk (2021) and GM Aleksandra Goryachkina (2023) as the third-ever winner of this prestigious title.

With this remarkable win, Divya Deshmukh is now not only the 2025 Women's World Cup Champion, but also one of the most exciting young stars in the world of chess.

Divya also not only secured the USD 50,000 first prize, but also automatically earned the Grandmaster (GM) title -- the highest title in chess.

She is now India's fourth woman to become a grandmaster, which is significant because before the event started, she had none of the three norms required to become a grandmaster.

After the final game, an emotional Divya embraced her mother before giving a short interview: "It's hard for me to speak now. Of course, this definitely means a lot, but there is a lot more to achieve, so I am hoping that this is just the start," she said.

12-year-old swimmer hailed as 'phenomenally talented'

AFP, Singapore

The 12-year-old schoolgirl Yu Zidi was labelled "phenomenally talented" by her rivals after narrowly missing out on a medal at swimming's world championships on Monday.

China's Yu finished fourth in the women's 200m medley in Singapore in her first world championships final, as Canadian star Summer McIntosh took gold.

Yu finished the race in 2min 09.21sec, missing out on bronze by 0.06sec.

American Alex Walsh, who took silver, said Yu was "phenomenally talented at such a young age".

"I think it will be interesting to see how she takes this meet and translates it into the future swims she has because she's definitely got a really bright future," said Walsh.

Yu was fastest off the blocks and she was in third place before fading towards the end of the race.

She will also compete in Singapore in the 400m medley and 200m butterfly.

Canada's Mary Sophie Harvey, who beat Yu to the bronze, said the Chinese swimmer can be a force at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

"She might have more pressure by the end of the meet because she's been swimming really well so far," said Harvey.

"I used to be a junior and I used to think that it's just gaining experience for the future, and I think going into LA we're probably going to see her a lot more."

Yu discovered swimming as a six-year-old in order to cool off in China's boiling-hot summers.

The minimum age at the world championships is 14 but younger swimmers can compete if -- like Yu -- they meet the qualifying standard.

Hampton's 'fairy tale' hour in 4k clarity

STAR SPORTS DESK

Finals make heroes. Penalty shootouts carve legends; especially out of goalkeepers. But Hannah Hampton's story peels back like an onion: layered; stinging; unexpected.

She was never meant to become immortal with gloves: not with an eye condition that still affects her depth perception; not after being sidelined for months; not with the weight of Mary Earps' legacy hanging over her hands.

Yet on a cool July evening in Switzerland, she stood tall on the biggest stage in European football, saving penalties and hearts alike as England beat reigning world champions Spain to retain the UEFA Women's Euro title on Sunday.

Once a striker in her youth, Hampton's journey to becoming England's No. 1 was anything but conventional.

Born with a serious eye condition (strabismus) that affects her depth perception, she was advised early on to stay away from football. But her family's move to Spain at age five ignited something deeper. Living there for five years, she picked up the language, joined Villarreal's academy, and fell in love with the game.

It wasn't long before she returned to England and made waves. A switch from striker to goalkeeper during her development at Stoke City led to a meteoric rise.

By 16, she was in Birmingham City's



first team, dazzling with her feet as much as her hands. "Her passing range is second to none," recalled Ellen White, her former team-mate.

Technically gifted and fiercely determined, Hampton made her senior England debut in 2022; fittingly against Spain. That same year, she celebrated the Euro win from the sidelines but was soon dropped due to behaviour concerns.

The road back was hard; but she made it. "You can't let all the media scrutiny win," she had said after her recall in 2023, when manager Sarina Wiegman noted she had "sorted out personal issues".

There was additional pressure coming into this tournament. Mary Earps, a two-time FIFA Best Goalkeeper and England icon, had announced her surprise retirement five weeks before the Euros.

Hampton, still young and still fighting

to prove herself, stepped up and left no doubt.

Against Sweden in the quarters, she saved two penalties. And in the final, she denied two-time Ballon d'Or winner Aitana Bonmati before sealing the win with a crucial stop from Mariona Caldentey.

"In 120 minutes, the team worked so hard for us all," Hampton said after the final. "So the penalty shootout was my moment to say thank you."

Coach Wiegman, beaming with pride, summed it up best: "Her journey has been incredible. It's a little bit like a fairy tale to stop those penalties in a Euros final."

At 24, with imperfect eyesight but perfect composure, Hampton -- on the biggest stage of her career -- verified the notion that fairy tales are written by those remain defiant.

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MILESTONE TRAGEDY

Death toll 34 as another student dies

Commission formed to probe jet crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another student who sustained severe burns in the July 21 jet crash at Milestone School and College in the capital's Uttara died early yesterday.

Meanwhile, the government has formed a high-power commission to probe the crash and make recommendations to prevent such incidents in the future.

Shaheen Faravi Ayan, 14, a seventh grader, passed away around 1:45am at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, said Shawon Bin Rahman, a resident surgeon at the institute.

"He had 40 percent of his body burnt," he said.

The number of crash deaths at the institute has risen to 18.

The health ministry on Sunday revised the official death toll twice within six and a half hours, eventually confirming 33 deaths.

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In the wake of last week's harrowing jet crash at Milestone School & College in Uttara's Diabari, a counselling centre has been set up on campus to offer psychological support to children suffering from trauma. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Thailand and Cambodia agree on ceasefire

AFP, Putrajaya

Thailand and Cambodia's leaders agreed to an "unconditional" ceasefire yesterday, after five days of combat along their jungle-clad frontier that has killed at least 36 people.

Nearly 300,000 people have fled as the two sides fired artillery, rockets and guns in a battle over the long-disputed area, which is home to a smattering of ancient temples.

The flare-up was the deadliest since violence raged sporadically from 2008-2011 over the territory, claimed by both sides because of a vague demarcation made by Cambodia's French colonial administrators in 1907.

Reading a joint statement from the leaders of both countries after peace talks, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said they had agreed "an immediate and unconditional ceasefire" with effect from midnight Monday (1700 GMT).

"This is a vital first step towards de-escalation and the restoration of peace and security," he said at a press conference in Malaysia's administrative capital Putrajaya, flanked by Thai acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai and Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Manet.

Anwar said a meeting of military commanders from both sides would take place on Tuesday morning, before the countries' cross-border committee would meet in Cambodia on August 4.

As the deal was being announced, an AFP journalist in the Cambodian city of Samraong -- 17 kilometres (10 miles) from the fraught frontier -- reported hearing continuing artillery blasts.

But locals expressed relief that a truce had been struck.

"I am very happy with the ceasefire. This will let people go back home and children go back to school," 48-year-old Cambodian vendor Soeung Chhivling told AFP. "Please stop the clashes."

No extortionist will be spared

Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will show no leniency towards any extortionist regardless of their identity or influence, said Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury.

"No one will be spared, no matter how powerful or influential they are, or what identity they claim -- no extortionist will be given immunity," he told reporters yesterday at the secretariat following a meeting of the Law and Order Core Committee.

On July 26, police arrested five individuals, including leaders of the Students Against Discrimination platform, on extortion charges in Dhaka.

The group, identifying themselves as SAD members, went to the residence of former Awami League lawmaker Shammim Ahmed and demanded Tk 50 lakh.

"We didn't let the extortionist in Gulshan walk free," he said, adding that the crackdown was part of a broader combing operation against extortion and criminal networks.

The government has also intensified its efforts to curb the spread of narcotics.

"Drugs have spread into every corner of our society -- we are now focusing on how to stop this."



SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

News of SAD
coordinators'
arrest painful
Says Fakhrul
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

B N P
Secretary
General
Mirza
Fakhrul
Islam
Alamgir
yesterday said he was
saddened to see the arrest
of members from Students
Against Discrimination on
extortion charges in the
capital.

"I turned blue with
sorrow when I opened the
newspaper. I saw that five
coordinators had been
arrested by police for
allegedly extorting Tk 50
lakh from the residence of
a former lawmaker. Is this
the outcome we had hoped
for? Is this what the people
of Bangladesh wanted?" he
said.

"If such an incident
can happen so soon, even
before a year has passed,
what does that say about
our future? I say this
because the entire nation is
looking to them..." Fakhrul
added.

The BNP leader
made the remarks while
inaugurating a graffiti
campaign by the party's

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Israeli rights groups call Gaza campaign 'genocide'

At least 55 Palestinians killed, including 17 waiting for aid

AGENCIES

Rights groups B'Tselem and Physicians for Human Rights Israel said on Monday that they had concluded the war in Gaza amounts to "genocide" against Palestinians, a first for Israeli NGOs.

Both organisations are frequent critics of Israeli government policies, but the language in their reports issued on Monday was their most stark yet.

"Nothing prepares you for the realisation that you are part of a society committing genocide. This is a deeply painful moment for us," B'Tselem executive director Yuli Novak told a news conference unveiling the two reports.

"As Israelis and Palestinians who live here and witness the reality every day, we have a duty to speak the truth as clearly as possible," she said.

"Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinians."

Since October 7, 2023, Israeli assault has left much of the Gaza Strip, home to more than two million Palestinians, in ruins, and according to the Gaza's health ministry has killed at least 59,821 people, most of them civilians.

All Gazans have been driven from their homes at least once since the start of the war, and UN

agencies warn that residents face a growing threat of famine and malnutrition.

The International Court of Justice, in an interim ruling in early 2024 in a case lodged by South Africa, found it "plausible" that the Israeli offensive had violated the UN Genocide Convention.

The Israeli government, backed by the United States, fiercely denies the charge and says it is fighting to defeat Hamas and to bring back Israeli hostages still held in Gaza.

The reports from B'Tselem -- one of Israel's best-known rights groups -- and Physicians for Human Rights Israel argue that the war's objectives go further.

B'Tselem's report cites statements from senior politicians to illustrate that Israel "is taking coordinated action to intentionally destroy Palestinian society in the Gaza Strip".

Physicians for Human Rights Israel's report documents what the group says is "the deliberate and systematic destruction of Gaza's healthcare system".

On the ground, truckloads of food reached hungry Gazans yesterday after Israel promised to open secure aid routes, but humanitarian agencies warned vast amounts more were

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'Without the
uprising, you
wouldn't have
dreamt of polls'

**Nahid tells political
parties, demands justice,
reforms before election**

STAR REPORT

Political parties would not have dreamt of an election had there been no mass uprising on August 5, said Nahid Islam, convener of National Citizen Party (NCP).

"Under fascist Hasina, you would have had to wait another four years for an election," he said at a street rally yesterday organised as part of its monthlong programme styled 'Road March to Build the Nation' at Faujdar intersection in Jamalpur town.

Nahid's comments came in reference to the accusations made by a few political parties that the NCP is attempting to delay the national election.

"We want justice for all the crimes committed by the previous regime, including for massacre -- we want reform of state structures, and we want elections too."

The students and people have toppled the fascist government and ushered in the birth of a new

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3



Just outside the outpatient gate of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, auto-rickshaws hog almost the entire width of the Secretariat Road. They are blocking traffic, causing congestion, and obstructing emergency access to the hospital. This photo was taken near the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

ATTACK OVER FB POST
Hindu families
living in fear
in Rangpur's
Gangachara

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The Hindu community in Aldadpur village of Rangpur's Gangachara upazila is living in fear after several homes were vandalised by people protesting over an alleged Facebook post hurting religious sentiment.

Police said 12 houses were attacked while the locals put the number at 20 and the Upazila Nirbahi Officer at 15.

Army personnel and additional police have been deployed in the area to prevent further violence, said Al Emran, officer in charge of Gangachara Model Police Station.

According to locals and police, Ranjan Roy, 21, a resident of the village and a student of Rangpur Polytechnic Institute, allegedly uploaded a Facebook post deemed hurtful to religious sentiment.

Tensions had been rising since Saturday noon as the news spread, the OC said quoting locals.

A group of people vandalised some houses in the neighbourhood around

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