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retail banking
in Bangladesh

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farmland
threatens
livelihoods

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mandates prison
sentences for
polls critics

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Injuries, fatigue
add to decisive
Oval Test's
intrigue

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CONSENSUS TALKS Deal reached on women's JS seats

Key issues of July Charter still not agreed
upon with discussions entering final day

MD ABBAS

The deadline set by the National
Consensus Commission for finalising
the July Charter expires today, yet
several crucial issues remain unresolved.

Outstanding matters include the
formation of the caretaker government,
the selection of its chief adviser, the
structure and process of establishing the
upper house, the fundamental principles
of state policy, and the method for
electing the president.

On the penultimate day of talks,
the 22nd day of the second phase
held yesterday at the Foreign Service
Academy, political parties reached
consensus on women's representation in
parliament. Seven key topics were on the
agenda.

Prof. Ali Riaz, vice president of the

- Parties agree that 5% of total nominees in the next election will be women
- They also agree to retain existing system of having 50 seats reserved for women

National Consensus Commission, told
reporters after the talks around 9:30pm
that parties agreed to nominate women
in at least 5 percent of constituencies in
the next national election.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

BOND SCAM
Salman Rahman
barred from stock
market for life
Star exposed the
irregularities in 2023

STAFF
CORRESPONDENT



The Bangladesh
Securiti es
and Exchange
Commission has
declared Salman
F Rahman, former
adviser to deposed
prime minister Sheikh Hasina, unwanted
for life in the stock market for misleading
investors with a deceptively named bond.

The same punishment has been
handed down to his son, Ahmed Shayan
Fazlur Rahman, and former BSEC
chairman Prof Shibli Rubayat-Ul-Islam
for their involvement in the scam.

In a press release issued yesterday, the
regulator said the trio deceived investors
by naming a bond "IFIC Aamar Bond",
creating the false impression it was
issued by IFIC Bank, when the actual
issuer was Sreepu Township Ltd.

The DailyStar exposed the irregularities
in a report titled "Aamar Bond not IFIC's",
published on Nov 23, 2023.

However, it took the BSEC until
after the fall of Hasina's Awami League
government to form an inquiry
committee in October last year over

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6



Buses jostling for passengers block the entire side of airport road at Kuril Bishwa Road bus stop yesterday. The photo was taken only a stone's throw away from the spot where two racing buses killed two school students in 2018, sparking a nationwide protest demanding safer roads.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

PHOTO ON PAGE 12

**July crackdown was
'a political decision'**
Ex-IGP Mamun says in confessional
statement; choppers were deployed
to create climate of fear



Ex-IGP Javed Patwary advised
50% vote stuffing night
before 2018 polls

Enforced disappearances
ordered by Hasina's defence
adviser Tarique Siddique

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun has said that most of the decisions made to suppress the July uprising came from political high-ups, including the prime minister herself.

He said this in a confessional statement to a Dhaka magistrate on March 24.

Mamun is now behind bars in a case filed against him over crimes against humanity during the July movement. Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and ex-home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal are his co-accused.

He was made an approver upon his request on July 10.

In a legal context, an "approver" is someone who was involved in a crime but, in exchange for a reduced sentence or pardon, confesses their guilt and provides testimony against their accomplices.

In his statement, Mamun said regular meetings of a "core committee" were held at Asaduzzaman's house almost every night around 8:00-9:00pm from July 19, 2024, onwards to suppress the uprising.

Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Zakir Hossain

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

The hospital that did not back down



SHAEEN MOLLA and NAZIBA BASHER

At the height of the July uprising, many hospitals turned their backs -- some out of fear, others silenced or forced into complicity. State forces roamed halls of healing, seizing CCTV footage, erasing patient records, and threatening doctors not to treat the wounded.

Elsewhere, hospitals shut their doors, fearing protesters couldn't pay.

Teenagers with gunshot wounds were refused entry, ambulances were stopped, and lives were lost -- not just to bullets, but to suppression and cowardice.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Since July 17, Jatrabari had turned into one of the uprising's fiercest battlegrounds. This photograph was taken near the Jatrabari Police Station -- a site marked by tear gas, bullets, and chaos. Just across the road stood Safa Marwa Hospital, its doors open through it all, becoming a lifeline for the wounded.

PHOTO: FILE

Landlord killed inside BNP office for seeking rent

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A landlord was beaten to death allegedly by local BNP activists in Narayanganj's Araihazar yesterday, following a dispute over unpaid rent for a local party office set up on his property.

The victim is Md Jahangir Hossain, 57, of Salmadi Naypara village. Local BNP leaders claimed Jahangir was the assistant general secretary of the Mahmudpur union unit of Jatiyabadi Mtsajibai Dal, but his family denied he had any political ties.

Khandaker Nasir Uddin, officer-in-charge of Araihazar Police Station, said the incident took place around 11:30am at Salmadi Bazar after Jahangir went to the newly set up party office to demand due rent.

"Preliminary investigation revealed that the shop space belonged to the victim. A few months ago, local BNP leaders had established a party office there," the OC said. The dispute reportedly escalated when Jahangir confronted them, leading to an altercation inside the BNP office, during which he was beaten.

Jahangir was taken to Araihazar Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared him dead. Police said there were injury marks on his body.

"We have received complaints about one local BNP leader, Tota Mia Pradhan, his son, nephews, and several BNP activists. The matter is under

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Riyad-led group targeted another former AL MP Cheques worth Tk 2.25cr found at ex- SAD leader's home

RAFIUL ISLAM

The group led by former Students Against Discrimination leader Abdur Razzak Riyad, arrested for allegedly extorting a former Awami League lawmaker's family in Gulshan, had targeted another ex-AL MP, Abdul Kalam Azad, a month earlier, said police.

According to police and the victim, a group of 10-12 individuals led by Riyad stormed Azad's Green Road office on June 26, threatened him with public humiliation, and forced him to write cheques worth around Tk 5 crore.

Talking to The Daily Star, the former MP said the attackers demanded money, threatening that about 200 people were waiting outside to humiliate him.

"Do you want to get slapped by 200 people, get beaten with shoes by 200 people?" one of them threatened, Azad told The Daily Star.

"They said, 'Will you go to the police'



SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Crackdown on March for Justice

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

As the sun rose on July 31, 2024, thousands of students, teachers, and citizens across Bangladesh prepared to join the March for Justice, a nationwide programme organised by Students Against Discrimination.

Intended to honour those killed or arrested during the quota reform protests, the day soon became another chapter of repression and resistance, with clashes, detentions, and violence unfolding across cities.

The peaceful rallies were disrupted as law enforcers used teargas, stun grenades, and batons. At least 100 people were injured and 83 detained.

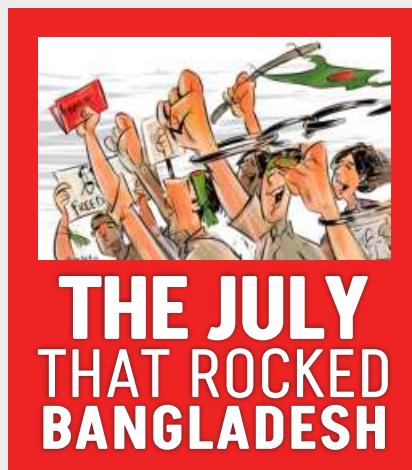
In Barishal, police charged at students on Kathpatti Road, injuring 11, including five journalists. A confrontation broke out inside Barishal City Corporation between protesters and City Panel Mayor-2 Enamul Haque Bahar. Thirteen protesters were detained; most were later released.

In Sylhet, around 100 Shahjalal University of Science and Technology students marched towards Subid Bazar. When they tried to cross police barricades around 1:00pm, teargas and stun grenades were fired. Locals said around 50 were injured. Another 100 cultural and political activists also marched through the city.

Khulna saw intense clashes as students marched from Nirlala Mor to Royal Mor, dismantled barricades at Moyla Pota, and gathered at Satrasta. Police detained at least 19 people.

In Dinajpur, 10 were detained, including five female students, during rallies at Gore Shaheed Boromath and the Shaheed Minar.

In Dhaka, private university students and teachers were intercepted near the High Court. At least five students were picked up; one was later released. Two Dhaka University professors -- Nusrat Jahan Chowdhury and Shehreen Amin Monami -- were shoved by police



Professor Salimullah Khan spoke during a protest organised by ULAB teachers in Dhaka on July 31, 2024, demanding justice for the students who were killed, arrested, and disappeared during the quota reform movement.

FILE PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

while trying to stop a student's arrest. The University Teachers' Network condemned the "misbehaviour" and demanded an investigation.

A group of pro-BNP DU teachers, joined by students from BUET, DU, and private universities, attempted to march to the High Court but were stopped near Shishu Academy. They held a sit-in at Doyel Chatter. Over 50 lawyers gathered near the closed Mazar Gate of the High Court, chanting in solidarity.

In Chattogram, students protested on court premises, joined by pro-BNP lawyers. A confrontation followed with pro-AL lawyers.

At Jahangirnagar University, students and teachers held a signature campaign demanding the release of detainees.

The then prime minister Sheikh Hasina said damaged buildings could be rebuilt but lives lost could not be returned. She claimed her government had fulfilled the student demands and that the Appellate Division had upheld the 2018 notification abolishing quotas.

At a protest organised by ULAB teachers, Prof Salimullah Khan called the killings state-sponsored and demanded an international probe. Wearing red, teachers expressed solidarity with the "killed, injured, disappeared, and persecuted" and called for the withdrawal of all cases.

Salimullah said the issue was political and criticised the government for choosing repression over dialogue. He said an apology and resignation were needed for a fresh start.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir called the government a "public enemy" and accused it of a genocide. He urged citizens to join the protests and called for international accountability.

That day, a Supreme Court lawyer filed a petition seeking a judicial commission to investigate the deaths of four children during the protests.

The government lifted restrictions on Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp after a meeting with Meta, ByteDance, and YouTube representatives.

Still, the crackdown continued.

Law enforcers arrested 281 more

people in the 36 hours before 6:00pm on July 31 -- 205 in 31 districts, the rest in Dhaka. Of the 76 produced in court, most were jailed, some placed on remand.

This brought total arrests since July 18 to at least 10,769 across 673 cases filed in Dhaka and 51 districts.

Two US senators and two UK MPs urged Bangladeshi authorities to conduct an independent probe into the alleged rights violations.

That night, protest organisers announced Remembering the Heroes, a series of programmes to honour the fallen -- silent processions, protest songs, wall writings, and campaigns under hashtags like #JulyMassacre and #RememberingOurHeroes. They reiterated their nine-point demand, including the resignation of seven cabinet members and an apology from Hasina.

What began as remembrance became yet another day of trauma. But in the chants, marches, and graffiti, the students held their ground -- mourning, resisting and refusing to forget.

Riyad-led group targeted another former AL MP

FROM PAGE 1

station yourself, or should we take you?"

Azad said as he had no money with him, the attackers searched his drawers, found a cheque book, and coerced him into writing the cheques.

"They said I was an aide of Sheikh Hasina, so I had to pay."

Azad was elected a member of parliament in 2009 through a by-election after then prime minister Sheikh Hasina vacated the Rangpur-6 seat.

Earlier yesterday, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Deputy Commissioner (Media) Talebur Rahman said they recovered four cheques worth Tk 2.25 crore from Riyad's house. According to police sources, the cheques were signed by Azad.

Police said Riyad and his associates could not cash the cheques due to insufficient funds. Since then, the group had been pressuring Azad to deposit money into the account.

The process of filing a case was underway till the filing of this report at 8:00pm.

On July 26, Riyad, Ibrahim Hossain Munna, 24, Dhaka city unit convener of Student Against Discrimination; SAD members Sakadoun Siam, 22, and Sadab, 21; and a 16-year-old were arrested from the house of former MP Shammi Ahmed in Dhaka's Gulshan area, after allegedly trying to extort her family.

They are currently on remand and have been expelled from their respective organisations.

In the case filed with Gulshan Police Station, Shammi's husband, Siddique Abu Zafar, alleged that the group, identifying themselves as members of SAD, first visited their home on July 17 and demanded Tk 50 lakh in cash.

As the former MP was not home at the time, the demand was made to her husband.

"When I refused to pay, they labelled me an Awami League associate and kept pressuring me. Eventually, I gave Tk 10 lakh to Abdur Razak Riyad," Zafar said.

He said the group returned again on July 19, banged on the door, but left when he called police.

"On July 26, Riyad and others came again. Though I was not there, the security guard informed me. They demanded the remaining Tk 40 lakh and threatened to hand me over to police if I didn't comply."

He added, "I called the police again, and five of them were arrested from the spot, while another accused, Kazi Gourab, managed to flee."

Gulshan Police Station Officer-in-Charge Hafizur Rahman said police are investigating whether the group had extorted others as well.

Deal reached on women's JS seats

FROM PAGE 1

They also consented to retaining the existing 50 reserved seats for women, with necessary constitutional amendments to follow.

"Almost all parties agreed in principle to gradually raise the number of women's seats to 100," Riaz said, adding that while some parties submitted notes of dissent, "a broad consensus has been established".

He said following the charter's signing, political parties would be urged to nominate at least 5 percent female candidates in the next polls. The constitution will also require 10 percent female nominations in the following election, with the quota increasing by 5 percentage points in each subsequent one until 33 percent representation is achieved. The reserved seat provision would remain until 2043 or be repealed earlier if the 33 percent target is met.

Riaz added that a concept paper on expanding the president's powers had been shared with parties.

The proposed expansion includes appointments to the posts of attorney general; heads and members of commissions such as the NHRC, Information Commission, Press Council, Bangladesh Bank, UGC, and the energy and telecom regulators; chiefs of the armed forces; and heads of DGFI and NSI.

"These proposals have been sent to the parties for consideration," said Riaz. "If consensus is reached, constitutional amendments will follow."

Members of the commission also met Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, who chairs the commission, to brief him on progress and disagreements.

"Our goal today is to reach full consensus on the July Charter," said Riaz. "We've already agreed on 14 major issues, including women's representation. Parties were asked to submit written amendments."

He said the commission has been tasked with resolving decisions on the caretaker government system and the upper house structure. The commission will clarify its position on the matter today, he said.

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Gulshan Police Station Officer-in-Charge Hafizur Rahman said police are investigating whether the group had extorted others as well.

A preliminary draft of the charter has already been shared with

parties. "We expect to receive any final additions or revisions by tomorrow (today)," said Riaz.

Apart from women's representation, the agenda covered proposals on the president's role, presidential election procedures, upper house structure and membership, expansion of fundamental rights, and principles of state policy.

Riaz said discussions on presidential powers would be deferred, as the proposal was newly introduced.

"We want to reach unanimous decisions on all other matters and your cooperation is essential in doing so, just as you have supported us since the beginning. We will continue our efforts in that spirit," he added.

The commission's proposal submitted earlier during yesterday's talks called for nominating women in 5 to 7 percent of general seats in the upcoming polls while retaining the 50 reserved seats.

In the following election, the quota would rise to 15 percent, increasing incrementally until 100 women are directly elected to parliament by the 15th parliamentary election.

BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed proposed starting with 5 percent, stating that his party would struggle to field so many female candidates. He suggested raising the number to 15 percent starting from the 14th parliament.

NCP Member Secretary Akhter Hossen opposed the commission's proposal and reiterated support for direct elections to 100 women's seats.

Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammed Taher opposed BNP's stance and suggested exploring other ways to increase reserved seats in a way that honours the spirit of inclusion."

In response, Riaz said the final decision would follow Prof Yunus's guidance.

Tania Rab of JSD (Rab) and Mominul Amin of NDM recommended easing the binding quota to allow parties

flexibility in fielding 5-7 percent female candidates.

CPB General Secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince advocated for direct elections to the 100 women's seats, while IAB's Ashraf Ali Akon supported a proportional representation system.

DRAFT CHARTER

BNP's Salahuddin told reporters that the charter would ultimately be implemented through the next parliament.

"The charter is a social contract among the nation, its people, political parties, and stakeholders. I believe the only legitimate space for its implementation is the national parliament," he said.

"Once the charter is finalised and made available, will any political party dare to reject it? And if they do, where will their political credibility stand?"

During a tea break, Jamaat leader Taher remarked, "A legal framework must be built for the charter. Otherwise, these discussions will bear no fruit."

Jamaat representative Advocate Shishir Monir proposed several legal options, including a Legal Framework Order (LFO), a pre-election referendum, or an ordinance issued by the chief adviser. He cited examples from the Zia and Ershad regimes where referendums and proclamations were later ratified by parliament and given constitutional status.

NCP's Akhter strongly objected to the current draft's two-year implementation timeline.

"We categorically reject such a delay. A charter that takes years to implement only opens the door to deception and betrayal of the people's expectations," he said. "We do not want another ineffective, incomplete, and toothless document like past 'three-party frameworks.'

The NCP has demanded that the charter incorporate reforms agreed upon by all parties, carry legal enforceability, and provide a mechanism for immediate implementation.

"We are not willing to sign any document that does not meet these criteria," Akhter warned.

FIRST ROUND OF CONSENSUS TALKS 62 proposals finalised for July Charter

Parties to send final revisions today, says Prof Ali Riaz

MD ABBAS

During the first round of talks between the National Consensus Commission and political parties, consensus was reached on 62 out of 166 proposals submitted by six commissions.

Based on these agreed proposals related to the constitutional, electoral system, judiciary, public administration, police, and anti-corruption reform commissions, the consensus commission sent a draft of the issues to be included in the final July Charter to the political parties. Prof Ali Riaz, commission vice-president, told The Daily Star.

"We expect to receive any final additions or revisions by tomorrow [today] from the political parties," he added.

Thirty parties have agreed on the proposal of forming a legislative body under the Constitutional Reform Commission, 24 supported defining qualifications and disqualifications of upper house members, 19 backed provisions on reserved seats for women in parliament, and 29 appointing a deputy speaker from the opposition.

Besides, 24 parties agreed on legislation concerning parliamentary committees and members, 28 supported the impeachment process of the president, 30 Bangla as the state language, 31 on the identity of Bangladeshi citizens, and 28 on defining crimes like abolishing or suspending the constitution.

Thirty-three parties agreed on dignity and coexistence among all communities, 31 supported expanding fundamental rights, and 23 backed parliamentary approval of international treaties.

On local governance, 28 parties backed holding elections, 27 financial reforms, 27 placing government officials under local authority, 24 supported revenue-raising powers, 25 district coordination councils, and 23 transitional provisions. Twenty-four parties agreed to bring political parties under the Right to Information Act.

Regarding the judicial reforms, 30 parties backed increasing the number of Appellate Division judges, 26 agreed on judicial appointments, 29 on the Judicial Appointment Commission, 32 on judicial independence, 31 on the judicial code of conduct, and 21 on the code for retired judges.

Thirty-one parties supported Supreme Court administrative independence, 29 a permanent attorney service, 30 agreed on an independent criminal investigation service, 32 on increasing judiciary manpower, 30 on converting legal aid services to a directorate, and 28 on asset disclosure for court officials.

Landlord killed inside BNP office

FROM PAGE 1

investigation," the OC added.

Dr Ashraful Amin, resident medical officer at the health complex, said, "The man was brought dead to the hospital. We found a deep cut on his head. It could have been caused by a sharp object. When the body was brought in, they claimed he had been in a road accident. We suspected foul play and informed police."

Jahangir's son Rasel told The Daily Star that after the AI government's fall last August, local BNP men, led by Tota Mia Pradhan, former general secretary of the Mahmudpur Union unit of BNP, merged three shops at the bazar to set up a party office.

A party reading "BNP Office - Ward 7, Mahmudpur Union" was put up in front of the tin-shed structure.

"Without informing us, they set up the party office. Two of the shops belong to my uncles, and they received rent, but we got nothing. Despite several

meetings, they refused to pay us. Today, when my father went to ask for due rent, they beat him inside the office," Rasel alleged.

However, Tota Mia's son Khokon Pradhan denied Jahangir was beaten.

"He [Jah

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ঘরে বসেই
ব্যাংক
অ্যাকাউন্ট
ঢুলুন



পাই ব্যাংক (PI Banking) –
একটি পুরালী ব্যাংক অ্যাপস

ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্মী' পুরালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়

JULY UPRISING

'I just did what any teacher should'

College teacher recalls standing up to protect students from violence

MD ZAHIDUR RABBI

On July 18, 2024, tensions flared outside the home of Aklima Akter, an assistant professor at Kabi Nazrul Government College.

From her balcony in Dhaka's Middle

harassed, and beaten.

Just across from her home stood a local Awami League office, and the situation was quickly spiralling out of control.

From her balcony in Dhaka's Middle

I saw a boy being hit. I rushed downstairs. They said he was a terrorist. I asked, 'Where is his weapon?' They couldn't show anything.

AKLIMA AKTER

Badda, she watched as students from institutions like BRAC University, Gulshan Commerce College, and Canadian University attempted to join a protest rally -- only to be stopped,



Aklima Akter confronting a group of men, including a police official, in Dhaka's Middle Badda area on July 18, 2024 while she was shielding students from being beaten and harassed.

PHOTO: VIDEO GRAB

And I could not just watch.
So, she stepped into the chaos.

"I saw a boy being hit. I rushed downstairs," she said. "They said he was a terrorist. I asked, 'Where is his weapon?' They couldn't show anything."

That moment, captured on video, went viral. It showed Aklima shielding students and confronting men twice her size with calm yet firm resolve. She was risking everything for a student she didn't even know.

"No, he wasn't from my college," she said. "I didn't know his name. But he was a student, and that was enough."

Later that day, a clip from a live TV broadcast circulated online, showing Aklima in a heated exchange with police and unidentified men in plain clothes. As she tried to shield students, she was being called a "Razakar".

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

'Tajuddin Ahmad was a statesman beyond party lines'

DU event honours the founding PM's legacy, leadership; 7 students awarded



PHOTO: COLLECTED

DU CORRESPONDENT

From his wartime leadership to his post-independence efforts to stabilise the new nation, Tajuddin Ahmad stood out for his honesty, clarity, and commitment to democratic values, said speakers at a memorial event at Dhaka University yesterday.

They made the remarks at a memorial lecture and award-giving ceremony held at the Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

Auditorium, organised by the Tajuddin Ahmad Memorial Fund.

Speaking at the programme, DU Vice Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan said, "We are honouring a civilised and principled figure, Tajuddin Ahmad, whose career left a deep impact on the nation. We have taken the initiative to preserve and expand his legacy through the efforts of our talented students."

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

5 lands in jail over attack on Hindu houses in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A Rangpur court yesterday sent five people to jail in a case filed over the attacks on Hindu houses, vandalism, and looting of valuables in Rangpur's Gangachara upazila.

Rangpur Judicial Magistrate Court passed the order after police produced them before the court in the afternoon, said Kishoreganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Ashraful Islam.

The accused are Yasin Ali, 25, Swadhin Mia, 28, Ashraful Islam, 28, Atiqur Rahman Khan, 30, and Saddam Hossain Selim, 22, of neighbouring Magura village under Nilphamari's Kishoreganj upazila, said police.

Members of joint forces arrested them in a drive from their houses early yesterday, said OC Ashraful.

Earlier on Tuesday night, Rabindra Nath Roy, one of the victims, filed a case of vandalism and looting with Gangachara Model Police Station, accusing 1,200 unidentified individuals.

"Five of my cattle, cash, and gold ornaments have been looted. I have incurred a loss of around Tk 20 lakh," he told The Daily Star.

The attack on the Hindu community at Aldadpur Balapara village of Betgari union took place in two phases -- first on Saturday night and again on Sunday afternoon -- by people protesting a Facebook post allegedly made by a local teenager, which "hurt religious sentiments".

Before the first round of attacks, a local 17-year-old

SEE PAGE 9 COL 8



Motorcyclists take over the footpath in the capital's Bangla Motor area yesterday, attempting to dodge traffic congestion -- a reckless practice that puts pedestrians at risk and worsens public nuisance.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Touhid calls for ceasefire in Gaza

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain

has urged an immediate, unconditional ceasefire in Gaza and accountability for crimes against Palestinians.

"We [Bangladesh] reaffirm our steadfast support for the establishment of a viable and independent State of Palestine, based on pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital," he said while speaking at the "High Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two State Solution" in New York on Tuesday.

The adviser described the current situation in Gaza as "one of the gravest genocides of our time".



SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

POST-COUP MYANMAR Junta mandates prison sentences for polls critics

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's junta said yesterday it has enacted a new law dictating prison sentences for critics or protesters of their planned election, which is being boycotted by opposition groups.

The junta seized power in a 2021 coup, sparking a many-sided civil war, and has touted elections at the end of this year as a path to peace.

Opposition groups -- including democratic lawmakers ousted by the military takeover -- and international monitors have called the polls a ploy to legitimise the junta's rule.

State newspaper The Global New Light of Myanmar said the "Law on the Protection of Multiparty Democratic Elections from Obstruction, Disruption and Destruction" was enacted on Tuesday.

Its 14 page text forbids "any speech, organising, inciting, protesting or distributing leaflets in order to destroy a part of the electoral process".

Individuals convicted face between three and seven years behind bars.

Support for
Israel's Gaza
war hits new
low in US: poll

AGENCIES

A new poll from the research firm Gallup suggests that only 32 percent of Americans approve of Israel's military action in Gaza, a 10 point drop from September 2024, as anger over atrocities against Palestinians continues to rise.

The survey, released on Tuesday, also showed an enormous partisan divide over the issue. Seventy-one percent of respondents who identified as members of the Republican Party said they approve of Israel's conduct, compared with 8 percent of Democrats, reports Al Jazeera online.

Overall, 60 percent of respondents said they disapprove of Israel's action in Gaza. Shibley Telhami, a professor at the University of Maryland, said the latest survey shows a trend of growing discontent with Israel that goes beyond the war on Gaza.

REUTERS

A very powerful magnitude 8.8 earthquake off Russia's Far Eastern Kamchatka coast yesterday triggered tsunami warnings as far away as French Polynesia and Chile, and was followed by an eruption of the most active volcano on the peninsula.

The shallow quake damaged buildings and injured several people in the remote Russian region, while much of Japan's eastern seaboard -- devastated by a 9.0 magnitude earthquake and tsunami in 2011 -- was ordered to evacuate, as were parts of Hawaii.

By the evening, Japan, Hawaii and Russia had downgraded most of their tsunami warnings. But authorities in French Polynesia warned residents of several of the remote Marquesas Islands to move to higher ground and expect waves as high as 2.5 metres (8 feet).

Russian scientists said the

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- ❷ Massive earthquake struck on 'megathrust fault': scientists
- ❸ Waves up to 1.7 metres high impacted Hawaii
- ❹ 3 tsunami waves recorded in Japan, largest of 1.3 metres

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Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said there had been no casualties in Russia from the quake, crediting solid building construction and the smooth working of alert systems.

In Severo-Kurilsk in the northern Kuril Islands, south of Kamchatka, tsunami waves exceeded 3 metres, with the largest up to 5 metres, Russia's RIA news agency reported.

The Klyuchevskoy volcano on Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula began erupting later, a geological monitoring service said.

"A descent of burning hot lava is observed on the western slope. Powerful glow above the volcano, explosions," the Russian Academy of Sciences' United Geophysical

Service said in a statement posted on Telegram.

The US Geological Survey said the earthquake was shallow at a depth of 19.3 km (12 miles), and centred 119 km (74 miles) east-southeast of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, a city of 165,000.

The quake occurred on what is known as a "megathrust fault" where the denser Pacific Plate is sliding underneath the lighter North American Plate, according to scientists.

Hawaii recorded waves of up to 1.7 metres while in Japan the largest recorded came to 1.3 metres, officials said. Flights out of Honolulu airport resumed in the evening, the transportation department said.

Waves of nearly half a metre were observed as far away as California, with smaller ones reaching Canada's province of British Columbia.

In French Polynesia, waves started to hit some islands in the early morning hours of yesterday.

Last push to beat US tariff deadline

FROM PAGE 1
Uddin. He was accompanied by National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman, Commerce Secretary Mabhubur Rahman and Additional Commerce Secretary Nazneen Kawsar Chowdhury.

On the US side, Assistant Trade Representative Brendan Lynch is leading the delegation, accompanied by officials handling trade and tariff matters.

Bangladesh's economy is heavily reliant on exports to the United States, particularly garments, which made up the majority of the \$8.2 billion in goods shipped to the American market in 2024. Bangladeshi officials fear that any tariff above the current levels would severely damage competitiveness and disrupt employment in an already pressured global market.

Speaking from Washington, Commerce Secretary Rahman expressed cautious optimism. "We are confident our position is being seriously considered. We've made major offers to help balance trade, and the tone of the meetings has been constructive."

In recent weeks, Bangladesh has revised its negotiating strategy, presenting a package of concessions and market access promises that directly address US concerns over its \$6 billion trade surplus with Dhaka.

The government plans to import 3.5 million tonnes of American wheat over the next five years and purchase 25 Boeing aircraft under a multibillion-dollar deal. Additional plans have been offered to expand the import

of US liquefied natural gas, cotton, soybeans, and other agricultural products.

These proposals, Bangladeshi officials say, are aimed at demonstrating reciprocal trade goodwill and positioning the country as a cooperative economic partner in Washington's new trade architecture.

Privately, some Bangladeshi delegates suggest the country could increase US imports by as much as \$2 billion annually if policy support on port infrastructure and shipping logistics were improved at home. One major importer of US commodities, who requested anonymity, said this week from Washington that a favourable tariff outcome would unlock significant trade potential. "If the government provides proper port facilities, we could easily scale up imports of soy and LPG," he said.

The final outcome of the talks will be revealed soon. But there is no question that Bangladesh is now in a race against the clock.

US-INDIA TALKS BREAK DOWN

Elsewhere, some countries are experiencing far rougher treatment. India, the world's fifth-largest economy, has already been hit with a 25 percent tariff by the Trump administration, along with a warning of additional penalties over the country's military and energy purchases from Russia.

Talks between Indian and US negotiators, which had stretched over months, broke down over New Delhi's refusal to open its domestic market to US agricultural products. Washington had pushed for

access to sensitive sectors including wheat, rice, corn, and genetically modified soybeans -- demands India resisted, citing the need to protect smallholder farmers.

The Indian tariff decision has alarmed exporters in Delhi, particularly those in labour-intensive industries such as garments, pharmaceuticals, jewellery, and chemicals. With India's exports to the US valued at \$87 billion in 2024, the economic fallout could be significant.

For Bangladesh, the difference between being in and out of a deal could define the trajectory of its economy over the coming years. The country's ready-made garments sector, which employs more than four million workers, is already operating on razor-thin margins. Any added tariff, even in the 15 percent range, would squeeze exporters and make it harder to compete with rivals like Vietnam and China, both of which have made strategic inroads in the US market.

Nahid expressed gratitude for people's overwhelming support for their countrywide march. Over the last five months, the NCP received unrepresented response from the people and the party will win in the coming parliament and in the new Bangladesh", he said.

At its final rally of the march in Baipal intersection in Ashulia, Nahid said, "Sheikh Hasina's crimes will not be reduced even if she is hanged 10 times."

"The people of Bangladesh will never forgive Hasina. They will never forgive the Awami League... they will not even forgive a refined Awami League."

Manifesto

FROM PAGE 1
conspiracies were being hatched and obstacles placed. Reforms initiatives were being obstructed," he said at a rally in Narsingdi on the last day of NCP's month-long march.

The party started the march on July 1 after paying tribute to Abu Sayed in Rangpur, and it ended with rallies at Narsingdi and Ashulia of Dhaka last night.

At the Narsingdi rally, Nahid alleged that they were not allowed to frame a new constitution and to remove President Mohammed

Shahabuddin elected by the fascist Awami League.

He also criticised the interim government for not presenting the "July Declaration".

"Although Mahfuj Alam and Asif Mahmud are not members of our party, they are student representatives of the July uprising. They are working to realise the aspirations of July. But there is a plot underway to remove them," Nahid continued.

He said, "In Narsingdi, land grabbing and extortion continue, but we will drive out those responsible."

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PHOTO: REUTERS

Evacuated residents are seen on the roof of a fire station in Mukawa Town, Hokkaido, Japan yesterday, after Japan issued an evacuation alert following a major earthquake in Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula that triggered a tsunami warning.

Huge quake off Russia sparks Pacific tsunamis

Warnings issued, later downgraded in Japan, Hawaii, Russia

REUTERS

A very powerful magnitude 8.8 earthquake off Russia's Far Eastern Kamchatka coast yesterday triggered tsunami warnings as far away as French Polynesia and Chile, and was followed by an eruption of the most active volcano on the peninsula.

The shallow quake damaged buildings and injured several people in the remote Russian region, while much of Japan's eastern seaboard -- devastated by a 9.0 magnitude earthquake and tsunami in 2011 -- was ordered to evacuate, as were parts of Hawaii.

By the evening, Japan, Hawaii and Russia had downgraded most of their tsunami warnings. But authorities in French Polynesia warned residents of several of the remote Marquesas Islands to move to higher ground and expect waves as high as 2.5 metres (8 feet).

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Salman Rahman barred from stock market for life

FROM PAGE 1

irregularities in the stock market, including the issuance of the IFIC Aamar Bond.

The decision to declare Salman, Shayan and Shibli persona non grata was based on the committee's findings.

Salman has also been fined Tk 100 crore, while Shayan faces a Tk 50 crore fine.

Beximco Ltd and SFR Real Estate Ltd had collectively contributed 25 acres of land to form a joint venture on a revenue-sharing basis with Sreepur Township Ltd.

The owners from Beximco were Salman and Shayan, respectively vice-chairman and adviser of the industrial behemoth.

Both sat on the board of IFIC Bank as well; Salman as the chairman and Shayan as the vice-chairman.

Shibli, a former Dhaka University professor, was working as BSEC chairman at the time of the issuance of the bond.

Salman and Shibli are currently behind bars on different charges related to the July uprising atrocities and financial irregularities.

A senior BSEC official, requesting anonymity, told The Daily Star that the action followed the inquiry committee's

recommendations. He added that the trio will be barred from participating in the stock market, even through intermediaries.

According to the BSEC, some rules and regulations were waived during the Sukuk's approval. The commission also granted multiple subscription extensions after the Sukuk failed to attract general investors. The issuer company abused its powers in securing the extensions, the BSEC said in the press release.

The inquiry committee further found abuse of regulatory authority in the approval of the Beximco Secured, Convertible, Asset-Based Green Sukuk worth Tk 300 crore.

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The inquiry committee has recommended further investigation by the BSEC and punitive measures against those involved in the Sukuk irregularities.

At the time, its authorised capital was Tk 500 crore and paid-up capital Tk 335 crore. Of the paid-up capital, Tk 248 crore was withdrawn in the name of land development and purchase -- a move the commission called "questionable".

Despite IFIC Bank not issuing the bond, it was widely promoted as "IFIC Aamar Bond" in advertisements.

"In this way, it attracted investors by means of fraud," the BSEC said in the press release.

The commission also fined Emerging Credit Rating Ltd Tk 10 lakh for its role in rating Sreepur Township Ltd.

Imran Ahmed, CEO of IFIC Investments Ltd and arranger of the bond, has been banned from the market for five years.

The BSEC has also issued warnings to IFIC Bank and its independent directors: ARM Nazmus Sakib, Md Golam Mostofa, Zafar Iqbal, Quamrun Naher Ahmed, and Shudhangshu Shekhar Biswas.

Prof Shaikh Shamsuddin Ahmed, the then BSEC commissioner, has also been declared unwanted.

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Reaching consensus shouldn't be this slow

Delays threaten the reform agenda and hard-won democratic gains

We are concerned that political parties are still stuck in disagreements over some key reform proposals and the finalisation of the July Charter. The National Consensus Commission (NCC) has been holding talks with them for months now. With the deadline to finalise the charter ending on July 31, a report by this daily indicates that there are still sharp disagreements on several issues among the parties.

The BNP, for instance, has partially agreed to the proposed reforms in the draft charter, while Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Andolok Bangladesh (IAB), and the National Citizen Party (NCP) hold some reservations. Jamaat has termed the draft "incomplete and dangerous," while the IAB says it is "weak, lenient towards the fallen autocracy, and lacking enforceability." The BNP says it has issues with the phrasing of some sections and wants them revised, but it has no fundamental objection to the draft. Ganoshambhi Andolok shares the BNP's sentiment regarding some of the wording and language, adding that additional points should be included. The NCP wants all the consensus points to be codified into law before the next parliamentary election. The NCP, Jamaat, and the IAB have all demanded that the charter be made legally binding.

The consensus dialogues—held in two phases, the first from March 20 to May 19 and the second starting from June 2—did see some success. Through these talks, the country's political leadership reached consensus on 12 key issues, including the two-term (10 years in total) cap on an individual's service as prime minister and the formation of an independent police commission. However, on issues like the selection of chief advisers and women's representation in parliament, political parties remain divided.

We appreciate the complexity of the entire consensus-building process (with so many parties involved), as well as the prudence shown by political parties so far by making concessions to reach agreement on certain crucial reforms. That said, we expected this whole exercise to have taken less time and shown more willingness for compromise. The back and forth over these issues has been going on for months. Consensus-building, especially when everyone claims to want a nation free of discrimination and inequalities in the spirit of the July uprising, should not be this arduous.

To have such differences even after so long is quite disappointing. With the tentative deadline for the upcoming elections set in February 2026, what we need is stability and clear direction so that we can move on to the business end of this whole exercise. Therefore, we urge all political parties to see the bigger picture and act accordingly. Prolonging the consensus-building process risks not only creating further divisions and uncertainties in society but also jeopardising the future of reform initiatives. Parties, therefore, must cooperate with the NCC to reach a common ground on the unresolved issues and finalise the July Charter. They must do this to honour the sacrifices of our July martyrs and warriors and realise their dream of a new Bangladesh.

Trafficking survivors deserve justice

Authorities must bring the traffickers to book

We are deeply concerned to see how a section of citizens, desperate to secure a better future for their families, are still undertaking perilous journeys to reach Europe. Many, however, only end up being trafficked into Libya, where they are held captive in camps, subjected to extreme forms of violence, and their families extorted for money. Reportedly, for the past three years, Bangladesh has ranked number one among countries whose citizens attempt to enter Europe by crossing the Mediterranean Sea. According to BRAC's migration programme, at least 70,000 Bangladeshi have entered Europe using this route over the past decade. While many are rescued and brought back home after immense hardship, many others remain unrescued, and some lose their lives by drowning in the Mediterranean. Though many survivors have filed cases against the traffickers, these cases have seldom ended in conviction.

Md Tanjir Sheikh and Md Alamgir Hossain are two such survivors of trafficking who returned from Libya this year—alive but mentally shattered and deep in debt. Both were lured by false promises of work abroad, subjected to inhumane conditions, and held captive for ransom by international trafficking gangs. Although they were eventually able to return home after paying hefty ransoms, many others could not even make it back. While both filed cases against the local brokers responsible for their plight, the overall slow progress of such cases doesn't give them much hope.

There are thousands of survivors like them still waiting for justice. According to the Monitoring Cell for Combating Trafficking in Human, a total of 10,917 human trafficking cases were filed between 2009 and January 2025. Of these, 5,467 cases have been resolved, and 5,450 remain pending. Traffickers were arrested in many cases, but most are now out on bail. During this entire period, only 247 cases have resulted in conviction. Experts say this is due to poor coordination among agencies, a lack of dedicated courts, and little protection for witnesses.

Given the circumstances, the government must act fast to prevent citizens being sold into modern day slavery in the name of migration. It must treat trafficking cases as a priority and take coordinated action against those responsible. Specialised trafficking courts must be set up in every district to expedite proceedings and create a safe environment for survivors and witnesses. Effective coordination between the relevant departments and law enforcement agencies is also crucial. Survivors like Tanjir and Alamgir deserve real support, and aspiring migrants need protection from exploitation.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Nation joins March for Justice

On this day in 2024, in response to a call by the anti-discrimination student movement, people poured out on the streets to join the March for Justice, protesting the mass killings, mass arrests, attacks, lawsuits, enforced disappearances, and murders of students and civilians by the Sheikh Hasina regime following the quota reform protests.

EDITORIAL

What recent scandals reveal about student activism and our politics



H.M. Nazmul Alam
is an academic, journalist, and political analyst. He can
be reached at nazmulalam.rijohn@gmail.com.

H.M. NAZMUL ALAM

There is something painfully ironic when those providing leadership to a movement, built on the premise of justice and reform, become the subject of criminal investigations. That irony is now manifesting in the public sphere as multiple individuals associated with Bangladesh's recent anti-government student platforms—particularly the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement (SAD), Bangladesh Ganatantrik Chhatra Sangsads (BGCS), and the political camp National Citizen Party (NCP)—face serious allegations of extortion, impersonation, and criminal misuse of power. The accusations are not just isolated headlines; they speak to a deeper, structural pattern that has historically tainted Bangladesh's student and political activism. The past, it seems, is catching up with the present once again.

The shocking episode unfolding in Dhaka's Gulshan neighbourhood has cast a long shadow over these platforms. Five individuals, including prominent student leaders, were arrested for allegedly demanding Tk 50 lakh from a former ruling party MP. Police say they were caught in the act of collecting a second instalment, after allegedly receiving Tk 10 lakh already. The implications go far beyond a single extortion case. In the days that followed, more complaints surfaced across the country: coordinators, organisers, or self-declared activists tied to the July movement allegedly using their newfound political capital to engage in extortion, intimidation, and even sexual violence.

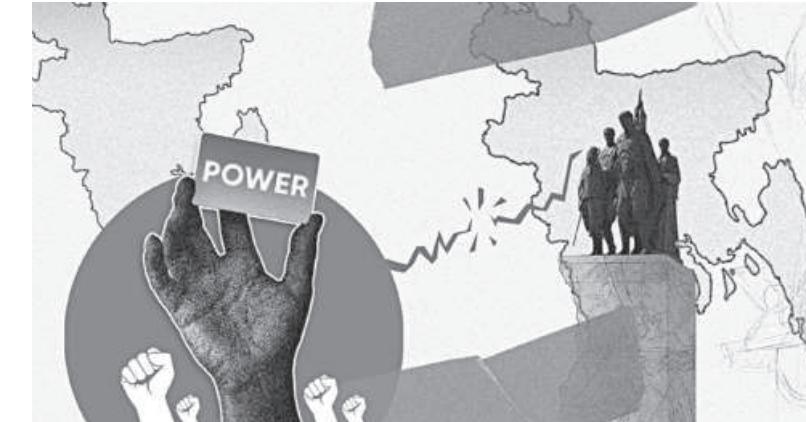
For movements that once championed equality and accountability, these developments are not just reputational blows—they are existential threats. As various leaders scramble to issue statements, suspend local committees, and distance themselves from the accused, the public is left wondering: how did we get here? More importantly, what does it say about the nature of political transitions and grassroots mobilisations in Bangladesh?

Political activism in this country, especially at the student level, has always been a double-edged sword. On the one hand, students have played a historic role in shaping national discourse—from the Language Movement of 1952 to the anti-Ershad protests of the late 1980s. But on the other, student wings of political parties have often devolved into hubs of patronage, muscle power and, frequently, corruption. As such, when a movement like SAD emerged

with a focus on inclusive democracy and citizens' rights, it was seen by many as a refreshing break from the entrenched party politics that dominates university campuses and civil discourse.

But idealism, no matter how noble, is not immune to co-option.

What we are witnessing now is the familiar pattern of transformation: a moral crusade turning into a power mechanism, and then eventually into a money-making enterprise. In many ways, it mirrors the lifecycle of movements globally, where momentum and mass mobilisation attract not only the idealists but also opportunists. Once a movement grows powerful enough to influence public narrative or policy, it becomes a magnet for those seeking leverage—access to power, favours, money or



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

prestige. The difference lies in whether the movement has internal safeguards, a culture of transparency, and structural accountability to prevent its degradation.

Clearly, in this case, the structures were either absent or grossly inadequate.

The fact that student activists were able to demand ransom, pose as law enforcement officials, and infiltrate high-profile networks suggests not just personal greed but systemic vulnerability. In the aftermath of the Gulshan scandal, former spokespersons and prominent figures from the movement have come forward to say they had long sensed the rot within. Allegations of internal harassment, threats, and coercion were previously raised but never acted upon.

If that is true, then the current outrage must be tempered with a dose of self-critique: were these organisations too eager to expand, too reliant on

symbolic unity, too dismissive of warning signs?

Even more troubling is the reaction from some of the organisations' leadership, which appears focused more on damage control than soul searching. Announcements of suspensions and promises of zero tolerance, while necessary, feel inadequate in the absence of genuine institutional reform. When the BGCS or NCP speaks of spontaneous committee formations and lack of screening during the movement's peak, they unintentionally underscore how a powerful civic force has been allowed to operate without internal checks. In their eagerness to harness discontent and mobilise youth, structure was sacrificed for speed, and ideology for expediency.

But perhaps we are expecting too much from student-led movements in a broader political environment that rewards power over principles. In a country where criminal cases are often filed and withdrawn based on political alignments, and where the phrase "coordinator" can grant access to government offices and police stations, it's not surprising that ambitious individuals, regardless of ideology, would be tempted to exploit their roles.

and democracy last year are now becoming what they opposed: a new elite with old habits.

This is not to say that the entire movement is tainted—far from it. Many who were involved continue to push for meaningful reform, justice, and civic empowerment. But the credibility of such efforts now depends on how seriously the movement and its offshoots treat this crisis—not as a PR disaster, but as a moral reckoning.

The silence—or worse, deflection—of some political actors risks reinforcing the public's growing cynicism. When citizen-led movements start to mirror the very systems they sought to reform, people begin to lose faith not just in politics, but in the possibility of change itself. That is the real tragedy. Because when good people grow disillusioned, the space is ceded to those who thrive in chaos.

Bangladesh cannot afford that. The country's youth have long been both its conscience and its catalyst for progress. But they have also been weaponised by those in power, too often. Each wave of student activism has brought hope, and later disillusionment. The lesson is that they must mature institutionally and morally, even as they grow politically.

Perhaps it's time to rethink how these movements evolve from protest to politics. Can a movement be built on democratic values if its internal operations are opaque and hierarchical? Can it claim to represent the people if it does not vet its own representatives? Can it pursue justice without upholding it within?

The stakes are too high to allow these questions to remain rhetorical.

Bangladesh stands at a juncture where public anger at governance failures coexists with deep suspicion of new political actors. That is a dangerous equilibrium. For true transformation to occur, it is not enough to change slogans or swap out faces. As history has shown—from the French Revolution to the Arab Spring—if movements don't reform themselves from within, they are destined to repeat the failures of those they replaced.

Political capital, once spent on coercion and corruption, rarely regenerates. It dissipates, leaving behind apathy and anger. And in that vacuum, authoritarianism finds fertile ground.

The crisis unfolding today is not just a test of individual guilt or innocence. It is a referendum on the integrity of the very platforms that once promised a new political dawn. If these movements are to survive and remain relevant, they must act swiftly—not only to punish wrongdoers, but to reform themselves.

That means introducing transparency, democratic accountability, and, above all, a renewed commitment to the values that first brought people to the streets.

Because in the end, it is not the protests that matter—it is what comes after.

Uncle Sam wants you and your social media accounts



Barrister Noshin Nawal
is an activist, feminist, and a columnist for The Daily Star.
She can be reached at navahoshin@gmail.com.

NOSHIN NAWAL

They say love means never having to say you're sorry, and apparently, visiting America means having to say, "Here's my Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, Reddit, YouTube, Pinterest, MySpace revival fan page."

Because in 2025, if you're a bright-eyed Bangladeshi student dreaming of the Ivy League or just hoping to pose with a pumpkin spice latte on a New England campus, you'd better come armed not just with academic transcripts or SAT scores, but with public social media profiles, sparkling clean and whiter than the visa officer's poplin shirt.

Yes, the land of freedom, fireworks, and filtered liberties has spoken: your feed shall be examined, dissected, and judged like a reality show contestant who dared to post #DeathToHomework in 2019. It's all part of the US State Department's new diplomatic love language: "I trust you... but let me check your digital footprint anyway."

Under the new rules, all F, M, and

J visa applicants—from Fulbright scholars to exchange students—must make their social media public. Because nothing establishes "national security" like trawling through someone's 2018 throwback to a Baishakh selfie with the caption "Dhaka heat is not for the weak."

And what are they looking for, exactly? Evidence of "hostility towards American values." Which is funny, considering how many Americans seem hostile to those same values these days. But I digress.

To be fair, we Bangladeshi know a thing or two about surveillance. We come from a land where criticising the wrong tree on Facebook might lead to a phone call from the forest department. But at least we were subtle about it. The Americans, bless them, are now just upfront: "You want our visas? Strip for the algorithm."

applicants to make their accounts public "to facilitate vetting." Because God forbid someone use their private settings to, you know, protect their privacy. In 2025, privacy is the new profanity. And don't even think of deactivating your account—that's the

spicy. Did you share a meme that made fun of Trump in 2017? That might be a problem. Did your cousin post a rant about American drone strikes and tag you by mistake? Ruh-roh. Did you once like a reel featuring Palestinian keffiyehs and sad violin music? Pack your bags.

Naturally, the US Embassy in Dhaka has chimed in, reminding Bangladeshi

digital equivalent of setting fire to your fingerprints.

Some say this is just bureaucracy gone wild. Others say it's the globalisation of paranoia, where every border post now doubles as a behavioural psychologist, data analyst, and moral judge. Either way, it's ironic that the same country that gave us Facebook is now penalising us for using it freely.

And what about the geopolitics of it all? Let's be honest: had this rule applied to American tourists going the other way, entire flights to Bali would be grounded over their spring break antics alone. But alas, the power dynamics are clear: we post, they prey.

The Bangladeshi student, once a symbol of ambition and soft diplomacy, is now a walking, talking Excel sheet of hashtags, likes, and filtered sunsets. You are no longer just a human being—you are a risk profile. Did you post too much? You're suspicious. Too little? Also suspicious. Only shared cat videos for five years straight? Definitely hiding something. And let's not even get into the heartbreak of losing your right to "Close Friends" stories.

But take heart, dear applicants. All is not lost. This too shall be archived. Until then, smile, sanitise your timeline, and say a little prayer to the algorithm gods. Because in this new age of diplomacy, your social media isn't just your highlight reel—it's your visa application.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Nation joins March for Justice

On this day in 2024, in response to a call by the anti-discrimination student movement, people poured out on the streets to join the March for Justice, protesting the mass killings, mass arrests, attacks, lawsuits, enforced disappearances, and murders of students and civilians by the Sheikh Hasina regime following the quota reform protests.

The interplay of doxa and episteme in Bangladesh's politics



Dr Faridul Alam
is a retired academic and writes from New York City, US.

FARIDUL ALAM

In the terrain of Bangladeshi politics, the tension is not simply between belief and knowledge, myth and reason, or performance and policy. These oppositions—framed as *doxa* and *episteme*—do not neatly resolve into a hierarchy of value. Instead, they constitute a dialectic in perpetual suspension. The allure of *doxa*—popular belief, inherited legitimacy, and the immediacy of affect—often coexists with the imperatives of *episteme*: evidence, deliberation, and long-term vision. Yet, attempts to privilege one over the other repeatedly collapse, not least because the conditions for a stable synthesis are historically absent.

The dominance of *doxa* in Bangladeshi political life cannot be disentangled from the structural failure of *episteme*. Nor can *episteme* be simply summoned as a rational corrective to belief without grappling with the aspirations, anxieties, and lived conditions that *doxa* organises. Drawing on recent events—including the July 2024 uprising, the interim government's fragile mandate, and chronic budgetary neglect of public goods—this essay offers not a critique of *doxa* per se, but a reflection on how its entanglement with *episteme* produces a volatile political condition, perpetually caught between rupture and restoration. The argument resists framing *doxa* as pathology or casting *episteme* as panacea, and instead culminates in a contingent wager:

that if democratic politics is to retain even a fragile footing in Bangladesh, we must cultivate the institutional and cultural space where critical knowledge can engage belief without disavowing it.

Doxa and Episteme: A fragile dialectic

Inherited from Plato and reworked by Pierre Bourdieu, the distinction between *doxa* and *episteme* has long served to diagnose the epistemic decay of public discourse. *Doxa* is that which circulates unquestioned; *episteme* demands justification, critique, and institutional depth. But to read Bangladeshi politics as a mere triumph of *doxa* over *episteme* would be to miss the deeper dialectic at play. In a society marked by colonial afterlives, authoritarian interruptions, and epistemic unevenness, *doxa* often fills the vacuum left by weak institutions of knowledge. Belief becomes infrastructure when state capacity fails.

Here, the slogans of liberation, invocations of unity, and fetishisation of sovereignty are not ideological residue alone—they serve as affective scaffolding that stabilises a fractured polity. *Episteme*, meanwhile, does not always arrive as emancipation. As Michel Foucault reminds us, *episteme* is not neutral; it governs the very conditions of truth production, delimiting what may be known, by whom, and on what terms. To many,

it appears not as enlightenment but as elite imposition—technocratic, aloof, or externally induced. Thus, the friction between *doxa* and *episteme* is not a clear-cut antagonism but a shifting, unstable interplay of power, affect, and legitimacy.

Media and the epistemic short-circuit

Nowhere is this dialectic more

Student movements, independent platforms, and segments of civil society continued raising uncomfortable questions. But the simultaneous rise of mob justice—bypassing due process in favour of affective retribution—illustrated how easily the epistemic impulse could be eclipsed by *doxa*'s visceral force. What this reveals is not the disappearance

rather than interrogate it. This is not merely strategic—it is existential. In a polity where historical legitimacy often carries more weight than policy credibility, *doxa* becomes the currency of political survival.

The interim government's epistemic interregnum

The interim government, birthed by an epistemic rupture and popular mobilisation, initially held promise. Unencumbered by electoral calculations, it could have embraced technocratic governance and long-term planning. Expert panels were formed, policy white papers circulated, and consultations initiated. For a moment, *episteme* seemed to gain ground.

Yet, that promise has proved elusive. Pressed by the urgency of stabilisation and haunted by the spectre of collapse, the interim regime has leaned on the tropes of continuity: nation-branding, investor confidence, bureaucratic inertia. Its budgetary choices are telling. Education receives less than 2.5 percent of GDP, undermining efforts to cultivate critical thought. Health remains sidelined in a country vulnerable to both pandemics and chronic illnesses. Agriculture—crucial for rural livelihoods and food security—faces declining support amid mounting climate threats.

Rather than a clean break from *doxa*, we witness a painful return to it. The government, lacking both the democratic legitimacy for sweeping reform and the public trust necessary to anchor technocratic rationality, is caught in a double bind: govern too rationally and risk mass alienation; govern by sentiment and reenact past failures.

Arab Spring syndrome and the epistemophobia of governance

Hovering over this impasse is the ghost of the Arab Spring—the fear



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

of *episteme*, but its fragility—its inability to institutionalise itself in the face of narrative consolidation and emotive closure.

Political parties: A feedback loop

Political parties, rather than being mere vessels of *doxa*, function as sites where *doxa* and *episteme* feed off each other. The Awami League's invocation of its liberation legacy or the BNP's narrative of marginalisation are not purely mythic constructs; they also reflect the epistemic vacuum left by underdeveloped democratic norms and public distrust of expert discourse.

Suppressing internal dissent, sidelining expert advice, and rewarding loyalty over competence create a culture in which knowledge is selectively deployed to affirm belief

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that epistemic uprisings end not in democratic renewal but in chaos, authoritarian relapse, or technocratic drift. The lesson many elites draw is caution: too much reform too fast can unmoor the system. The lesson many citizens internalise is impatience: if knowledge does not deliver material or affective results quickly, it is dismissed as irrelevant.

This mutual suspicion makes *episteme* hard to anchor. It is not that reasoned policy is unwelcome—but that, in the absence of institutional memory and civic trust, it struggles to resonate, to “stick.” *Doxa*, for all its volatility, offers immediacy; *episteme* offers complexity, which can feel like delayed gratification and postponement.

A non-synthetic path forward

If a path forward exists, it lies not in the forced synthesis of *doxa* and *episteme*, but in embracing their constitutive tension. *Episteme* must learn to translate itself without arrogance; *doxa* must be engaged without condescension. This demands civic education rooted in dialogue, not rote; media that functions less as sermon and more as agora; and budgets aligned not with donor expectations or performative sovereignty, but with the structural needs of the vulnerable.

Most crucially, we need a political ethic that resists collapsing into either technocratic detachment or populist fury. To invoke *episteme* today is not to prescribe a cure; it is to place a wager—a wager, paradoxically, in the power of knowledge to disrupt belief.

In an era haunted by failed uprisings and weaponised mythologies, the wager is fragile and fraught—yet if democracy is to endure in Bangladesh, it is one we cannot afford to squander.

Bonn climate conference falls short on key promises



Farah Kabir
is country director at ActionAid Bangladesh.

FARAH KABIR

responsive funding, resilience efforts fail. Moreover, global credibility is at stake when aspirational language without financial backing deepens the trust deficit and imperils the 1.5 degrees Celsius goal. The clash over gender definitions mirrors global rollbacks of progressive rights, putting human rights under threat. If GAP language narrows, it

support and guaranteeing decision-making roles, not token presence for women in delegations.

Bonn laid bare political divides but brought no resolution. The urgency is not theoretical: extreme climate events have already displaced hundreds of thousands in 2024–25. Communities are paying the price for negotiation delays—with lost homes, destroyed harvests, and eroded rights.

To observers, Bonn's outcome may read like a draft priority list. But for frontline communities and activists, all eyes are now on Belém. A weak GAP or empty L&D pledges would signal business as usual, not justice.

Bangladesh offers a blueprint. Its push for grant-based L&D funding, rather than debt-inducing

loans, shows how international commitments can translate into community impact. But national action alone isn't enough. Global systems must step up or risk failing those who need them most.

Gender justice and Loss and Damage are both at a tipping point. Belém must decide: pass the moment or seize it.

risks codifying injustice rather than dismantling it.

Bonn, Brazil, November 2025, is now the true test. These three demands must be met: (i) mounting finance commitments, (ii) solidifying gender justice, and (iii) enabling participation. Mounting finance commitments mean capitalising the FRLD with at least \$400 billion annually, integrating L&D into the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), and transforming voluntary reporting guidelines into mandatory obligations.

Solidifying gender justice includes embedding inclusive, intersectional definitions of gender, enforcing financing, capacity building, and access for women and gender-diverse communities, and gender-responsiveness across all thematic tracks, not isolating them. The last but not the least, enabling participation means funding for low-income women's attendance and leadership, providing childcare, visa assistance, and institutional

solidarity. The L&D board meeting ended with broad intentions but glaring omissions. Urgency was acknowledged, but not matched with action.

Bonn delivered some wins—intersectional references in the draft GAP and technical momentum toward COP 30—but persistent resistance, underrepresentation, and underfunding still loom large. If gender remains narrowly defined, the plan risks being diluted rather than transformative.

On L&D, SB 62 marked progress—from silence to recognition. Yet, no hard finance, clear mandates, or binding pathways emerged. While the house is on fire, negotiators are still debating who will hold the hose.

Development justice demands that women are not excluded from decision-making, climate finance, and land rights. Without gender-

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July crackdown

FROM PAGE 1
recorded the statement. This newspaper saw a copy of the statement from a source at the International Crimes Tribunal yesterday.

"As a member of that committee, I was present at those meetings. Attendees included home secretary Jahangir, additional secretary [Political] Tipu Sultan, additional secretary Reza Mostafa, SB [special branch of police] chief Monirul Islam, DB [detective branch of police] chief Harun Or-Rashid, RAB DG [director general] Barrister Harunur Rashid, DMP [Dhaka Metropolitan Police] commissioner Habibur, Border Guard Bangladesh DG Major General Ashrafuzzaman Siddique, Ansar DG Major General AKM Aminul Haque, NTMC [National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre] DG Major General Ziaul Ahsan, and DGFI chief."

The meeting discussed the movement, and various government directives and recommendations by Asaduzzaman.

"At one meeting, it was decided to arrest the coordinators of the movement. DB chief Harun and DGFI were tasked with making the arrests. The [six] coordinators were detained and held in DB custody, subjected to mental pressure and threats to coerce a compromise with the government."

"Family members were also brought in. The detainees were forced to make statements on television announcing the withdrawal of the movement. I opposed the arrests at the committee meeting, but they were carried out following the home minister's directive," Mamun said.

DG chief Harun had a very close relationship with Asaduzzaman Khan, who used to call Harun "Jinn" (spirit) and regarded him as highly efficient and politically effective in implementing government decisions.

Outside the official meetings, several police officials, OCs, NTMC's Ziaul Ahsan, DGs of DGFI and NSI (National Security Intelligence), and officials of various ranks regularly met Asaduzzaman.

"At one stage, a secret plan was made to monitor, shoot at protesters, and create a climate of fear around the movement using helicopters. I later learned that the operation was conducted using helicopters under the planning of Rab DG Harunur Rashid and with the support of the military. However, as the IGP, I was not involved in this operation. The deployment of helicopters was essentially a political decision."

Mamun also said that to suppress the movement, a direct political decision was later made to use lethal weapons and conduct block raids in protest prone areas.

"I was informed by home minister Asaduzzaman that under the directive of prime minister Sheikh Hasina, the decision to use lethal weapons to quell the movement was taken. At that time, additional DIG of Police Headquarters Proloy Kumar Joarder was present in front of me. Through him [Proloy], the then DMP commissioner and other police officials at various levels came to know of the directive."

Additionally, then DMP commissioner Habibur had direct communication with Asaduzzaman. "Both Habibur and DB chief Harun were overly enthusiastic about using lethal weapons."

In his statement, Mamun added that the home minister was determined to suppress the movement by any means. "On July 18, DMP commissioner Habib publicly ordered the use of Chinese rifles to fire upon protesters."

The then law minister Anisul Huq, Dhaka South City Corporation mayor Fazle Noor Taposh, prime minister's adviser Salman F Rahman, Awami League general secretary Obaidul Quader, Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Mirza Azam, state minister for information and broadcasting Md Ali Arafat, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal general secretary Hasanul Haq Inu, and Workers Party's Rashed Khan Menon all advised and incited the prime minister to eliminate the student people movement using lethal weapons, he added.

"Even after so many people were killed across the country, they did not stop their incitement or ask the prime minister to stop the violence."

He said that on July 17, Chhatra League carried out a brutal attack on students at Dhaka University.

"The police did not play a proper role there. Essentially, they acted under the instructions of DMP commissioner Habibur. Leaders like Obaidul Quader and Nanak unleashed Chhatra League upon the students. Rab, the military, and other forces were deployed under the directives of the prime minister and home minister... and many people were killed or injured through the use of helicopters and lethal firearms."

Additionally, Awami League-affiliated intellectuals, journalists, and police officers were all eager to misguide the government and brutally suppress the movement, he said.

On August 4 last year, then law minister Anisul, home minister Asaduzzaman, chiefs of three armed forces, and members of the National Security Committee met with Hasina at the Gono Bhaban around 11:00am.

The meeting focused on the movement and strategies to suppress it. Intelligence reports indicated that the movement had reached a critical stage and needed to be quelled. There was no

discussion about regime change.

"We tried to present accurate information to the government, but it was unwilling to acknowledge its weaknesses. As the situation deteriorated fast across various locations, the meeting was adjourned."

At 10:00pm that night, Hasina convened another meeting at the Gono Bhaban, where her sister Sheikh Rehana, Asaduzzaman, Anisul, chiefs of the three armed forces, the Rab DG, and he himself as the IGP were present.

"SB chief Monirul and the DGFI DG were sitting outside while Maj Gen Mujib [director general of Special Security Force] attended the meeting.... The discussions were candid, focusing on how to suppress the planned mass gathering on August 5. Deployment of forces was discussed in detail. The meeting lasted about 30-45 minutes."

"Afterward, we moved to the military's operations control room. Chiefs of three forces, Maj Gen Mujib, Rab DG, intelligence officials, DMP commissioner Habibur, and I were present there. There, we discussed force deployment. The meeting concluded around 12:30am. It was decided that strict control would be enforced at entry points to Dhaka city. No detailed plan was finalised, but it was agreed that police would coordinate with the military."

Mamun further said, "On August 5, 2024, until 10:00am, we [the police] maintained a strong position inside Dhaka. At the entry points, in areas like Uttara and Jatrabari, hundreds of thousands gathered. At that time, I was stationed at Police Headquarters. The DMP commissioner and other senior police officials of Dhaka were present at the police control room, issuing directives from there."

He said that around 11:00am, hundreds of thousands of people began entering Dhaka from Uttara. "It was then that I learned that the army did not obstruct them. Field-level officers of the army took a stance in favour of the movement. As a result, it was not possible to block the flow of people heading toward the Gono Bhaban."

By 1:00 pm, the streets of Dhaka were taken over by protesters. "We were instructed by the PMO to block the crowds in the Mohakhali area. Between 12:30-1:00pm, I realised the government would fall. I was informed through SB that the prime minister would relinquish power. I didn't know she would go to India. The army didn't disclose that."

That afternoon, Mamun was informed about a helicopter arriving at the Police Headquarters to evacuate officers. He boarded it and went to Tejgaon Airport. From there, he took refuge at the Army Officers' Mess.

He said he was later arrested in several cases. "Owing to my service in critical government and law enforcement roles, I became involved in many matters of national importance. BEFORE JULY 2024 In his tell-all statement, he further said that at least 50 percent of the ballots were stuffed the night before the 2018 election day, after the then inspector general of police Javed Patwary advised Hasina in this regard.

During the 2018 election, Mamun was serving as deputy inspector general of Dhaka Range. "As part of my personal respect towards the July uprising and driven by conscience, I have voluntarily decided to provide this statement."

He said orders were allegedly issued to field-level authorities to support the ballot stuffing process.

"With the involvement of political leaders, district administration officials, including deputy commissioners, upazila nirbahi officers, assistant commissioners [land], superintendents of police and officers-in-charge, played central roles."

"Later, when selecting recipients for the Bangladesh Police Medal and President Police Medal, officers involved in electoral and political operations were favoured, compromising professionalism."

He said he was a student of Chittagong University but was never involved in Chhatra League politics. His family, however, was involved with Awami League loyalists – his father being the Shalla upazila chairman.

"In recognition of my reputation and service to the government, I was appointed the DIG of police, chief of CID, and later as director general of RAB."

Subsequently, when conflicts and divisions emerged among Gopalganj-centric officers within the force, Hasina and Asaduzzaman appointed him as the IGP, considering his seniority, competence, and perceived neutrality, he said.

"To preserve the reputation of the police force and prevent open conflict among officers, I was later appointed IGP on a contractual basis twice."

About the divisions, he said the police force underwent extensive political polarisation since the 2014 polls, with various Gopalganj-centric factions forming within it.

He said officers at different levels became involved in political activities. As a senior officer, his ability to control the force was limited.

"Due to political connections, controversial police officers actively pursued the government's agenda, often disregarding standard laws and regulations. I have given a truthful statement. This is my testimony."

"After 2018, political interference escalated. Certain officers gained considerable influence, often beyond the control of their supervisors. Meetings used to take place at night at the residence of Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, lasting until late hours."

Regular attendees included the then DMP commissioner Habibur Rahman, DB chief Harun or Rashid, Special Branch chief Monirul Islam, DIG Nurul Islam, DMP joint commissioner Biplob Kumar Sarkar, additional SP Kafi, and OCs Mazahar Islam, Forman Ali, and Apurba Hasan.

"These officers largely ignored directives from me or the IGP, believing they had political backing to act independently. Some had close ties with the prime minister and senior leaders. As IGP, I wanted the police to operate with professional integrity."

Officers from Gopalganj held strong influence over the force, especially at officer and OC levels. They rarely followed commands and operated according to their own will, Mamun added.

"Matters relating to them were usually handled by additional IGP Monirul Islam and commissioner Habibur Rahman. They had close connections with the home minister. Most key roles in Dhaka were held by officers from Gopalganj. A rivalry existed between Monirul Islam and commissioner Habib, each maintaining their own networks."

Claiming he had tried to fulfil his responsibilities with honesty and dedication, Mamun admitted that during the July-August movement last year, he was responsible for suppressing protests, applying excessive police force, and overseeing incidents that led to the deaths and injuries of students and civilians.

He said while serving as RAB DG between April 14, 2020, and September 30, 2022, he was aware that the Task Force Interrogation (TFI) cell operated from within the RAB I compound in Uttara.

Additionally, individual RAB units maintained their own cells, run by unit commanders.

Within RAB, abduction, interrogation, torture, and secret detention of dissenters were seen as standard practice. These were coordinated by the additional director general (operations) and the director of RAB intelligence.

He said he heard that serious directives, including for abductions, enforced disappearances, and crossfire killings, came directly from the Prime Minister's Office.

"During my tenure, I did not receive such orders. But I came to know that some instructions came from the prime minister's defense adviser Tarique Siddique. Though RAB was under the IGP, the chain of command was often bypassed."

He said he tried to keep the IGP informed but wasn't always aware of who was detained or held in the TFI cell.

"I knew Barrister Arman was detained in the TFI cell, but he was not abducted during my tenure. Arman had been taken earlier."

"When DG RAB Benazir Ahmed handed over responsibilities to me, he informed me Arman was in the cell. Later, Sarwar Bin Kashem (ADG Ops and Intelligence Director) also confirmed it. The decision came from the government."

Mamun said he raised Arman's case with Tarique Siddique. "He told me, 'Keep him there. I'll tell you more later.' But he never did."

When Mamun handed over charge to Khurshed Hossain, he informed him of Arman's detention.

He added that Sarwar Bin Kashem, Kairul Islam, and Mashur Rahman served as RAB intelligence directors during his tenure. He was aware of detainees being held without trial, tortured, or killed in crossfire.

"But I did not investigate or intervene. These decisions came from outside forces and intelligence agencies. Even as IGP, I could not take action. My words were often ignored."

"Most of RAB's operations were based on intelligence agency input. The IGP was rarely consulted."

He said he knew RAB officers Alep Uddin and Mohiuddin Faruqi. Alep, known for enforced disappearances, was preferred by many for his "skills."

Most officers involved in torture were from the military.

"Matters like enforced disappearances were directly handled by Tarique Siddique through intelligence officials. Even though I was IGP, I was not informed about everything."

According to ICT officials, former IGP Javed Patwary is now a wanted accused in a case filed over crimes against humanity.

This newspaper could not reach Javed for comment yesterday despite repeated attempts.

Mamun ended his statement by saying, "As a former police chief, I am ashamed, remorseful, and seek forgiveness for the suppression of the movement under government directives; the excessive use of force by overzealous police officers and personnel, including firing on civilians, and the torture, arrest, injury; and the killings of countless people.... I am providing this statement to describe the overall situation including my role. I have given a truthful statement. This is my testimony."

EC officials emphasised that the demarcation of parliamentary seats

Fascist forces waiting on govt slip up

FROM PAGE 12

of hundreds of martyrs."

Stating that a section of the interim government might be using evil tactics instead of working to return the country's ownership to its people by handing over power to their elected representatives.

"There is a question among the people about whether the interim government is showing the wisdom and farsightedness needed in determining election priorities."

Anyone wishing to govern the country must listen to its people.

"People from all walks of life did not continue their movement just to hand over state power to a few individuals," Tarique added.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir urged all political parties not to create divisions over minor issues, so that the country's path to democracy is not disrupted again.

Calling for unity among all, he said: "Our appeal is that we do not create such a situation over minor issues that gives fascist Hasina a chance to return to the country. We request that all political parties work together to quickly resolve the problems we have and return to a democratic system. Let us establish a people's government through an election," he added.

"Demand Justice, Exemplary Punishment for Hasina"

At the event, which was organised

to commemorate the victims of the brutal Ashulia incident during the July uprising, family members

demanded exemplary punishment for Sheikh Hasina and recognition of those who were killed during the clash under police protection."

Muradnagar Police Station's Officer in Charge, Zahidur Rahman said both sides engaged in chase and counter-chase during the rally.

"Several NCP supporters were injured. Police intervened to restore order," he said.

France, UK, allies

FROM PAGE 12

majority looted and robbed due to the security chaos systematically and deliberately imposed by the Israeli occupation," the office said in a statement.

Human rights organisations and experts in Germany have confirmed that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, Wafa reports.

This came during a press conference in Berlin on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and the role of the European Union and Germany in this regard.

The Secretary General of Amnesty International Germany said that the deliberate starvation of civilians constitutes a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, adding: "There is sufficient evidence that Israel is using starvation as a weapon of war."

70 filed on average

FROM PAGE 12

Mohammadpur were also held, said the official.

Regarding traffic, Talebur said new strategies are being implemented regularly. In the past 24 hours, 2,845 cases were filed under the traffic act, 282 vehicles were impounded, and 83 were towed.

In another development, Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said there is no specific security threat centring the August 5 anniversary of the July uprising.

"Hopefully, everything will go well," he told reporters at his ministry.

Asked about recent police drives reported by the Special Branch, Jahangir clarified, "This is not a countrywide operation. It is being conducted by the DMP. Such measures are taken from time to time, depending on the situation."

Regarding recent attacks on Hindu homes, he said that those responsible would be brought to justice.

It's time for this govt

FROM PAGE 12

those, and what it is leaving behind for the next government."

He said any interim or caretaker government must consider an exit strategy, and the current government is no exception.

Debapriya warned that whenever politicians distorted the constitutional process to avoid peaceful transfer of power, the system collapsed and the worst sufferers were the politicians themselves.

"Be it after Ershad, or during the 1/1 period, or even in the case of Sheikh Hasina, politicians have suffered the most. They became the prime victims of the consequences," he said.

He noted that it still remains uncertain whether the next government will fully legitimise the actions taken by the current one, particularly in terms of reforms.

SC acquires Mobarak

FROM PAGE 12

Mobarak is currently receiving treatment at the prison cell of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, he added.

Senior Advocate SM Shahjahan and Barrister Imran represented Mobarak during the appeal hearing, while Prosecutor Gazi MM Tamim appeared on behalf of the state.

On November 24, 2014, the ICT-1 sentenced Mobarak, a Jamaat-e-Islami leader from Brahmanbaria who later joined the Awami League, to death for abducting and killing 33 people from Tanmand



Farmers till their arable land with ploughs and cattle in Rajshahi's Paba upazila yesterday, preparing for Aman paddy cultivation. Despite persistent rain, they continue working to ready the muddy fields for sowing.

Over 4,000 cases pending

FROM PAGE 4

Additionally, 1,079 new cases were filed, and five traffickers have received life sentences under the existing law, he said.

Bernd Spanier, chargé d'affaires of the EU Delegation to Bangladesh, expressed concern that despite numerous trafficking cases being filed in the country, only a few have led to convictions.

"Behind every person who has returned home lies a long line of others still trapped in the shadows of traffickers," he said. "Trafficking thrives when governments are weak, migration is unsafe, and opportunities are scarce. Traffickers exploit that despair."

According to IOM data presented at the event, over 9,000 Bangladeshi crossed the Mediterranean to Italy in the first half of 2025, bringing the total since

2009 to over 90,000.

Many of these migrants, aged between 14 and 35, were lured by false promises of employment.

A significant number ended up in Libyan camps, where they were subjected to extortion and torture. As a result, Bangladesh is now one of the top countries for irregular migration to Europe.

DIG of Police Ashiq Saeed said law enforcement agencies remain active in counter-trafficking efforts, with many traffickers already arrested and others being pursued internationally through Interpol.

Ikrumul Habib of the Criminal Investigation Department identified Khulna as a trafficking hotspot due to its economic vulnerability and proximity to border districts like Jhenaidah, Meherpur, and Chuadanga.

Abul Hasnat, deputy

secretary of the law ministry, said in many cases, victims are deceived by people close to them.

Lance Bono, chief of mission of IOM Bangladesh, pointed out the disproportionate impact of trafficking on women and children.

Sujin Kong, deputy country director of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), described trafficking as one of the most serious forms of crime.

He said Bangladesh remains one of the major source countries for human trafficking.

The event began with a welcome speech by Jasim Uddin Khan, joint secretary of the home ministry.

Md Asad Ullah Chowdhury from the Special Branch's Immigration Unit also attended the programme.

Touhid calls for ceasefire in Gaza

FROM PAGE 3

Touhid urged the international community to begin implementing the two-state solution without delay, emphasising the urgency to uphold international laws, humanitarian principles, and the UN Charter.

He warned that peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved without justice for the Palestinian people and reiterated Bangladesh's firm position in support of the two-state solution.

More than 58,000 Palestinians have lost their lives and many more have been injured, most of them women and children," he said. "Schools, hospitals, and aid camps are under attack with countless bodies lying beneath rubble in Gaza."

The adviser also warned against Israel's continued expansion of illegal settlements and erosion of

Tajuddin Ahmad was a statesman

FROM PAGE 4

On August 27 last year, Supreme Court lawyer Muhammad Mujahidul Islam filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station under sections 219 and 466 of the Penal Code, accusing Khairul.

On July 24, a team of the Detective Branch of police arrested Khairul from a house in Dhaka's Dhanmondi.

On the same day, he was sent to jail in connection with a case filed over the killing of Jubo Dal activist Abdul Kaiyum Ahad, 16, in Jatrabari on July 18 last year.

On July 29, he was shown arrested virtually in a case filed with Fatullah Police Station in Narayanganj for issuing an illegal verdict and fabricating a judgement that abolished the caretaker government system.

The case filed by Abdul Bari Bhuiyan, former president of Narayanganj Bar Association, also includes sedition charges.

structures left behind by the colonial system to become more mature and effective," Azam said.

He also said Tajuddin sought financial transparency and proper responsibility in state affairs.

Tajuddin could be seen as modern and liberal in the Western sense, but not in a purely Western ideological way, said Azam. "Instead of copying Western models, he believed in learning from our own lived experiences. That's why we cannot call him a Western-style liberal humanist."

"Tajuddin's diary is a rare and honest account of Bangladesh's political journey. It encourages people to rethink older, rigid views of history," he added.

Mohammad Azam, director general of Bangla Academy, delivered the memorial lecture titled "Tajuddin Ahmad: A Diary: Oithashikota O Rajonitikota".

He described Tajuddin as a realist and practical thinker whose political views were shaped more by real-life experiences than by ideology or theory.

He did not believe in imposing abstract ideas. He worked with what existed and tried to improve it. He wanted the institutions and

and Dr Sazzad Siddiqui, acting chairman and associate professor of the Peace and Conflict Studies Department, also spoke at the event.

A total of seven DU students received awards at the event.

Govt to hike

FROM PAGE 3

duty in the capital said he has been in the force for nine years.

"Currently, I receive a risk allowance of Tk 1,800. Once the initiative is implemented, I will get Tk 2,160 – just Tk 360 more," he said.

However, officials who have served five years will benefit more.

Talking with this newspaper, an SI working in the Dhaka Metropolitan Police said he is now receiving a Tk 2,700 risk allowance.

"Once the new allowance rates take effect, I will receive Tk 3,840, which is an immediate increase of Tk 1,340," said the SI.

An ASI who has been in service for 19 years said, "I currently get Tk 3,200. With the new system, it will rise to Tk 3,840."

"But after four more months, when I complete 20 years, it will increase further to Tk 4,560," he added.

5 lands in jail

FROM PAGE 3

teenager was arrested on Saturday night in a case filed under the Cyber Security Act. He was later produced before a court and subsequently sent to a juvenile correctional centre on Sunday.

Meanwhile, a team of Bangladesh Hindu Buddha Christian Oikya Parishad visited the spot on Tuesday, spoke to the victims, and demanded punishment for the attackers.

Decision on

FROM PAGE 3

the charges pressed by the prosecution, which include murder, attempted murder, abetment, complicity, and command responsibility under crimes against humanity.

Sayed was shot dead on July 16 last year in Rangpur during a student-led protest against the quota system in government jobs. The defiance he showed against oppression before his death turned the protests into a mass uprising that eventually toppled Sheikh Hasina's regime on August 5 last year.

The accused in jail are former university proctor Shariful Islam, assistant registrar Rafiul Hasan Rasel, staff member Anwar Parvez, assistant sub-inspector Amir Hossain, constable Sujan Chandra Roy, and Bangladesh Chhatra League leader Imran Chowdhury Akash. At least 24 accused are absconding.

JP's income

FROM PAGE 3

In 2021, the party reported a total income of Tk 2,09,85,154 (including bank deposits) and expenditures of Tk 84,68,134, ending the year with a surplus of Tk 1,25,17,020.

In 2020, Jatiya Party's expenditure stood at Tk 76,04,120, with a surplus of Tk 51,68,757.

Since the introduction of the registration system in 2008, political parties have been required to submit their income and expenditure reports – audited by a recognised chartered accounting firm – to the EC by July 31 each year.

Currently, the EC has 50 registered political parties, including BNP, Jamaat, and Morelgonj Upazilas of Bagerhat District, which are affected by the impact of climate change (MRMWSP) Project, FY-2024-25.



SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

25. Total cropland shrank from 212,472 hectares to 160,861 hectares.

Land once used for rice, vegetables, and other staple crops has increasingly been taken over by industries, housing projects, roads, and government infrastructure. Non-agricultural land use jumped from 16,564 hectares to 43,884 hectares in ten years.

In Rampal alone,

at least 2,100 hectares of agricultural land have been converted to industrial or infrastructural sites in the last 25 years, pushing many farmers to migrate to cities for work. Nearly 1,214 hectares were acquired in the past three decades for government projects, including the Rampal,

Thermal Power Plant (742 hectares), Khan Jahan Ali Airport (255 hectares), and the Khulna-Mongla Railway (57 hectares). Additional land was taken for technical institutes, fire stations, and police training centres.

Private industries have also changed the landscape. Along the 12-kilometre Khulna-Mongla highway stretch, over 550 hectares of farmland have been used for factories, LPG plants, fish depots, and solar power plants.

Landowners, tempted by high prices, sold their fields, while day labourers and sharecroppers who

depended on the land lost their jobs.

Amrito Lal Sarkar, a land

seller near a solar power plant, said, "I sold my land to a private industry, but around 300 farmers used to cultivate paddy there. Many were day labourers – they are now jobless."

Adding to the crisis, river erosion from the Pashur and Bogura rivers has swallowed at least 202 hectares of farmland over the last 30 years.

Rampal's upazila agriculture officer, Walid Islam, claimed that although land area has decreased, initiatives like crop intensification and improved seed varieties have helped maintain overall output.

However, many experts and environmentalists disagree.

TENDER NOTICE

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar hereby announces the launch of the following tender:

TENDER REFERENCE NUMBER	ITEM DESCRIPTION
BGD - UNHCR RFP 1472	FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF ASSORTED CONSTRUCTION WORKS, AND RELATED SERVICES FOR SEMI - PERMANENT STRUCTURES

Interested and potential vendors are invited to participate in this Request for Proposal (RFP) by accessing and downloading the tender documents from [UNHCR Cloud ERP Supplier Portal](https://www.unhcr.org/CloudERPSupplierPortal).

UNGM Notice Link: <https://www.unhcr.org/CloudERPSupplierPortal>

ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

Please confirm your participation for BGD - UNHCR RFP 1472 by using the "Acknowledge Participation" functionality in Cloud ERP Supplier portal.

It is very important to subscribe (Acknowledge Participation) to an ongoing negotiation that you wish to participate in as this is the only way to receive automatic email notifications with information on any changes related to this negotiation.

Instruction to Bidders:

UNHCR will organize an online supplier pre-bid conference on 31/07/2025 at 11:00 am hrs BST via Microsoft teams. Bidders may also join the meeting through scanning the QR Code:

To register as a prospective supplier and submission of bids, please follow the guideline: <https://www.unhcr.org/CloudERPSupplierPortal>

Existing suppliers use this link: <https://supplier-portal.unhcr.org/> to login with your email address and password. Do not create a new profile if you are already registered. If you have forgotten your password, click on Forgot Password link to reset your password.

Bid submission deadline: Tuesday, 18 August 2025 – 23:59 hrs BST Bangladesh time.

Kindly note that no hard copy is acceptable. The offer to be submitted only through Cloud ERP portal.



Scan above QR Code to join

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Department of the Public Health Engineering
Bagerhat District, Bagerhat
e-mail: bagerhat@dphe.gov.bd
টেলিফোন: ৩৮৭৯৯৫৮৮৮

Memo No. 46.03.0100.061.16.010.17-922
Invitation for e-Tender Notice No-01 (2025-2026)

Date : 30/07/2025.

1 Ministry/ Division Local Government Division

2 Implementing Agency Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE)

3 Project/Program Name Development of Water Supply and Sanitation Systems in Mongla, Rampal and Morelgonj Upazilas of Bagerhat District, which are Affected by the Impact of Climate Change (MRMWSP).

4 e-Tender IDs 1131522

5 Description of Works Installation of 01 nos 100 mm * 50 mm dia PVC submersible Tubewell (Depth 268 m) at Morelgonj Upazila in Bagerhat District Under Development of water supply and sanitation system in Mongla, Rampal and Morelgonj Upazilas of Bagerhat District, which are affected by the impact of climate change (MRMWSP) Project, FY-2024-25.

6 This is online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Interested DBO Firm/Contractor can see details in the website : <http://www.eprocure.gov.bd> Size : 4" x 3"

GD-1692
Signature:
Jayanta Mallick
Executive Engineer
DPHE, Bagerhat District

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

Tracing an uprising in strokes

Review of 'The Art of Triumph: Graffiti of Bangladesh's New Dawn' (2024)
compiled by July Shaheed Smriti Foundation

The Art of Triumph is more than a photo book; it is a reminder of a time when walls spoke louder than headlines. In capturing the spirit of a generation that chose courage over silence, it preserves not just images, but as a record of resistance and imagination, it reminds us that even when erased from walls, truth finds a way to last.

MAHMUDA EMDAD

Graffiti has long played a powerful role in revolutions around the world. From the walls of Paris in 1968 to the slogans of the Arab Spring, street art has served as one of the most immediate and accessible forms of resistance. In times of unrest, when voices are silenced in traditional spaces, walls become a way to speak: boldly, publicly, and without filter. It's a tool used not just to protest, but to mourn, remember, and demand change. Often spontaneous and urgent, revolutionary graffiti captures the mood of a movement in real time. Graffiti during revolutions function as visceral, immediate forms of expression; these murals become the raw voice of a generation that risked life and limb to literally paint its dissent on city walls.

When Chief Advisor Professor Muhammad Yunus writes in the foreword of *The Art of Triumph* that "as a nation, we must protect and cherish this newfound freedom, ensuring that the walls of our cities continue to echo the voice of the young people, now and always," he captures the soul of what this book stands for. This isn't just a photo book—it's a loud and lasting echo of a revolution that swept through Bangladesh in July and August 2024. It is an archive of rage, grief, hope, humour, resistance, and above all, youth.

The Art of Triumph collects over 50 photographs of graffiti and murals created during and after the student-led uprising of July 2024, often referred to as the Monsoon Revolution. Photographed mainly by Avijit Karmoker, the images come from various parts of Dhaka, especially protest hotspots like Mirpur 10, Shahbagh, Dhaka University, and Uttara. The selection balances both in-the-moment protest graffiti—messy, raw, powerful and the cleaner—more carefully curated—arts that came later. Shot in the rain-washed days of early August, the photographs glow with colour and contrast, making the art feel even more alive.

But beyond the visuals, the book is a record of what the youth dared to say when they finally found space to speak. There are murals paying tribute to martyrs like Mir Mugdho, whose last words, "pani lagbe?", became a haunting slogan of sacrifice. There are paintings addressing racism, the plight of the tea workers in Sylhet, and the rights of indigenous communities—groups who had been excluded from the national conversation for far too long. In that moment of upheaval, students were not just resisting a



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

regime, they were remembering others who had been silenced for years. There are murals on the remittance earners who work abroad and send money home, often unseen, often unheard. A mural on Gulshan Avenue thanks them for keeping the economy running, for reducing poverty, for building a better life, not just for their families but for the

Though the book's price may seem high, it's printed on recycled, eco-friendly paper, an intentional choice that reflects the movement's spirit of responsibility and care. Professor Muhammad Yunus approved the idea of this book and personally selected the cover, supporting the effort to curate the July Revolution through visuals. From the start, the team behind the book held no political affiliations; their only aim was to archive the uprising

through street art and preserve a powerful chapter of history.

Of course, the book also captures graffiti directly critical of the former regime. During the movement, walls were covered in slogans denouncing the fascist government and calling out the now-exiled Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Many of these were painted in moments of sheer danger; students drawing their messages while being chased, beaten, or threatened. That's the real beauty of those walls—not how pretty they are, but how brave; not how polished, but how immediate. But here lies one of the limitations of the book: most of the photographs lean toward the murals painted after the movement had ended, cleaned up, repainted, often beautified. The raw, hurried, and sometimes chaotic graffiti created during the heart of

the uprising is barely present. Perhaps many of them were erased too quickly, perhaps they weren't documented in time. But those imperfect, urgent strokes told us something the polished ones can't. They carried the weight of fear, of adrenaline, of protest born in the moment. And while this book offers a valuable archive, it only scratches the surface of the unrest it seeks to remember. During the movement and even in the days after August, some city walls held unfinished graffiti: abrupt lines, half-written slogans—silent traces of artists forced to flee, likely chased off by the police. In their incompleteness, these works often said more than any finished mural ever could.

Yet, the compilation succeeds where it matters. It tells us what the youth of this country think, feel, and demand. It shatters the lazy assumption that this

generation is apolitical or indifferent. On the contrary, these walls show a generation that is politically conscious, socially aware, and emotionally invested in justice.

The Art of Triumph is more than a photo book; it is a reminder of a time when walls spoke louder than headlines. In capturing the spirit of a generation that chose courage over silence, it preserves not just images, but as a record of resistance and imagination, it reminds us that even when erased from walls, truth finds a way to last.

Mahmuda Emdad is a women and gender studies major with an endless interest in feminist writings, historical fiction, and pretty much everything else, all while questioning the world in the process. Reach out at mahmudaemdad123@gmail.com.

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

Between protest and power: Shahriar's portrait of a nation in flux

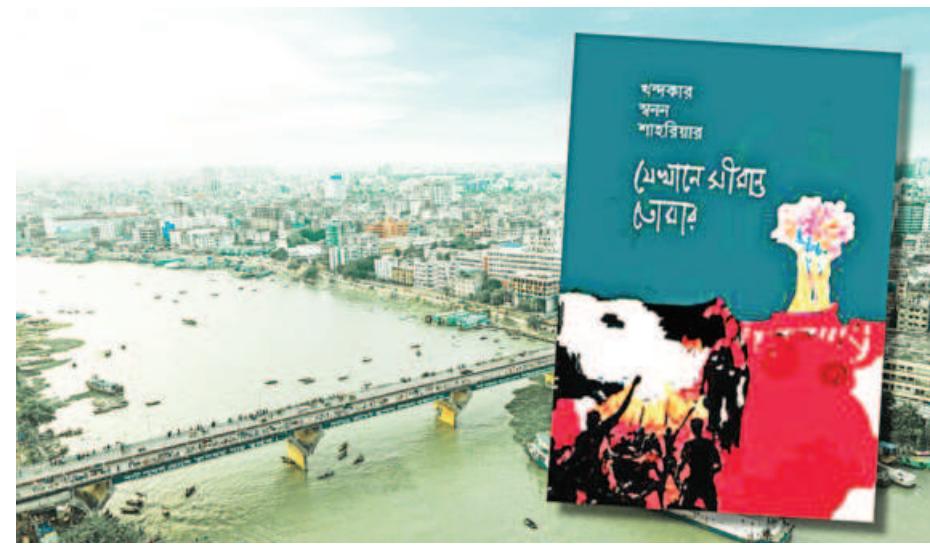
Review of 'Jekhane Shimanto Tomar' (Prothoma Prokashon, 2025) by Khandker Swanjan Shahriar

MOHIN UDDIN MIZAN

Literary experts often caution against writing a novel immediately after a major political upheaval, arguing that personal involvement may cloud objectivity. However, creative minds are seldom bound by such prescriptions. Just as Shaheed Anwar Pasha authored *Rifle, Roti, Aurat* (first published in 1979) during the Liberation War, Khandker Swanjan Shahriar felt compelled to write his second novel, *Jekhane Shimanto Tomar*, stirred by the events surrounding the July Uprising. Wrestling with his inner dilemmas following the days after August 5, Shahriar wrote this novel as an urgent response to history in the making.

While Pasha offered a powerful, empathetic, and humanistic portrayal of the circumstances during the liberation war, Shahriar takes a more critical stance on the Uprising, attempting to unmask the limitations and contradictions of all stakeholders involved. *Jekhane Shimanto Tomar* weaves together multiple subplots or parallel narratives to present a holistic account of the 'July 36' events and to document the broader context of 15 years of quasi-fascist rule under the Hasina regime.

One narrative thread follows Mojaffor Hossain, a Member of Parliament, and his daughter Ania. Through them, the author illustrates the misuse of political power: Mojaffor extracts commissions from public projects, arranges for the arrest of Ania's ex-boyfriend, and manipulates systems to secure her a position at a prestigious institute. The novel lays bare how traditional Bangladeshi politics often enables land grabbing, extortion, and environmental degradation,



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

such as river-filling, by party loyalists.

Yet, the novel does not flatten its characters into mere villains. Mojaffor, once an honest politician, is shown as a man trapped in the vicious cycle of power politics—much like the July frontliners themselves after forming a political party. He is contrasted with his old friend Kamalesh, a freedom fighter who leaves the party after witnessing its degeneration.

Ania, in turn, disapproves of her father's abuse of power and develops admiration for Kamalesh and her grandfather, both of whom embody integrity and patriotic love.

Through Ania's visit to her ancestral village and conversations with Kamalesh and his comrades, the author unveils the regime's track record of corruption: extortion, manipulation of public tenders, and manipulation them into joining his cause

three uncontested elections, embezzlement in mega projects, systemic bribery, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and the stifling of dissent—all facilitated or overlooked by law enforcement agencies.

Another significant subplot revolves around Mujtaba, a student, and Regan, the son of a former opposition MP. The author critiques the toxic culture of student politics, especially the persecution of students who visibly express Islamic identity, such as by wearing beards or topees. Mujtaba is expelled from his university dormitory under false accusations of political affiliation and later becomes ensnared by Regan's ideological network. Regan exploits the vulnerability of disenfranchised students and manipulates them into joining his cause

with enticing rhetoric. In a conversation with Mujtaba, he declares (as translated by the reviewer): "Ideology is just a pretext. What politicians really want is power. They seek to reclaim it when out of office and cling to it once they have it. Once secured, they exploit it—for themselves or their party. The difference between good and bad politicians is merely in how easily their deceptions are recognised."

This subplot underscores the necessity of the Quota Reform Movement while simultaneously revealing the movement's susceptibility to infiltration. Trained political actors are shown looting weapons, vandalising monuments, torching politicians' homes, and terrorising innocent family members. As we see, Mojaffor's house is looted, vandalised, and set ablaze; his guard is killed, Ania flees to India, and Mojaffor escapes to Singapore earlier.

Yet another narrative follows the tragic love story of Harun and Shahida. When Harun attempts to marry Shahida, Jobed—Mojaffor's assistant—has him falsely imprisoned using political influence. Jobed then marries Shahida, who is already pregnant with Harun's child.

Though the novel celebrates the spirit of the movement, it also critically explores the moral ambiguities and personal failures of its participants. It was published during the last Ekushey Book Fair, sounding an alarm for all political actors to confront their own ethical boundaries and complicity. As readers, our continued disregard for such critical fiction and essays risks normalising fascistic tendencies—extortion and stoning to death, mob lynching, summary executions, historical revisionism, media trials, nepotism,

censorship—all of which persist in different guises today.

The prose is lucid and accessible, somewhat reminiscent of Humayun Ahmed's signature style. Shahriar even adopts some "Humayan" trademarks. The narrative unfolds through parallel storylines, creating an engaging and layered reading experience. The book's structure mirrors its title, *Jekhane Shimanto Tomar* (Where Your Limits Lie), dividing the novel into chapters with evocative titles, some borrowed from famous songs like "Nongor Tolo Tolo", "Pother Klanti Bhule", "Dorjor Opashe", "Peye Haranor Bedonay", among others, enriching the emotional texture of the narrative. At the beginning or end of chapters—and during narrative shifts—the author incorporates symbolic imagery and language, often hinting at impending doom or its reversal.

In sum, this novel takes the reader on a journey from 2010 to a reimagined Bangladesh, offering not only a reflection on the past but also a vision of the future. It presents poignant observations and raises critical questions that remain unanswered even a year after the July Uprising. It demands that we not only witness history but question it—and, perhaps, change its course.

Mohin Uddin Mizan is a publication and communication professional at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), Ministry of Planning. A translator and former journalist at national dailies, Mohin used to write short stories, poems, op-eds and book reviews for print and online platforms at home and abroad. He can be reached at mohinmizan07@gmail.com.



Injuries, fatigue add to decisive Oval Test's intrigue

AGENCIES

At The Oval, in 14 Tests between England and India, the hosts won five times. India won twice, with seven other matches ending in a draw.

India, however, can take confidence from the fact that they won the last game they played at the venue -- a 157-run victory in 2021.

Shubman Gill is now equal with Sir Don Bradman and Sunil Gavaskar for most centuries (4) as a captain in a series.

Gill, with 722 runs in the series, can also surpass Bradman's record of 812 runs (in 1936-37, against England) in his first series as a Test captain.

England and India head to The Oval today for the fifth and decisive Test of a tightly contested series, with both sides grappling with mental and physical fatigue.

A packed schedule of five Tests in under seven weeks has taken a toll, particularly on fast bowlers, with each match going the distance.

India, trailing 1-2, managed to draw the fourth Test at Old Trafford by batting 143 overs in their second innings. Tensions rose when Ravindra Jadeja and Washington Sundar completed their centuries after England captain Ben Stokes had offered to end the match, adding further intrigue to the decider.

Injuries and selection dilemmas

Stokes has been ruled out of the

final Test with a shoulder injury, with vice captain Ollie Pope to lead

England in the final game. The all-rounder bowled 140 overs across the four Tests, the most in any series in his career.

"It's emotional when you find out what you've done," said Stokes.

We will take a decision [on Bumrah] tomorrow; the wicket looks very green. So we will see how it turns out.

India captain Shubman Gill

India are yet to confirm whether Jasprit Bumrah will play, as he was initially expected to feature in only three Tests -- which he already did. "We will take a decision [on Bumrah] tomorrow; the wicket looks very green. So we will see how it turns out," said India captain

Shubman Gill on the eve of the final Test.

England have also rested Jofra Archer for the game after the injury-prone pacer already played back-to-back Tests at Lord's and Old Trafford in what is pacer's first Test series in four years.

Gill eyes record breaking series

Gill, previously inconsistent, has thrived in his debut series as captain. He scored his fourth century at Old Trafford, a gritty 103 off 238 balls after India were left reeling at 0-2 in their second innings.

He has now scored 722 runs in the series, surpassing Yashasvi Jaiswal's record of 712 runs in a series against England by an Indian batter. At The Oval, he could break Sunil Gavaskar's all-time India record of 774 runs in a series, set against the West Indies in 1971.

One downside for Gill is that he will be without vice captain and prolific runscorer Rishabh Pant, who sustained a foot fracture in Manchester.

'Players have to upskill to keep up with global strike-rate standard'

English power-hitting coach Julian Wood is no stranger to Bangladesh cricket, having coached Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) sides Chattogram Challengers and Sylhet Sunrisers before. But his forthcoming stint in the country will be different as for the first time he will be working with the national side for a three-week camp on power-hitting from August 10 to September 3. In a conversation with *The Daily Star*'s Abdullah Al Mehdi, the coach talked about what he hopes to achieve through the upcoming camp.

Following are the excerpts:



Table tennis teams fall apart

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh table tennis teams' bid to finish second in South Asian Regional Championships in both men's and women's sections fell apart as both suffered miserable defeats in all of their first day matches in Kathmandu yesterday.

Bangladesh women's team, comprising Sonam Sultana Soma, Sadia Rahman Mou and Khoi Khoi Marma suffered a 3-1 defeat, with only Khoi Khoi winning her match. They later suffered a 3-0 defeat against India and Nepal.

In men's section, Bangladesh lost to Maldives 3-2.

Following the demoralising defeat, Bangladesh made a meek surrender in a 3-0 defeat to India. Bangladesh were scheduled to take on Nepal in the day's last match.

Both teams will play their respective last matches against Sri Lanka today. The top teams from each section of the five-nation championship will progress to World Team Table Tennis Championship.

AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP 2026 PREPARATION BFF seeks monthly friendlies with top sides

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is planning to arrange at least one international match per month for the national women's football team in the lead-up to the AFC Women's Asian Cup final round in Australia next year.

Mahfuz Aakter Kiron, chairman of the BFF women's committee, shared the development at the BFF House yesterday, a day after Bangladesh were drawn into a tough Group B alongside nine-time champions China, DPR Korea, and Uzbekistan. The tournament kicks off in three Australian cities from March 1.

Preparations are set to begin in September, with 19-year-old Sweden-based forward Anika Siddiqui likely to come to Bangladesh for a trial prior to it.

"Our target is to start the senior camp from September and then play at least one international match every month," Kiron told reporters. "But things may not go exactly as planned because the opponents we are targeting also have their own schedules."

Kiron, after getting approval from BFF president Tabith Awal, has reached

out to the Japan and Korea Football Associations to propose month-long training camps and two friendly matches in each country.

"South Korea can't host us due to their domestic schedule, and their national team will be in Europe from September to March for their own Asian Cup preparations," she said. "Japan hasn't responded yet, but we're hopeful."

Kiron, also a member of the AFC Executive Committee, stressed the urgency of preparing for top-tier opponents. "We don't want to waste time. We're taking every possible step to ensure the team is ready. We will also contact Spain and other top Asian teams not in our group." She added that match schedules would be finalised once they align with other teams' calendars. "We want to keep the programme running until next March and ensure we play every month."

Kiron sees Bangladesh's tough group not as a burden but an opportunity. "It's good to face strong opponents -- we rarely get that chance."

She also appealed to the corporate sector for financial support to help realise the preparation plans for the national women's team.



The Daily Star (DS): Are you excited about the Bangladesh camp?

Julian Wood (JW): Yes, absolutely. It's something that I thought was going to happen earlier. I did the BPL twice and there was talk about it back then but nothing really came off it. So, it's good to get things up and running.

DS: What changed for the BCB to acquire your services now?

JW: I think if you look at how the game is going now, the big nations like Australia, India, England, are pulling ahead in white ball cricket. So, I think the other nations are starting to fall behind a bit. And I think they realise that they need to do something about it.

DS: What is your assessment on someone like Tanzid Hasan Tamim, who appears to be a natural six-hitter?

JW: Yes, Tanzid looks natural. I think they're going the right way, doing the right things and definitely there are players out there who have the ability to do it and he's obviously one of them. I think the way the game is going now, there is basically a way that players have to evolve their game. It's like there is a global

strike-rate standard in T20 cricket which is why players have to upskill and evolve to keep up with the other nations.

DS: Right now, you are conducting a week-long camp in Sri Lanka. Do you feel players in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka need a fundamental shift or minor tweaks in technique for power-hitting?

DS: Size is a thing. If you look at

both Bangladesh's and Sri Lanka's

players, they're not that big. Whereas

the West Indian, English players

are big and strong. Bangladeshi or

Lankan players need to do things

slightly differently. Whereas West

Indians or English batters rely

heavily on power.

DS: While you can add power to a

player's game but with the guys

who are smaller, it's basically

about rhythm and timing of their

movements and the sequencing of

his movements.

DS: He's not just about power, he has

superb skill levels. And that's how I

see a lot of the Bangladeshi players.

They will have enough power, but you can always add power.

DS: How do you actually go about adding power to your game?

JW: Obviously, strength and

conditioning is massive. I'll do lots of

overload training with heavier bats.

Everything I do is very functional. It's

not just going in the gym and just

lifting loads of weights. It's actually

using the muscles and recreating the

movements you do when you hit a ball.

DS: What kind of changes do you

want to see after the camp?

JW: I'll be looking at the World

Cup potentially since they would be

exposed to these methods as time

wears on. Mindset is key. It's not just

about physicality, it's a mentality

thing as well. With power-hitting,

you have to have that trust with the

players and if you can do that, you

are already ahead of what you want

to start working towards.



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HIGHEST
SELLING
CEMENT

for more than
20
YEARS



Fascist forces waiting on govt slip-up Says Tarique

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Any wrong decision by the government could allow fascist forces to be rehabilitated into politics and put the country's democratic journey at serious risk, said BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman.

A s c i s m , e x t r e m i s m and radicalism can raise their heads, he said at a protest rally organised yesterday by the Dhaka District unit of BNP at Sreepur in Ashulia.

Subsequently, he urged the interim government to remain extremely careful.

"I want to draw the attention of the interim government to the fact that the fallen, fugitive, defeated and ousted fascist forces are lurking in the shadows, waiting for an opportunity to return to politics despite the blood

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Govt turning against those who put it in power Says Anu Muhammad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is oppressing the very groups it relied upon to come to power, including the labourers, women and other minority groups, said former Jahangirnagar professor Anu Muhammad.



The interim government was supposed to create a freer environment for the cultural activists across the country but the communal groups of the country are becoming more powerful nowadays, he said at a seminar titled "The 2024 Uprising and the Cultural Struggle" at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

The seminar was organised by Ganatantrik Sangskritik Oikko, an alliance of 31 left-leaning socio-cultural organisations that grew during the uprising last year, to commemorate July 30, 2024, when the cultural activists took to the streets with a musical procession from Zero Point towards Bahadur Shah Park.

Police and military forces attempted to block and disperse the

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EXTORTION CASES 70 filed on average each month: DMP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 70 extortion cases were filed on average every month in the capital in the first six months this year, according to crime statistics shared by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

At least 33 robbery, 248 mugging, 121 murder, and 1,068 theft cases were recorded with 50 police stations in Dhaka.

On average, this amounts to over 20 murders, five robberies, and 41 muggings per month, Talebur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media), told a press briefing at the DMP media centre yesterday.

Despite the figures, the DMP official claimed that the overall law and order situation in the city remains under control.

To increase public safety, the DMP has beefed up patrols and checkpoints. In the last 24 hours alone, 441 patrol teams were deployed across the city -- 259 in the daytime and 221 at night. These included 221 foot patrols and 27 motor patrols. Checkpoints were also set up in key and strategic locations.

A special drive in the same period led to the arrest of 186 people accused of various crimes, including robbery, theft, and drug dealing. Others who have arrest warrants against them are among the arrestees.

A DB team from Wari arrested five members of a phone-snatching gang and recovered 123 stolen mobile phones from their possession.

Two members of the notorious "Kobzi-kata" gang



NCP Convener Nahid Islam addressing a rally in front of municipality office at Narsingdi town on the last day of party's month-long countrywide march yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: NAHID ISLAM'S FACEBOOK PAGE

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CLEAN SWEEP AHEAD

How Washing Machines Are Changing Bangladeshi Homes

PRIYAM PAUL

Once considered a luxury item, the washing machine is steadily becoming a sought-after home appliance in Bangladesh. For a country juggling rapid urbanisation, dual-income households, and shifting gender roles, the promise of convenient laundry care is no longer a distant dream—it is inching closer to daily reality. But even as its popularity rises, the washing machine has yet to secure a place in most Bangladeshi homes, lagging behind other appliances like refrigerators and air conditioners.

The country's shift from a low-income to a middle-income economy—fueled by an expanding middle class and near-universal electrification—has paved the way for wider adoption of modern household gadgets. Washing machines offer a practical solution to an often overlooked burden: daily laundry, a task that traditionally falls on women. They also serve time-strapped office-goers who prioritise convenience.

"Washing machines are still considered

urban-centric products. Users tend to have a fascination with international brands, and among household appliances, washing machines are the slowest-moving items. There's also a common mindset that washing machines reduce the longevity of clothes. However, given the rising demand for smart home appliances overall, the prospects for washing machines remain promising," says Salim Ullah Salim, Director of Marketing at Jamuna Electronics and Automobiles Ltd.

The market is indeed expanding. According to MD. Khairul Bashar, Deputy Chief Business Officer at Walton Home Appliance, "The washing machine market in Bangladesh is undergoing a quiet revolution as manufacturers respond to growing consumer demand for sustainable home appliances. With rising electricity costs and increased environmental awareness, both global brands and local manufacturers are prioritising energy efficiency and eco-friendly features in their newest models."

SEE PAGE J2




WALTON
Washing Machine

Less Laundry Stress
More Life
Moments




INTELLIGENT
DRYING


SMART
CONTROL


OXYFRESH
TECHNOLOGY


Scan To
Discover





MD. KHAIRUL BASHAR

Deputy Chief Business Officer,
Walton Home Appliance

WALTON BRINGS SMARTER, Greener Laundry Solutions

The Daily Star (TDS): What are the current trends in the washing machine market in Bangladesh, and what challenges does the industry face?

MD Khairul Bashar (MKB): The washing machine market in Bangladesh is experiencing steady growth, driven by urbanisation, rising disposable incomes, and a shift towards modern home appliances. However, the industry also faces several challenges, including high production costs, unreliable power supply, and low rural penetration. Consumers are increasingly opting for fully automatic washing machines over semi-automatic models due to their convenience and time-saving features. Front-load and top-load variants are gaining traction, especially in urban households where space and efficiency are priorities. With rising electricity costs, consumers are now considering energy-efficient washing machines.

This industry is still very new. Local brands like Walton have not been producing washing machines for a long time. Some other companies are planning to enter this sector, but due to certain challenges, they are reconsidering their investment. The government's decision to impose a 5% VAT on locally manufactured units in the 2025-26 budget, without adjusting tariffs for Completely Built Unit (CBU) imports, has created an

uneven competitive landscape. This not only hampers existing manufacturers but also discourages new investment. To encourage local production and make washing machines more affordable for middle-class

TDS: What new technologies are currently being introduced in your washing machines?

MKB: There has been significant development in washing machine technologies since the onset of the 'new normal', with greater emphasis on enhanced performance, efficiency, and convenience. First comes Inverter Technology, which enables energy efficiency, quiet operation, and longer machine life. The Fuzzy Control System automatically detects the load and sets the appropriate wash function accordingly. Saving power, water, and detergent is now a major concern for users. Air Wash technology significantly reduces water and detergent consumption. Oxy Fresh enhances fabric freshness. The washer-dryer combo helps dry clothes completely in the same machine. Lastly, the IoT feature enables users to control and monitor the machine's operation, diagnostics, and cycle updates via a smartphone app.

TDS: Are you planning any future initiatives focused on innovation, particularly towards eco-friendly or energy-efficient washing machines, in response to customer needs?

MKB: Air Wash, Oxy Fresh, IoT, DD (Direct Drive), Inverter, AI, Auto Dosing, and Anti-foaming – these are the key features of our washing machines. In addition, our products offer EMI facilities, extended warranty periods, and both indoor and outdoor service support.

families, government support and protective tariffs on CBU imports would be beneficial.

TDS: What are the key features and product offerings in your washing machines that attract customers?

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Clean Sweep Ahead

The washing machine market in Bangladesh is undergoing a quiet revolution as manufacturers respond to growing consumer demand for sustainable home appliances.

FROM PAGE J1

Currently estimated at BDT 1,000 crore, the washing machine market in Bangladesh records annual sales of 150,000 to 200,000 units. It is growing at a rate of 5-10 percent yearly, with local manufacturers capturing 70-75 percent of the market share.

The market is segmented into manual, semi-automatic, and fully automatic machines – the latter including both top-loading and front-loading models. Top-loading machines are typically priced between Tk 10,000 and 12,000, while front-loading models range from Tk 35,000 to 40,000. Fully automatic models from local brands cost around Tk 40,000 to 50,000, while

premium international brands are priced between Tk 60,000 and 70,000. Lower-end models usually offer basic functionality, while high-end versions can dry up to 70 percent of the load.

Currently, over 70 percent of sales are for top-loading models, although the market is gradually shifting toward front-loading options due to their water efficiency and advanced features. Sales typically peak during the rainy season and winter, when consumers seek better drying solutions and relief from cold-water washes.

Among the key players in the domestic market are Walton Group, Rangs eMart, Best Electronics, Jamuna Electronics, PRAN-RFL (Vision), Esquire Electronics, Electra International, and Super Star Group International.

names such as Samsung, LG, Sharp, and Whirlpool also enjoy consumer trust. Singer Bangladesh, which manufactures most of its machines locally, imports select high-end models to meet premium market demand.

"Singer Bangladesh is doing great work in enhancing the availability and affordability of washing machines. Every year, Singer introduces new models equipped with the latest features. Moreover, Singer has teamed up with Beko, Europe's leading large home appliances company, to bring even more advanced technology to customers in Bangladesh," notes Shabbir Hossain, Marketing Director, Singer Bangladesh Limited.

To stay competitive, companies are investing heavily in R&D to incorporate smart technologies into their machines. "Engineered to handle even the most demanding laundry loads, the JAMUNA Washing Machine comes in 7.0 Kg, 8.0 Kg, and 10.5 Kg drum capacities – perfect for families of all sizes. With both washing and drying functions, this all-in-one solution simplifies your laundry routine while delivering powerful performance every time," shares Salim Ullah Salim.

"Walton introduced inverter-driven motors that reduce power consumption by up to 30% compared to conventional models. These advanced systems automatically adjust motor speed based on load weight, optimising energy use throughout each wash cycle. New-generation front-loading machines

now use as little as 40 litres per cycle – a significant improvement over traditional models that consumed 70-140 litres," explains MD. Khairul Bashar.

Khairul Bashar.

Yet, the industry faces notable challenges. A persistent dollar crisis and rising global raw material costs have made it difficult to open letters of credit (LCs) for importing essential components. This has driven up production costs and limited local manufacturers' pricing flexibility.

"Washing machine prices in Bangladesh have risen significantly over the past year, primarily due to increased government duties. Furthermore, the market lacks comprehensive manufacturing. Most brands rely on Completely Built Unit (CBU) imports, with some local assembly using Chinese components," states Shabbir Hossain.

Policy bottlenecks also need to be addressed to encourage local production. "The government's decision to impose a 5% VAT on locally manufactured units in the 2025-26 budget, without adjusting tariffs for CBU imports, has created an uneven competitive landscape. This not only hampers existing manufacturers but also discourages new investment. To encourage local production and make washing machines more affordable for middle-class families, government support and protective tariffs on CBU imports would be beneficial," adds MD. Khairul Bashar.

Despite the hurdles, there is a silver lining. Bangladeshi brands like Walton have begun exporting washing machines to international markets including Bhutan, East Timor, India, Iraq, Nepal, Uganda, and Yemen – highlighting the sector's potential to not only meet domestic needs but also emerge as a player in the global appliance industry.

As Bangladesh continues its journey toward modern living, washing machines may no longer remain on the household wish list – they are fast becoming a practical necessity.

SHABBIR HOSSAIN

Marketing Director,
Singer Bangladesh Limited



SINGER LEADS

with Versatile Washing Machines

The Daily Star (TDS): What are the current trends in the washing machine market in Bangladesh, and what challenges does the industry face?

Shabbir Hossain (SH): Bangladesh presents a promising, developing market for washing machines. Traditionally, they have been perceived as luxury items; however, this perception is changing with the rise of the middle class and increasingly busy lifestyles, leading to growing interest in home washing machines. This shift indicates a positive trend towards greater washing machine penetration in the coming years.

Globally, consumers seek washing machines that are energy-efficient, water-saving, aesthetically pleasing, and user-friendly, and Bangladeshi consumers are no different. When purchasing a washing machine, customers frequently ask questions such as, "Will it be gentle on my clothes?", "How much will this impact my electricity bill?", "Does it offer a steam wash option?", and "Will it complement my home's décor?" These are common concerns – and, of course, price remains the foremost consideration.

TDS: What new technologies are currently being introduced in your washing machines?

SH: We have recently introduced several advanced technologies through our new product lineup, particularly with the addition of Beko washing machines. These include direct drive motors that reduce noise and improve durability, inverter motors that lower electricity consumption, and steam wash features that provide better cleaning and enhanced hygiene. Some of our models now offer smartphone integration, enabling users to control their washing machines remotely.

These technologies are designed to make laundry more efficient, convenient, and gentle on clothes. We have brought these features to the Bangladeshi market to meet rising customer expectations and to stay aligned with global trends.

TDS: Are you planning any future initiatives focused on innovation, particularly towards eco-friendly or energy-efficient washing machines, in response to customer needs?

SH: We are fully committed to energy efficiency in our washing machine offerings. All current models boast high energy ratings, including Energy Class S++ certification. This means they consume less electricity and water, which not only benefits the environment but also reduces operating costs for users.

With the introduction of Beko washing machines on the Singer platform, we now effectively serve both middle- and high-income customer segments. This partnership allows us to offer a comprehensive range – from basic semi-automatic washers to advanced, high-end fully automatic models. Our combined focus on design and technology ensures our products stand out in the market.

TDS: What new technologies are currently being introduced in your washing machines?

SH: We are prioritising customer needs, integrating global technology, and ensuring that every family finds a machine that suits their lifestyle and budget.





SALIM ULLAH SALIM

Director of Marketing, Jamuna Electronics and Automobiles Ltd

JAMUNA DELIVERS POWERFUL, Intelligent Laundry Solutions

The Daily Star (TDS): What are the current trends in the washing machine market in Bangladesh, and what challenges does the industry face?

Salim Ullah Salim (SUS): The washing machine industry in Bangladesh is transitioning from being dominated by luxury imports to becoming a market of widely available local appliances with increasing sophistication. Rising incomes and growing urban lifestyles continue to drive demand—but affordability remains key, especially for the mass market. The tentative market size of washing machines is approximately BDT 1,000 crore, with around 150,000–200,000 units sold annually.

Challenges Facing the Industry:

1. Currency and Supply Chain Constraints

A dollar shortage and rising foreign exchange rates have made opening letters of credit (LCs) difficult for importing components, raising costs for local producers and limiting pricing flexibility.

2. Quality Control and Low-End Imported Competition

Poorly regulated imports allow low-quality washing machines to enter the market, damaging brand trust. Consumers often blame higher-end products for early failures when substandard models tarnish their perception.

3. Incomplete Domestic Value Chain

While major assembly and parts manufacturing are done locally, many critical components and precision technologies still depend on imports. Achieving full domestic manufacturing remains a work in progress.

4. Limited Market Penetration

Currently, only 3–4% of households own washing machines. Penetration remains low and is concentrated among urban, higher-income consumers. This leaves significant untapped potential in rural and mid-tier urban areas.

5. Macroeconomic, Awareness, and Coordination Issues

Inflation has eroded purchasing power among the emerging middle class. Meanwhile, awareness about the benefits of washing machines is still limited beyond urban elites, necessitating stronger marketing and educational campaigns.

Domestic brands have made significant progress, but full-scale local production still lags behind today's aspirations. Policy continuity, a stronger component ecosystem, and tighter quality regulation for imports will be critical to sustaining momentum.

TDS: What are the key features and product offerings in your washing machines that attract customers?

SUS: Engineered to handle even

the most demanding laundry loads, the JAMUNA washing machine comes in 7.0 Kg, 8.0 Kg, and 10.5 Kg drum capacities—perfect for families of all sizes. With both washing and drying functions, this all-in-one solution simplifies your laundry routine while delivering powerful performance every time.

Equipped with Pure Steam and Allergy Steam technologies, the machine ensures your clothes come out spotless, allergen-free, and wrinkle-free—ready to wear immediately after the cycle ends. For added convenience, our AutoDosing System automatically detects the weight of your laundry and dispenses the exact amount of detergent needed, freeing you from manual measuring and reducing waste.

Designed with intelligence in mind, the JAMUNA washing machine features a self-diagnostic function that displays error codes to help you easily identify and resolve issues using the user manual. It also automatically detects incorrect usage or product faults to prevent further damage, offering peace of mind and extended durability. Whether you are upgrading or buying your first front-loader, JAMUNA combines technical excellence with thoughtful design—making it the perfect choice for modern households.

WASHING MACHINE CARE ESSENTIALS



Level for longevity

Ensure the machine is placed on a flat, balanced surface to avoid vibration and wear.

1



Choose the right detergent

Use machine-appropriate, gentle detergent to protect both clothes and hardware.

2



Clean inside and out

Regularly wipe the drum, door, and detergent compartments to prevent buildup and odours.

3



Use the drum clean function

Run the built-in cleaning cycle monthly to maintain internal hygiene and efficiency.

4



Mind the load size

Avoid overloading to reduce strain on the motor and improve washing performance.

5



Inspect and replace hoses

Check inlet and outlet hoses periodically, and replace them every 3–5 years to prevent leaks.

6



Keep the lint filter clear

The lint filter collects lint and dirt during the wash cycle, clean it regularly to maintain its efficiency.

7



Let it air out

Leave the door slightly open after each wash to allow ventilation and prevent moisture buildup.

8



Maintain a routine

Wipe down the gasket, clean filters, and check dispensers weekly to keep your machine in top shape.

9



THE DOMESTIC UPGRADE

When washing became a smarter chore

Inverter motors control voltage and frequency based on load. They run quieter, use 20–30 percent less power, and last longer because they avoid the wear and tear of constant on-off cycles.

AYMAN ANIKA

The washing machine isn't typically seen as a tech marvel. It doesn't beep like a smart fridge or glow like a neon-lit gaming laptop. But don't let its quiet nature fool you. Beneath that rotating drum lies a hub of real innovation—subtle, and increasingly intelligent.

In Bangladesh, where consumer expectations are rapidly evolving and energy costs are rising, the modern washing machine has transformed into something far more than a cleaning appliance. It's now a machine that senses, adapts, calculates, and conserves. And

though its adoption hasn't been as swift as other home appliances, the future is spinning into motion.

A shift in technology, a shift in mindset

"We've adopted AirWash, OxyFresh, IoT, Direct Drive, Inverter, AI, AutoDosing, and Anti-foaming technologies," says Md. Khairul Bashar, Deputy Chief Business Officer at Walton Home Appliance. "These aren't just flashy features—they're responses to what users now expect: performance, efficiency, and reduced hassle."

These technologies aim to cut water and power use, reduce detergent waste, and give users a better experience—without needing to guess what "normal cycle" really means.

Inverter: The engine of efficiency

At the heart of these upgrades is inverter technology, which is rapidly becoming a standard in modern appliances. "Inverter motors control voltage and frequency based on load," Bashar explains. "They run quieter, use 20–30 percent less power, and last longer because they avoid the wear and tear of constant on-off cycles."

Compare this to older machines with fixed-speed motors that burn energy even when they don't need to—and it's clear why inverter tech is now essential, especially in power-sensitive regions like Bangladesh.

Water wisdom and detergent discipline

Smart washing isn't just about electricity. It's about how much water and detergent your clothes really need—and not a drop more.

"Washing machines use AI Clean, Defoaming, and AutoDosing to optimise water intake and detergent use," Bashar notes. "AirWash, in particular, helps refresh clothes without needing a

full wash cycle—ideal for urban users trying to reduce their utility bills."

These features are not just good for the environment—they're tailored for users who need real-world savings, not just shiny specs.

A growing market with urban roots

Despite this innovation, not all companies are moving at the same pace—or with the same strategy. At Jamuna Electronics, washing machines are part of a measured rollout, deeply tied to consumer behaviour.

"Washing machines are still an urbanised product," says Salim Ullah Salim, Director of Marketing at Jamuna Electronics and Automobiles Ltd. "They sell well in Dhaka, Chattogram, Khulna, Rajshahi...but beyond that, in suburban and rural areas, the penetration is low."

According to Salim, perception also plays a role. "There's a belief among many that washing machines don't clean clothes as well as hand washing. Those who use them regularly know that's not true. But the perception lingers."

Jamuna's sales reflect this urban centric demand. "During the trade fair, our stock ran out. We sold quite a few units. But among home appliances, washing machines remain one of the slower-moving categories," he admits. "Still, it's a growing market."

Front-load vs. top-load: A tale of two machines

Salim explains that price plays a role in how the market splits between top-load and front-load machines. "Our top-loading machines are still available in flagship stores. They cost between Tk 10,000–18,000. But front-loading machines, which are more automated and efficient, start at Tk 40,000—and global brands go up to Tk 70,000."

He adds, "When you get a fully automatic washer-dryer combo, it does about 70 percent drying along with the wash. It's not just about cleanliness—it's about convenience. But that convenience still comes at a price."

Smart cycles for smarter clothes

Automation is now standard, especially in full-auto machines. "Jamuna's full-auto machines allow you to select cycles for jeans, wool, silk—whatever fabric you're washing," Salim explains. "They wash, rinse, spin, and dry automatically, depending on what's loaded. It reduces manual work significantly."

This is where urban life intersects with smart design. "People in cities are busier. They don't

want to spend their time scrubbing clothes on a weekend. That's why the market is gradually expanding," he adds.

Why isn't it booming yet?

Despite these gains, the washing machine market isn't exploding like refrigerators or air conditioners. "Seasonal trends aren't very strong here," Salim says. "We see a slight spike during the rainy season, when drying clothes becomes harder. But unlike Eid for fridges, washing machines don't have a festival window."

Even so, Jamuna sells three to four thousand units annually, with competitors like Singer or Sharp reaching higher volumes. "It's not about lack of demand—it's about slow lifestyle shifts," he explains.

IoT and the app era

For brands like Walton, the future is already app-connected. "The IoT feature allows users to monitor cycles, get maintenance alerts, and control the machine via smartphone," says Bashar.

This kind of real-time interactivity makes sense in a world where users are getting used to managing everything—from ACs to ovens—with their phones.

What do consumers really want?

Both experts agree that Bangladeshi consumers are evolving.

"People want durability, after-sales support, and energy efficiency," says Bashar. "But they're also curious about smarter, cleaner, quieter tech."

Salim sees a cultural transition: "There was a time when a fridge was rare. Now, many homes have two or three. The same is happening with washing machines. It's slow, but steady."

Final spin

Washing machine is becoming a symbol of how our domestic lives are being reshaped by technology that listens, learns, and adapts.

From fuzzy logic to inverter motors, from detergent sensors to app notifications, this isn't your grandmother's rinse cycle anymore. It's smarter. It's quieter. And—if the market keeps growing—it might finally shake off the stigma of being a "luxury" item and become what it was always meant to be: a time-saving, fabric-friendly essential for modern life.

As Salim sums it up, "The market size is growing. Usage is increasing. And year by year, people are moving toward smarter appliances. Washing machines included."



DECONSTRUCTING the Mental Load of Laundry

When machines are intuitive and smart, the 'mental load' of doing laundry no longer rests on just one person. With programmable settings, Wi-Fi-enabled controls, and clear interfaces, washing clothes doesn't require prior expertise or even physical presence.

SARAH BINTAY SHAKHAWAT

"Ma, how does the washing machine know if the clothes are dirty?"

My six-year-old nephew's question made everyone in the room laugh but it stayed with me. To him, the machine wasn't something his mother used because she was a woman; it was simply a fascinating gadget. Watching him reminded me how easily children absorb the world around them and how quickly play turns into perception.

Growing up, we all played "house." Girls wrapped saris, swept imaginary floors, stirred invisible rice, and scrubbed tiny socks in plastic basins. Boys slung on fake ties, carried cardboard briefcases, and returned home from pretend offices; sometimes calling out for tea. Rarely, if ever, did a boy wash

clothes, even in play. We weren't taught these roles outright; we learned them by watching. Laundry, messy and time-consuming, was quietly assigned to women. Never questioned, never shared.

But today, that old story is slowly unraveling. That subtle shift says a lot about how gender roles are evolving, slowly but surely, and how smart household appliances, especially washing machines, can be unexpected agents of change.

In many Bangladeshi homes, however, laundry still carries the invisible weight of gender.

Despite increasing urbanisation and dual-income households, the burden of household chores disproportionately falls on women. But as modern life gets busier and smart appliances get smarter, the old "division of labour" is being questioned. Today, a washing machine isn't just a box that spins clothes. It's a bridge between gendered expectations and shared responsibility.

No learning curves needed

One of the biggest psychological hurdles for men stepping

into household chores is the idea that they might "get it wrong." Operating a washing machine, with its buttons, dials, and multiple cycles, once felt like a puzzle best left to the "experts" at home, usually women.

But that's changing. Companies like Walton, Jamuna and Singer are designing machines that require little to no learning curve, making it easier for anyone to do laundry, regardless of experience or gender.

"Even for users unfamiliar with laundry tasks, features like fuzzy logic and auto-dosing in Walton machines make washing clothes as simple as pressing a button," said Fazle Rabbi Khadem, Senior Brand Manager for Walton Home & Kitchen Appliance. With fuzzy logic, the machine automatically detects the load size and fabric type, adjusting water and detergent levels accordingly.

Meanwhile, Jamuna's all-in-one washer-dryer and auto-diagnosis system take convenience to the next level. "Jamuna machines are built to eliminate confusion. You don't need to be a pro. The machine figures out the settings for you," said Salim Ullah Salim, Marketing Manager at Jamuna Group.

The rise of inclusive design

Washing machines today come with minimalist displays, quick start guides, and preset programs tailored for everyday needs. Some even connect to apps for real-time support or alerts. But more importantly, they're designed to be gender neutral.

The current washing machine designs cater to a broader demographic, focusing on

functionality over flair. And while their marketing still leans heavily on the idea of "smart homemakers," the machines themselves are quietly encouraging a cultural shift, empowering anyone in the family to take part in household care.

Walton's latest washing machines are equipped with AI-based load sensing and smart control panels, designed with minimal buttons and easy-to-understand icons. Some even come with child-lock and noise reduction technology, reflecting a design philosophy that considers the user's lifestyle holistically. For men who are newly stepping into shared domestic roles or bachelors learning to manage on their own, these features remove the intimidation factor and make laundry just another part of the routine. "For new users, all

of our machines come with easy-to-read

manuals as well as several tutorial videos which

makes everything smooth for everyone," shares

Fazle Rabbi from Walton.

Singer Bangladesh, one of the oldest and most trusted names in home appliances, has also evolved with the times. Their washing machines now offer mobile app connectivity, self-cleaning features, and auto restart functions which are ideal for users who might get interrupted mid-task.

What's particularly notable is how these innovations are not just adding convenience, they're changing perceptions. When machines are intuitive and smart, the 'mental load' of doing laundry no longer rests on just one person. With programmable settings, Wi-Fi-enabled controls, and clear interfaces, washing clothes doesn't require prior expertise or even physical presence. Whether it's a father washing baby clothes, a teenage boy helping with weekend chores, or a husband taking on equal responsibility, the act itself is no longer gendered. It's just a task, easily shared.

If my nephew's curiosity is anything to go by, the next generation may not carry the same baggage. For them, a washing machine will just be what it is, a machine. Not a symbol of gender roles. And that's a wash cycle worth celebrating.



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