



"Ukrainians will not give their land to the occupier."

Volodymyr Zelensky
Ukraine President ahead of expected meeting between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin

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BANGLADESH POLICE

Equipped to inflict heavy casualties

A closer look at police's arms procurement records reveals a brutal truth behind the July killings: the force bought 7 times more lethal weapons than non-lethal in 2021-23

MOHAMMED SUMAN
and ZYMA ISLAM

Long before bullets ripped through crowds during the July uprising, the Bangladesh Police had already been configured not as a force to keep peace, but a heavily armed institution with deadly intent.

Beyond Sheikh Hasina's now-infamous phone call on July 18, 2024, where she admitted ordering the use of lethal weapons against protesters, a closer look at the police's armoury explains the high death toll during the movement that eventually toppled the Awami League government.

Based on official data, The Daily Star has now uncovered that, in the years leading up to the uprising, the Bangladesh Police stocked nearly three times as many lethal weapons as non-lethal ones.

When protests intensified, the police responded with what they had, and what they had were weapons designed to kill.

A BUDGET FOR BLOODSHED

Between 2021 and 2023, Bangladesh Police bought 2.49

crore pieces of lethal ammunition, more than seven times the 30 lakh units of non-lethal rounds it purchased, including tear gas and rubber bullets.

Import documents, including customs records, show that Tk 240 crore was spent on lethal weaponry in those three years, roughly 1.5 times more than the Tk 191 crore spent on non-lethal arms. This investment in lethality proved devastating during the July-August uprising. The scale and sophistication of arms used, some meant for the battlefield, have raised alarming questions about the militarisation of a civilian force.

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COMBAT RIFLES FOR CROWD CONTROL

In 2022, just two years before the uprising, the police imported 18,000 pieces of 7.62mm semi-automatic rifles.

The arms would later be seen in chilling photos and videos of police firing on protesters, as was found by previous investigations by The Daily Star, as well as the United Nations Fact Finding report, published in February 2025. These rifles were backed by a stockpile of 10 lakh live rounds.

"This is a type of ammunition designed for use in combat situations against persons wearing body armour and not for law enforcement applications. It would normally be available only to the Army or paramilitary forces such as the BGB and RAB. This ammunition is not available for civilian purchase in Bangladesh," said the UN report.

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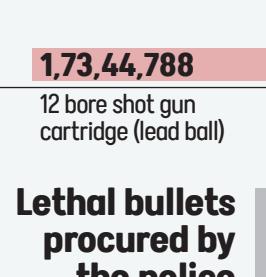
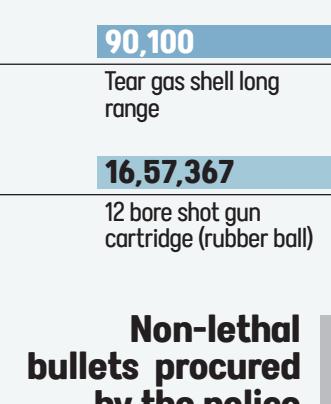


PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Just a month ago, vast sandbars stretched across the Padma. Now, the river is overflowing and has flooded the adjacent Lalor Shah Park in Rajshahi city. A man was spotted fishing at a market in the park yesterday.

Student politics banned at DU halls: proctor

Legality of the move questioned

DU CORRESPONDENT

All forms of student politics will remain banned in Dhaka University halls, according to the July 17, 2024 framework, Proctor Saifuddin Ahmed said early yesterday.

"The July 17 framework clearly states that all forms of overt and covert politics in the halls will be banned," he told protesters in front of the DU vice-chancellor's residence around 2:50am.

Around midnight on Friday, students broke into demonstrations, demanding a ban on student politics in the dormitories. The agitation followed the unveiling of hall committees by the DU Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) convening body.

Around 2:45am, after an almost half-hour heated debate with students near his residence, VC Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan told the protesters, "The hall administration will be able to make decisions on this. Political activities will be controlled and carried out according to the hall administration's wishes."

"We don't want any repressive politics at the hall level and that is very clear. The decisions made between the hall administration and the students on July 17 [2024] will be considered by them as they see fit; we have no objections to that."

Regarding the Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU), he said hall-based student organisations must work as they wish. "How this will take shape – whether they can hold processions in the halls or conduct poster campaigns – must be discussed with the student organisations and agreed upon ... When the panel forms, they will have to work in the halls. Consensus is needed on this matter."

Incensed at the VC's remarks, the protesting students began chanting slogans demanding a complete ban on student politics in the halls.

A few minutes later, Proctor Saifuddin took the mic and announced that all types of hall politics would remain banned.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Activists decry 'charity' quota for women in JS

At a roundtable they also slam consensus commission for excluding females in decision making

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women's rights activists yesterday blasted the National Consensus Commission for excluding genuine female participation in decisions on reserved seats in parliament.

They condemned the commission's recent move to allocate only 5 percent representation for women 54 years after independence.

At the current pace, they warned, it would take another 25 years, 75 years in total after independence, to reach even 33 percent representation.

At a roundtable titled "Women's Seats in Parliament and Women's Political Empowerment", organised by the Prothom Alo in Kawran Bazar, speakers demanded direct elections, an equal 50-50 share of parliamentary seats, and substantial reforms to move beyond tokenism and to ensure real political empowerment of women.

Shireen Huq, chief of the Women's Affairs Reform Commission, expressed her disappointment, saying that even in 2025 "we still lack the wisdom, knowledge, commitment, and courage to demand half the representation".

Referring to proposals to double parliament's size from 300 to 600 seats,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Rab arrests one more in journo killing

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Gazipur

Another suspect was arrested yesterday for the murder of journalist Asaduzzaman Tuhi in Gazipur on Thursday night.

A team of Rab-14 Kishoreganj arrested Shahidul Islam, 30, in Puran Bazar area of the district's Itna Sadar upazila, said Rab-14 (CPC-2) Squadron Leader Ashraful Kabir.

With Shahidul, all eight suspects in the murder of Asaduzzaman have been arrested.

Ashraful said Shahidul had fled to Itna after the killing. "We located and arrested him with the help of IT-based tracking. He was handed over to Rab-1 in Karimganj, who will take him to Gazipur."

Meanwhile, Gazipur Metropolitan Police (GMP) Commissioner Nazmul Karim Khan at a press conference at GMP headquarters said that a charge sheet against the accused would be submitted within 15 days of receiving the autopsy report.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



How law was manoeuvred as a tool for human rights violations



Why opinion polls still matter



A lifelong investment in health and well-being

P10



Protesting the alleged mismanagement and falling standards of healthcare services at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital, students block the central bus terminal in Nathullabab, Barishal city, halting traffic on the Barishal-Dhaka highway for three hours yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

বাংলাদেশ টেলিযোগাযোগ নিয়ন্ত্রণ কমিশন

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গ্রাহকের মোবাইল নম্বর থেকে *16001# ডায়াল করার পর তার জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের শেষ ৮ ডিজিট টাইপ করে সেন্ট করলে ফিরতি এসএমএস-এ আপনার এনআইডিতে মোট কতটি সিম নিরবন্ধিত আছে তা জানা যাবে।

জনস্বর্গে-

বাংলাদেশ টেলিযোগাযোগ নিয়ন্ত্রণ কমিশন

GD-1748

Over 1,100 sharp weapons seized from New Market shops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 1,100 sharp weapons were recovered from shops and warehouses in Dhaka's New Market area last night.

At least nine people were detained during the operation, said Lt Col Nazim Ahmed, commanding officer of 23 East Bengal Regiment of Bangladesh Army and in charge of Suhrawardy Medical College army camp.

"We primarily suspect that they are used in criminal activities involving teenage gangs and muggers," he said.

Based on intel reports, the seizure was part of a two-day operation under the supervision of the army's Suhrawardy Medical College camp.

The operation was carried out following confessions of recently arrested suspects and media reports indicating that such knives were being rented or sold to criminal groups, said the commanding officer.

The confiscated weapons will be handed over to the Detective Branch for further legal action.

Investigations are underway to determine whether shop owners had any links to criminal networks, the official added.



Banners, posters, and festoons have been pasted and hung on virtually every patch of blank surface found on sidewalks, electric poles, road dividers, and even tree trunks across a street in Khulna city. This unchecked spread of promotional materials is making the city look messy, with no visible effort from authorities to clean it up. The photo was taken in front of City College on Khanjahan Ali Road yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Student politics banned at DU halls: proctor

FROM PAGE 1

After that, the students returned to their dormitories.

A Provost Standing Committee meeting was held on the matter yesterday evening. However, the outcome could not be known till the filing of this report around 9:00pm.

Nahiduzzaman Shipon, general secretary of the DU JCD, said the proctor's announcement reflects "clear administrative weakness."

"After failing to control a mob situation, they rushed into making such a decision. If we were to form a similar mob now, would they then make a decision in our favour? The university administration must take a stronger stance on this."

Citing the 1973 ordinance, he said the DU administration has no authority to interfere with anyone's freedom of expression unless it involves anti-independence or anti-state activities.

"The administration may have acted in response to a particular situation, but under no circumstances can it make such a decision. This is our political and social right, guaranteed by the constitution. There is no scope to violate this right."

Jabir Ahmed Jubel, general secretary of Biplabi Chhatra Moitree's central committee, said the proctor's announcement goes beyond his authority.

"There is no legal basis for banning student politics in any part of the university."

"A moral ground was established following the July uprising... After that, there was an opportunity for the university administration and student organisations to jointly decide on politics in educational institutions, but that didn't happen. There is still a chance to reach an agreement on how student organisations will conduct their activities."

Meghmallar Bosu, president of the Chhatra Union DU unit, said the proctor's announcement conflicts with the 1973 ordinance and added

that if someone files a writ, the announcement may not hold.

He added that it is concerning if the administration has to make such decisions under pressure.

"We want to discuss a campus charter that outlines how politics will be conducted here, what actions are permissible in the halls, and how monitoring cells will operate within the halls."

Abdul Kader, president of the DU unit Bangladesh Democratic Student Council (BDSC), said a solution cannot come through a statement made in the face of a mob.

He added, "This ban only applies to organisations that are visible. There is no way to identify the covert ones. How will you prohibit them?"

Kader said decisions should be made through discussions with all stakeholders. "BDSC's position will remain the same -- organisational activities will not continue in the halls and other academic spaces."

Saif Md Alauddin, president of the DU's Islami Chhatra Andolon Bangladesh, termed the announcement banning hall politics "short-sighted".

He added, "If we stop politics through such a process, it will inevitably increase conflict rather than promote the political coexistence we speak of."

SM Farhad, president of Islami Chhatra Shibir's DU unit, told reporters that such unfortunate situations arose due to the university administration's failures and a lack of a fixed policy.

"It's the administration's responsibility to engage in discussions with all stakeholders as swiftly as possible to reach a favourable situation... Legal experts can also be consulted to ensure the rights of any student wishing to engage in politics are not infringed, and the rights of those who don't want to be involved in politics are also protected," he added.

On Friday night, following DU

JCD's hall committee announcement, protests broke out at Begum Ruqayyah Hall, demanding a ban on all hall politics. A section of the residents broke the hall gate around 1:00am.

Later, students of Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall and Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall joined in.

Last year, the authorities were compelled to ban political activities in halls after Chhatra League activists were driven out a day after they attacked quota reform protesters on July 15, 2024.

The residents of Begum Ruqayyah Hall had taken the first step to drive out the BCL activists and secured an undertaking from the then provost to ban politics in their hall.

Bus collision with truck kills 11, injures 45 in Brazil

REUTERS, Sao Paulo

A crash between a bus and a truck in Brazil's center-western state of Mato Grosso killed 11 people and injured another 45 late Friday, the toll road operator and Brazil's federal highway police said on Saturday.

The injured were sent to nearby hospitals, firm Nova Rota do Oeste and the highway police said in separate statements.

Among the injured, 11 were in critical condition, 26 in moderate condition and eight had only minor injuries, they added.

Initial information indicates that a bus collided head-on with a truck transporting cottonseed near the city of Lucas do Rio Verde, according to the firm, which said it had been notified about the crash at 9:40 p.m. local time on Friday (0140 GMT Saturday).

Rasheda K Choudhury, former caretaker government adviser, questioned whether Bangladesh was advancing or regressing in terms of women's political participation and empowerment.

"We (women) are being urged to apply pressure, but who is actually under pressure? Which direction is this government heading? The National Consensus Commission must carefully evaluate the path of women's empowerment," she said.

Rasheda also emphasised that it is the interim government's responsibility to demonstrate that it

Activists decry 'charity' quota for women in JS

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she asked how 300 members could adequately represent today's population. "When the parliament started with 15 seats, what was the population then compared to now?... We need to increase the number of representatives, and in that context, the issue of women's seats must also be addressed."

"We are not asking for this to be permanent. Our proposal is for two terms because we believe that during these terms, many women leaders will be developed. This has also been proven at the local level in the union parishad elections."

Farah Kabir, ActionAid Bangladesh's country director, slammed political parties for seeking just 5 percent reserved seats for women.

"Is this supposed to be an act of charity?"

Noting that women comprise over half the population and contribute more than 50 percent to the economy, particularly through the RMG sector and remittances, she reminded that the government pledged 30 percent reserved seats in the 1995 Beijing Declaration.

Emphasising direct elections as the only solution, Kabir said women in parties must be properly prepared. She rejected the claim that suitable candidates cannot be found.

"We need to determine clear criteria for entering parliament: whether it's based on our performance, our service to voters, our support to the community, or if it's about muscle power, ransacking, and domination," she said.

"If that is the criteria, then assessing women's qualifications becomes problematic. However, if the focus is on nation-building, I believe there should be no obstacle to women taking on these roles," she added.

Rasheda K Choudhury, former caretaker government adviser, questioned whether Bangladesh was advancing or regressing in terms of women's political participation and empowerment.

"We (women) are being urged to apply pressure, but who is actually under pressure? Which direction is this government heading? The National Consensus Commission must carefully evaluate the path of women's empowerment," she said.

Rasheda also emphasised that it is the interim government's responsibility to demonstrate that it

is not biased toward any particular group or individual. "If people believe otherwise, it will be difficult for the government to operate effectively."

She also questioned why all decisions concerning women are being made solely by political parties.

Badiul Alam Majumder, a member of the consensus commission and chief of the Election Reform Commission, admitted the decision to keep 5 percent seats for women was "an unfortunate incident -- a disaster".

He said the commission's mandate was to discuss with political parties and reach consensus on various issues, but on women's representation in parliament, "we have failed to secure women's rights".

He said he warned parties the move was regressive but was ignored and even faced pushback. He also revealed that he personally "came under fire" for his stance, recalling parties asked him at commission's meetings why he was so interested in women's issues.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, expressed disappointment that despite coming to power through an anti-discrimination movement, the government has failed to tackle discrimination issues. She said the reform commissions have poor representation of women.

Describing the National Consensus Commission as a "boys club", Anam further noted a persistent negative campaign against women. "There is a hostile attitude towards women, not only on social media but also in large gatherings, which has never been properly challenged."

She also noted concerns about women's safety and whether those participating, voting, or being nominated in the upcoming elections can fulfill their roles securely.

CPD Research Director Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem warned that women's empowerment remained "superficial and confined to symbolic roles".

True empowerment must start inside political parties, with meaningful female leadership from district to central levels, he said.

He criticised the reform commissions for ignoring political party reforms, calling this the root cause of women's continued marginalisation.

"I challenge that women's leadership in the upcoming

parliament will be even weaker. We are not heading in a good direction," he said.

Moazzem predicted even the symbolic presence of women will disappear unless post-election efforts intensify.

He pointed out barriers such as women entering reserved seats without election, which diminishes their accountability and ownership.

He also accused the drafters of the July Declaration of deliberately excluding women. "I read the entire declaration carefully. There is no mention of women anywhere. Their exclusion was intentional."

He further questioned how young representatives could endorse the document despite this omission.

Fawzia Moslem, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, said that without women's participation in decision-making, laws favouring women or eliminating discrimination cannot be created.

She cited two reasons for having reserved seats: the country's complex political culture and women's limited opportunities for independent decision-making. She explained that women often rely on others during elections, making reserved seats essential.

Dr Samina Luthfa, associate professor of sociology at Dhaka University, also said the consensus commission acted as a "boys club", where women's political futures have been decided without genuine participation of real women.

Calling the situation "ridiculous", she likened negotiations over women's seats to "bargaining at a fish market".

Khushi Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori, praised women in reserved seats for their strong contributions, in contrast to many unproductive male MPs. She said it was illogical to claim that qualified women cannot be found while unqualified men are deemed acceptable, noting that women are consistently held to higher standards and expected to be flawless.

Prothom Alo Senior Reporter Naznin Akhter presented the keynote, while rights activist Ilira Dewan, Bangladesh Garment Sramik Samhati President Taslima Akhter, and former student coordinator Nazifa Jannat also spoke. The event was moderated by Sumana Sharmin, associate editor of Prothom Alo.

Rab arrests one more in journo killing

FROM PAGE 1

"The journalist gave his life trying to expose the crimes of this organised gang. We have CCTV footage, witnesses, and all the evidence. Upon receiving the autopsy report, we will file the charge sheet within 15 days."

Nazmul acknowledged police responsibility and admitted shortcomings due to manpower shortages. "We cannot escape responsibility for the journalist's murder. We have failed in some aspects and lack sufficient personnel," he said, adding, "It is impossible for police alone to suppress crime."

He urged public cooperation to effectively combat crime.

Around 8:30pm on Thursday night, a group of miscreants killed Asaduzzaman, 40, with sharp weapons in front of a crowded market in Gazipur city's Chandana Chowrasta area. He had worked as a

staff reporter for the Mymensingh-based daily Pratidiner Kagoj for around five years.

Describing the incident, the GMP commissioner said it began with another victim, Badsha Mia, who had just withdrawn Tk 25,000 from an ATM booth.

One Parul Akhter, known as Golapi, tried to frame him by luring him into providing information. "When Badsha realised this, a dispute broke out and he punched Golapi, as seen on CCTV footage."

Immediately after, five to six of Golapi's associates attacked Badsha with machetes. Asaduzzaman saw the attack and began filming the assailants. "The accused saw him recording and feared exposure. They then chased the journalist. He took shelter at a tea stall, but they caught up and brutally stabbed him to death."

The next day, the victim's elder brother, Mizba Hossain filed a case against unknown people with Gazipur police.

Police later collected CCTV footage and identified eight suspects, seven of whom were arrested within 24 hours -- Mizan alias Ketu Mizan, 35; his wife Golapi, 25; Swadhin, 28; Al Amin, 21; Shah Jamal, 32; Faisal Hasan, 23, of Pabna; and Sumon, 26, of Cumilla.

The GMP commissioner added that Mizan is implicated in 15 cases. His wife, Parul (Golapi), is one of his associates. Two cases were earlier filed against Amin, two against Swadhin, eight against Jamal, and two against Faisal.

Meanwhile, the journalists across the country, including in Tangail, Narsingdi, Jhenaidah, Munshiganj, and Chandpur, held rallies and formed human chains to protest Asaduzzaman's killing.



A boy lies with an oxygen mask on a bed after receiving medical care at the trauma ward of Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Prof Yunus leaves for KL on Monday

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus is scheduled to meet Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim in Putrajaya on Tuesday, aiming to strengthen bilateral relations and achieve tangible outcomes in multiple sectors, including trade, investment, and labour cooperation.

Yunus will leave Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka for Kuala Lumpur on Monday for a three-day official visit at the invitation of Anwar Ibrahim, a senior official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told UNB.

Ensuring the smooth and transparent recruitment of Bangladeshi workers, expanding cooperation in energy, trade, higher education, halal food production, the blue economy and addressing the Rohingya crisis are among the issues to be discussed, the official added.

A number of cooperation documents in the form of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and notes are expected to be signed during the visit.

Chief Adviser's Deputy Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad Majumder said on Saturday that the media will be briefed in detail about the visit at 3:00pm Sunday at the Foreign Service Academy. Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain, Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Adviser Dr Asif Nazrul, Energy Adviser Fouzul Kabir Khan, and Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) Executive Chairman Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun are likely to accompany the chief adviser during the visit that will see a series of other meetings in addition to bilateral talks.

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BUSTLING FISHERY GHAT AT DAWN. A fisher shows off his catch at Chatogram's Fishery Ghat yesterday. The market comes alive with the first light, peaking in activity between 7:00am and 8:00am. After weeks of fishing bans and rough weather, the catch is plentiful, though hilsa remains scarce and costly. The abundance of other fish, however, keeps the ghat lively despite hilsa lovers' disappointment.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

No progress on separate judiciary secretariat

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Despite repeated proposals and directives, the interim government has yet to establish a separate secretariat for the judiciary, a crucial reform to ensure the judiciary's institutional independence.

The Supreme Court submitted detailed proposals to the law ministry twice -- first in October last year and again in April this year -- outlining the structure and functions of the secretariat.

The chief adviser, the chief justice, and the Judiciary Reform Commission have all emphasised the urgency of this reform, stressing that a dedicated secretariat is essential to separate the judiciary from executive influence.

However, progress remains slow, with the law ministry sitting on a draft ordinance regarding the proposed secretariat's organogram.

Currently, the law ministry acts as the judiciary's secretariat and controls key administrative matters such as recruitment, transfer, and promotion of lower court judges, allowing room for executive interference.

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'Photo exhibition of razakars at TSC shocking'

Says Prof Serajul Islam; urges leftist leaders to unite to lead social revolution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Emeritus Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury yesterday urged leftist leaders in the country to unite and lead a social revolution.

He said after the fall of the fascist government, it was the duty of the leftists to immediately form a united front, but a year has passed without any such unity.

In the meantime, bourgeois forces have grown stronger -- secular bourgeois, non-secular bourgeois, and religious-business bourgeois, he added.

The educationist warned that if leftist leaders fail to unite and create this revolution through a united front, liberation will not be achieved.

He was speaking at a views-exchange session titled "Expectations and Achievements of the July Mass Uprising" held at the Dhaka Reporters Unity. The Anti-fascist Leftist Alliance organised the programme, reports Bangla daily Prothom Alo.

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Vendors hang juice packets from tree branches to attract customers, selling drinks made with ice-cold water. Despite hygiene concerns, many continue to buy them to quench their thirst. The photo was taken in Dhaka's Golapshah Mazar area yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

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'Land, rights, recognition'

Indigenous leaders reiterate longstanding demands

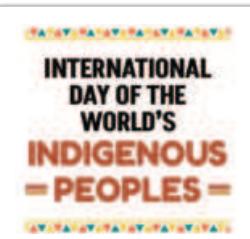
STAR REPORT

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was observed across the country yesterday with colourful processions and cultural events.

In Rangamati, dressed in traditional attire, men, women and children from the Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Tanchangya, Pangku and other indigenous communities marched from the municipality premises to the District Art Academy. The programme began with the release of balloons and featured traditional dances.

Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) Central Vice-President and former lawmaker Ushat Talukder, speaking at a discussion on the Rangamati Municipality premises, said despite changes in government over the years, no administration in Bangladesh has been willing to grant rights or recognition to the country's indigenous peoples.

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Biman flight faces technical issues again

Dhaka-bound flight from Singapore sees 2-hour delay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka-bound Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight experienced a mechanical failure in Singapore yesterday.

According to Biman sources, after nearly two hours of repairs, the Boeing 737 aircraft departed for Dhaka, causing inconvenience to the 172 passengers on board.

This was the fourth incident in a span of just 10 days where a Biman flight had to face delays or return mid-air.

On Saturday morning, flight BG 585 of Biman landed at Singapore Changi International Airport from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka. While preparing to depart for Dhaka with 172 passengers, a technical problem was detected.

Passengers were taken to the airport lounge while engineers worked for two hours to fix the engine issue.

Such technical failures have become common for Biman flights.

For example, a flight to Dammam returned mid-air due to a technical issue on July 28, while

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Chief adviser congratulates Shaheen Anam on MBE honour

STAR REPORT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has congratulated Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, on being awarded the Honorary Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) by King Charles III.

"I heartily congratulate you on being awarded the honorary MBE title by King Charles III of the United Kingdom. It is a recognition of your long-standing contribution to establishing human rights and social justice, and it is an honour for all of us," Yunus said in a letter dated August 8.

"This achievement will serve as an inspiration to all. I wish you continued success," he added.

On August 6, British High Commissioner Sarah Cooke formally presented the MBE insignia to Anam at the British High Commission in Dhaka.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 8



Grapes of hope in hilly Sherpur

Youth turns experimental vines into a growing venture

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

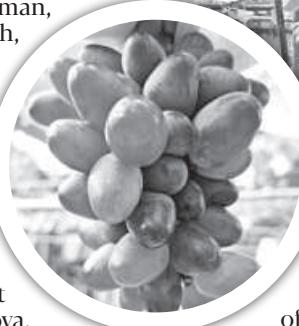
Bunches of grapes in vibrant shades of red, black and green in the hilly Meghalay village of Sherpur's Sreebardi upazila have opened new horizons for agricultural entrepreneurs in nearby areas.

Such cultivation in a garden is the first of its kind in Sherpur, said the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE).

Md Mizanur Rahman, a postgraduate youth, initiated the cultivation in 2022. He collected different varieties of grapes from within and outside the country, including Asian and European types. These include Balkonur, Akollo, Dixon, Black Magic, Green Long, Mascot Blow, Flame, Super Nova, Early Red and Joy Seedless.

Mizanur said his father, Jalal Uddin, brought home 10 grape saplings of two varieties from India out of sheer interest in 2022. These were planted in their homestead and, within just 10 months, began bearing sweet fruits.

Encouraged by this early success, Mizanur decided to expand his efforts, planting 50 different grape varieties



on 35 decimals of land. The fruitful harvest is attracting large numbers of curious visitors.

Now there are 150 plants in his garden, 35 of which are bearing fruits. The plants yield between 10 and 12 kilogrammes each, while the rest, still young, have produced three to four kilogrammes per plant. Some green grapes have already been sold locally at Tk 300 to Tk 400 per kilogramme. The plants can produce fruits for decades if well nurtured, Mizanur said.

Asked about his investment, Mizanur said he has so far spent Tk 2,50,000, mainly to collect saplings. Labour costs are comparatively lower in the hilly areas, he added.

"I have started producing grape saplings to expand cultivation to an additional 150 decimals of land in Meghalay," he said.

Mizanur's father, Jalal, said a few saplings brought from India out of curiosity have now become a source of hope for a reasonable income. At first, they were unsure whether the saplings

would survive, but over time they grew well and began bearing fruits, he added.

They have started producing saplings, and some 50 farmers from nearby villages have bought from their garden. Each is being sold at Tk 300 to Tk 600, depending on variety, and demand is increasing every season.

Abdul Wahab, a retired Ansar member from adjacent Chandapara village, said he bought some saplings to start cultivation this season.

Monir Hossain from Sherpur town said he bought five saplings from Mizanur's garden.

Shah Alam of Gorjoripa village in Sreebardi said he started grape cultivation on 10 decimals of land last year, and the fruits in his garden are now mature. "I have invested 35,000 takas so far and hope for a good production with reasonable profit. I will expand the garden next year," he said.

Mohammad Shakhuat Hossain, deputy director of the DAE in Sherpur, said they have visited the vineyard on various occasions and are providing technical support.

The weather in the hilly areas is very suitable for grape cultivation, he said, adding that the low cost is attracting more farmers. If the cultivation gains ground, it could help change the economic condition of the mostly poor hilly farmers, he hoped.

Late night drive turns fatal

2 cousins die, 1 hurt as car hits divider in Mohakhali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two cousins were killed and another critically injured after a private car lost control and hit a divider near the Mohakhali flyover in Dhaka's Banani early yesterday.

The deceased are Nazmul Huda Rintu, 42, and Shawkat Hossain Kanan, 37, of Old Dhaka's Hazaribagh area, said police.

Hasnat, 36, another cousin, was injured in the accident and receiving treatment at a hospital with critical injuries.

All three of them run tannery businesses separately and were involved in other professions.

The car caught fire following the collision around 2:30am in Mohakhali. The accident took place when they were going towards Mohakhali from Banani.

According to family, the three went out for a drive on Friday night around 7:00pm.

Locals rushed Shawkat to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead. Nazmul was taken to Kurmitola General Hospital but later died from his injuries.

Siddiq Hossain, sub-inspector of Banani Police Station and the investigating officer of the case, told The Daily Star, "The driver, Rintu, lost control of the vehicle and crashed into the divider. One



SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

5 years without a bridge

Residents of 25 Jamalpur villages face continuous hardships



SAHIDUL ISLAM NIRAB, Jamalpur

For more than five years, people from at least 25 villages in two Jamalpur upazilas have been suffering after a bridge over the Jhenai river in Sarishabari upazila collapsed during the 2020 floods.

The 200-metre-long concrete bridge was a vital link between Sarishabari and Madarganj upazilas. Its collapse cut off road communication, forcing thousands of residents to take long detours for daily activities, increasing travel time and costs significantly.

Locals said the bridge was the only convenient route for residents of at least 20 villages in Kamrabad and Satpua unions of Sarishabari, and Shidhuli and Adarvita unions of Madarganj.

Since the collapse, they have

organised human chains and submitted petitions several times, demanding a new bridge or repair of the damaged one.

"The worst affected are students. They cannot reach school on time because of the long detours. Immediate steps should be taken to rebuild the bridge," said Babu Miah, a member of Kamrabad Union Parishad.

Hundreds of people from the western side of the river, including Kamrabad and Satpua unions, used to rely on the bridge to reach Sarishabari upazila headquarters for work, markets and healthcare.

Now, many have to use risky boats or travel several extra kilometres.

"We have been facing immense trouble since the bridge collapsed. The government should urgently build a new bridge beside the damaged one," he said.

said Abdul Bari, a farmer from Shuakur village.

Waiting under the scorching sun on the riverbank, Morgina Begum of Shesua village said, "I have been waiting for over half an hour just to cross the river. The authorities must act quickly to ease our suffering."

Another resident, Asraf Islam, added, "The bridge collapsed years ago, but no concrete action has been taken. This is an emergency — the bridge must be rebuilt soon."

Sarishabari Upazila Engineer Jahidul Hasan acknowledged the residents' suffering caused by the bridge collapse in 2020, which he said was due to strong flood currents.

"An expert team from the LGED head office has visited the site several times. There is a plan to build a new bridge beside the damaged one," he said.

AGM Shamsul Kamal passes away, aged 89

CITY DESK



AGM Shamsul Kamal, founding chief executive officer of the Chittagong Stock Exchange and the Central Depository Bangladesh Limited, breathed his last yesterday at Evercare Hospital.

He was 89 years old, said a press release.

Kamal also served as managing director of Reckitt & Benckiser and held a senior position at Glaxo Bangladesh.

He was involved in social work through Rotary International and Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP).

He is survived by three daughters and five grandchildren.

Relatives, friends, and well-wishers have been requested to pray for the salvation of his soul.

Plaster falls off newly built madrasa building

Locals question quality of Tk 3.19cr project

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Plaster is falling off the walls of a newly constructed four-storey academic building at Modhya Bogura Nuria Dakkhil Madrasa in Patuakhali's Dashmina upazila, raising questions about the quality of the construction work.

He said he had informed the relevant authorities about the issue.

Contacted, contractor Abul Kalam Azad said although the project is in his firm's name, he did not personally carry out the work.

"Someone else handled the construction," he said, adding that he is unaware of any irregularities in the materials or workmanship.

Repeated attempts to reach Md Azom, who was supervising the work in the field, went unanswered as his mobile phone remained switched off.

Mosfigur Rahman, executive engineer of the EED in Patuakhali, said he was aware of the issue. "As a result, 27 lakh takas of the contractor's payment has been withheld. We have instructed him to redo the plastering work immediately."



PRAYER TIMING
AUGUST 10

Faz Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-25 12-45 4-45 6-41 8-00
JAMAAT 5-00 1-15 5-00 6-44 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Department of Architecture
Ministry of Housing & Public Works
Sthapatya Bhaban, Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000

www.architecture.gov.bd

Phone No. 02-223350954

Dated: 06-08-2025

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify for all concern that the following tender have published through e-GP Portal.

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of works	Publishing date & time	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time
1	1136854	Doa/egp/25-26/02	Computer & Computer accessories	10-Aug-2025 10:30	25-Aug-2025 11:30	25-Aug-2025 12:30
2	1136850	Doa/egp/5-26/03	Engineering and other equipments	10-Aug-2025 12:00	25-Aug-2025 11:00	25-Aug-2025 12:00

The interested persons/firms/supplier may visit the website www.eprocure.gov.bd to get details of the tender. This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guideline are available the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Anisul Haque
66-825

S.M. Anisul Haque

Executive Architect

(Circle-Co-Ordination, Division-Services)
Sthapatya Bhaban, Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000
Phone No. 02-223350954

FLAT SALE
Axis Development Ltd, offers 1400 Sq-ft ready flat at Mitali Road, Jigatala, Dharmendor, 6-7-11, 5-6, 5-7, 5-8, 5-9, 5-10, 5-11, 5-12, 5-13, 5-14, 5-15, 5-16, 5-17, 5-18, 5-19, 5-20, 5-21, 5-22, 5-23, 5-24, 5-25, 5-26, 5-27, 5-28, 5-29, 5-30, 5-31, 5-32, 5-33, 5-34, 5-35, 5-36, 5-37, 5-38, 5-39, 5-40, 5-41, 5-42, 5-43, 5-44, 5-45, 5-46, 5-47, 5-48, 5-49, 5-50, 5-51, 5-52, 5-53, 5-54, 5-55, 5-56, 5-57, 5-58, 5-59, 5-60, 5-61, 5-62, 5-63, 5-64, 5-65, 5-66, 5-67, 5-68, 5-69, 5-70, 5-71, 5-72, 5-73, 5-74, 5-75, 5-76, 5-77, 5-78, 5-79, 5-80, 5-81, 5-82, 5-83, 5-84, 5-85, 5-86, 5-87, 5-88, 5-89, 5-90, 5-91, 5-92, 5-93, 5-94, 5-95, 5-96, 5-97, 5-98, 5-99, 5-100, 5-101, 5-102, 5-103, 5-104, 5-105, 5-106, 5-107, 5-108, 5-109, 5-110, 5-111, 5-112, 5-113, 5-114, 5-115, 5-116, 5-117, 5-118, 5-119, 5-120, 5-121, 5-122, 5-123, 5-124, 5-125, 5-126, 5-127, 5-128, 5-129, 5-130, 5-131, 5-132, 5-133, 5-134, 5-135, 5-136, 5-137, 5-138, 5-139, 5-140, 5-141, 5-142, 5-143, 5-144, 5-145, 5-146, 5-147, 5-148, 5-149, 5-150, 5-151, 5-152, 5-153, 5-154, 5-155, 5-156, 5-157, 5-158, 5-159, 5-160, 5-161, 5-162, 5-163, 5-164, 5-165, 5-166, 5-167, 5-168, 5-169, 5-170, 5-171, 5-172, 5-173, 5-174, 5-175, 5-176, 5-177, 5-178, 5-179, 5-180, 5-181, 5-182, 5-183, 5-184, 5-185, 5-186, 5-187, 5-188, 5-189, 5-190, 5-191, 5-192, 5-193, 5-194, 5-195, 5-196, 5-197, 5-198, 5-199, 5-200, 5-201, 5-202, 5-203, 5-204, 5-205, 5-206, 5-207, 5-208, 5-209, 5-210, 5-211, 5-212, 5-213, 5-214, 5-215, 5-216, 5-217, 5-218, 5-219, 5-220, 5-221, 5-222, 5-223, 5-224, 5-225, 5-226, 5-227, 5-228, 5-229, 5-230, 5-231, 5-232, 5-233, 5-234, 5-235, 5-236, 5-237, 5-238, 5-239, 5-240, 5-241, 5-242, 5-243, 5-244, 5-245, 5-246, 5-247, 5-248, 5-249, 5-250, 5-251, 5-252, 5-253, 5-254, 5-255, 5-256, 5-25

Blast kills six at Lebanon arms depot

REUTERS, Beirut

The Lebanese army said on Saturday that six soldiers were killed and others wounded in an explosion while they were inspecting a weapons depot and dismantling its contents in the southern city of Tyre.

An investigation was underway to determine the cause of the blast, the army added in a statement.

Security sources told Reuters that the explosion was caused by "remnants of the Israeli war" in the coastal city.

Israel dealt major blows to Lebanon's militant group Hezbollah in an offensive last year - the climax of a conflict that began in October 2023 when the group opened fire at Israeli positions on the frontier in support of its Palestinian ally Hamas at the start of the Gaza war.

A US brokered ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel in November ended that conflict.

Muslim states must unite against Israel's Gaza plan
Says Turkey

REUTERS, Ankara

Muslim nations must act in unison and rally international opposition against Israel's plan to take control of Gaza City, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said yesterday after talks in Egypt.

Regional powers Egypt and Turkey both condemned the plan on Friday. Ankara has said it marked a new phase in what it called Israel's genocidal and expansionist policies, while calling for global measures to stop the plan's implementation.

Israel rejects such description of its actions in Gaza.

Speaking at a joint press conference in El Alamein with his Egyptian counterpart Badr Abdelatty, after also meeting Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al Sisi, Fidan said the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation had been called to an emergency meeting.

Fidan said Israel's policy aimed to force Palestinians out of their lands through hunger and that it aimed to permanently invade Gaza, adding there was no justifiable excuse for nations to continue supporting Israel.

PLASTIC POLLUTION TREATY UN talks hit obstacles

AFP, Geneva

Talks on forging a groundbreaking treaty to combat the scourge of plastic pollution were floundering yesterday, with progress slow and countries wildly at odds on what the proposed agreement should cover.

The negotiations, which opened on Tuesday, have four working days left to strike a legally-binding instrument that would tackle the growing problem choking the environment.

But in a blunt mid-way assessment, the talks chair warned the 184 countries gathered at the United Nations in Geneva that progress so far was well off track.

Some countries called for areas where countries are far from agreement to be ditched completely for the sake of expediency. Others slammed the brinkmanship and said insistence on consensus could not be used as justification for sinking the more ambitious elements of the treaty.

"Progress made has not been sufficient," Ecuadorian diplomat Luis Vayas Valdivieso told delegates in a frank summary as country delegations gathered in the assembly hall to take stock.

Countries have reconvened at the UN in Geneva after the failure of the supposedly fifth and final round of talks in Busan, South Korea in 2024.

After four days of talks, the draft text has ballooned from 22 to 35 pages - with the number of brackets in the text going up near five-fold to almost 1,500 as countries insert conflicting ideas.

More than 400 million tonnes of plastic are produced globally each year, half of which is for single-use items.

Plastic production is set to triple by 2060.



A protester is carried away by police officers at a "Lift The Ban" demonstration in support of the proscribed group Palestine Action, calling for the recently imposed ban to be lifted, in Parliament Square, central London yesterday. London's Metropolitan Police said officers had arrested at least 150 people for supporting Palestine Action at a protest.

PHOTO: AFP

11 more die of starvation in Gaza

Israeli strikes kill 38 people, including 21 aid seekers; Israel to evacuate half of Gaza population by Oct 7 from Gaza City

AGENCIES

A further 11 deaths resulting from malnutrition have been reported in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run health ministry.

That brings the total number of malnutrition-related deaths to 212, including 98 children.

At least 38 people have also been killed and 491 injured as a result of Israeli military activity over the past 24 hours, the health ministry said.

Deaths continue to rise amid reports that a deadline of 7 October 2025 has been set for residents to evacuate Gaza City following the announcement of a controversial Israeli plan to take control of the area.

The new plan, approved by the Israeli security cabinet and detailed on Friday, lists five "principles" for ending the war in Gaza, with one being "taking security control of the territory".

Reports in Israeli media say the plan initially focuses on taking full control of Gaza City, relocating its estimated one million residents further south.

The plan has been met with criticism from world leaders as well as fierce opposition from some within Israel, including from military officials and the families of hostages still being held in Gaza who fear for their safety.

Israel has rejected criticism, with Defence Minister Israel Katz saying condemnation would "not



weaken our resolve".

The US has been less critical, with Donald Trump saying earlier in the week that it was "pretty much up to Israel" whether to fully occupy the Gaza Strip.

Israeli media reports that the government has set a two-month deadline before a military siege of Gaza City to begin on 7 October 2025, the two-year anniversary of the beginning of the war.

Within those two months, Israel plans to forcibly displace the estimated one million Palestinians living in Gaza City, roughly half the number of people living in the entirety of the territory.

Gaza City is the capital of the Gaza Strip. Its pre-war population was estimated at around 600,000 people, but that number has grown significantly throughout the war as Israel's military campaign has pushed Palestinians into the city.

Many living there now have already been displaced multiple times through the war and are living in tents or the ruins of buildings that have been partially destroyed by Israeli air strikes.

Israeli media reports that the military would move the population towards al-Mawasi, a vast tent encampment in the south of Gaza, already home to thousands of Palestinians suffering from an absence of basic facilities and sanitation.

The plan is being widely condemned by humanitarian agencies and indeed many of Israel's allies for its potential to add untold human suffering onto the shoulders of an already exhausted and beleaguered people.

Gaza's health ministry yesterday said that 21 people had been killed trying to get aid in the last 24 hours.

Trump may use military against drug cartels: report

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump is moving to target Latin American drug cartels with the military, US media said Friday, after Washington designated several narcotics trafficking groups as "terrorist" organizations earlier this year.

The New York Times reported that Trump has directed the Pentagon to use military force against cartels deemed terrorist organizations.

The United States designated Venezuela's Tren de Aragua, Mexico's Sinaloa Cartel and six other drug trafficking groups with Latin American roots as terror groups in February.

But the Mexican foreign ministry stressed that Mexico "would not accept the participation of US military forces on our territory."

Trump's administration has since added another Venezuelan gang, the Cartel of the Suns, which has allegedly shipped hundreds of tons of narcotics into the United States over two decades.

The United States accuses Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro of leading that cartel -- an allegation Caracas has rejected as a "ridiculous smokescreen."

India claims shooting down 6 Pak jets in May

REUTERS, New Delhi

India shot down five Pakistani fighter jets and one other military aircraft during clashes in May, India's air force chief said yesterday, the first such statement by the country months after its worst military conflict in decades with its neighbour.

Most of the Pakistani aircraft were downed by India's Russian-made S-400 surface-to-air missile system, Indian Air Chief Marshal AP Singh said at an event in Bengaluru. He cited electronic tracking data as confirmation of the strikes.

"We have at least five fighters confirmed killed, and one large aircraft," he said, adding that the large aircraft, which could be a surveillance plane, was shot down at a distance of 300 km (186 miles).

Singh did not mention the type of fighter jets that were downed, but said that airstrikes also hit an additional surveillance plane and "a few F-16" fighters that were parked in hangars at two air bases in southeastern Pakistan.

In a post on X, Pakistan's defence minister accused India of dishonesty.

"If the truth is in question, let both sides open their aircraft inventories to independent verification - though we suspect this would lay bare the reality India seeks to obscure," he said.

The Pentagon did not immediately respond for a request for comment on Saturday.

Pakistan has claimed that it shot down six Indian aircraft during the clashes, including a French-made Rafale fighter. India has acknowledged some losses but denied losing six aircraft.

Nagasaki bell rings 80 years after nuclear tragedy

AFP, Nagasaki

Twin cathedral bells rang in unison yesterday in Japan's Nagasaki for the first time since the atomic bombing of the city 80 years ago, commemorating the moment of horror.

On August 9, 1945, at 11:02 am, three days after a nuclear attack on Hiroshima, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki.

After heavy downpours in the morning, the rain stopped shortly before a moment of silence and ceremony in which Nagasaki mayor Shiro Suzuki urged the world to "stop armed conflicts immediately".

"Eighty years have passed, and who could have imagined that the world would become like this?"

"A crisis that could threaten the survival of humanity, such as a nuclear war, is looming over each and every one of us living on this planet."

About 74,000 people were killed in the southwestern port city, on top of the 140,000 killed in Hiroshima.

Days later, on August 15, 1945, Japan surrendered, marking the end of World War II.

Historians have debated whether the bombings ultimately saved lives by bringing an end to the conflict and averting a ground invasion.

But those calculations meant little to survivors, many of whom battled decades of physical and psychological trauma, as well as the stigma that often came with being a hibakusha.

Ninety-three-year-old survivor Hiroshi Nishioka, who was just three kilometres (1.8 miles) from the spot where the bomb exploded, told ceremony attendees of the horror he witnessed as a young teenager.



Teen shooter wounds 3 in Times Square

AFP, New York

A 17-year-old boy opened fire and wounded three people in New York City's heavily touristed Times Square early yesterday, the New York Police Department said.

The shooting occurred around 1:20 am (0500 GMT) following a "verbal altercation", an NYPD spokesperson told AFP without giving further details.

An 18-year-old woman's neck was grazed, while a 19-year-old man and a 65-year-old man's lower limbs were injured, police said.

None of the injuries was considered to be life-threatening.

The three victims were taken to New York City's Bellevue Hospital, where they were determined to be in stable condition.

"The perpetrator has been taken into police custody, and a firearm has been recovered," the NYPD spokesperson added.



US President Donald Trump (C), Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev (L) and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan shake hands after signing an agreement in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington, DC, on Friday. Trump said that Armenia and Azerbaijan were committed to a permanent peace as he hosted a White House summit with the leaders of the two South Caucasus nations, which have fought for decades.

PHOTO: AFP

Rallies must respect commuters' rights

Dhaka's traffic needs immediate fixing

We are all aware of Dhaka's notorious reputation for its slow traffic and congestion on the roads. Whereas the standard recommendation is that at least 25 percent of space in every big city should be dedicated for roads, in Dhaka it is only nine percent. Even this space is neither well designed, nor properly maintained, much of it occupied by hawkers, illegal parking, uncollected garbage, and temporary food stalls. According to studies by the World Bank and BUET, traffic speed in the capital was 21 kmph in 2007; in 2022, it came down to 4.8 kmph, which is equivalent to the average walking speed. Dhaka is perhaps the only city in the world where vehicular traffic speed is equal to that of walking—while braving open sewage and numerous potholes.

Now we have another factor adding to the city's existing traffic challenges: random mass demonstrations. According to a recent report by *Prothom Alo*, in the 90 days between May 9 and August 6, main roads were blocked by various demonstrations in 36 days. Of the 54 times that roads were blocked, political rallies caused it 26 times, students' demonstrations 13 times, job seekers six times, and others nine times. People who block the roads usually choose the busiest and the most crucial places in the city, such as Shahbagh, Press Club, and Paltan. The idea is that the bigger the traffic mess is, the faster the authorities will react. Public convenience is nobody's headache.

According to the report, traffic congestion already causes a wastage of 82 lakh working hours in Dhaka every day, whose monetised value is Tk 139 crore (as of 2022). Multiply it by 365, and we get an idea of what we lose annually. Add to that the wastage of the ever expensive fuel, air pollution, and the impact on public well-being. Imagine the plight of office goers, factory workers, students, hospital goers, and emergency patients. If blockades due to the demonstrations are added to the mix, one can imagine how the commuters are affected.

This must be addressed promptly. Since we are seeking consensus in so many areas from the political parties, we suggest that all should agree not to block the city roads to hold rallies. Students could be urged to follow suit. The government should announce some designated open spaces for rallies and ban gatherings elsewhere. Also, the authorities should allow rallies only on the weekends. This should be considered a priority in national interest. These actions are fast and least expensive that the authorities can and must take immediately. Otherwise, the quality of life and productivity in Dhaka will continue to get worse. With the election on the horizon, we will see a lot more public gatherings taking place. Only planning ahead and preventive measures can alleviate public suffering due to blocked roads.

Israel's plan for Gaza condemnable

World leaders must come together to protect Palestinians' rights

We strongly condemn Israel's plan to take control of Gaza City, recently approved by its political-security cabinet. On August 8, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office unveiled a strategy aimed at "defeating Hamas" and "concluding the war." Although Netanyahu previously stated that Israel's military would "take control of all of Gaza," the current plan specifically focuses on Gaza City. The proposed plan has sparked widespread criticism both domestically and internationally, with fears that it would escalate the war rather than conclude it. Clearly, if implemented, this will result in further displacement of tens of thousands of Palestinians, who have already suffered tremendous losses.

Netanyahu's plan reportedly outlines five key objectives: disarming Hamas, returning all hostages, demilitarising the Gaza Strip, taking security control of the territory, and establishing an alternative civil administration in the territory. There are speculations as to how this takeover could unfold. There could be a phased takeover of areas in Gaza not yet under military control. Evacuation warnings could be issued to Palestinians in specific areas of Gaza, potentially giving them several weeks before the military moves in. Nearly two million Gazans have faced repeated displacement over the past 22 months, and now they face it again. It is heartbreaking to hear the words of a 52-year-old Palestinian woman quoted by AFP, "They tell us to go south, then back north, and now they want to send us south again. We are human beings, but no one hears us or sees us."

Over the past few months, Israel's severe restrictions on humanitarian aid to Gaza have pushed Palestinians to the brink of starvation, while attacks on aid seekers have turned distribution sites into deadly zones. Since May 27, at least 1,373 Palestinians searching for food and 514 along aid routes have been killed, according to the UN human rights office. Gaza is suffering from a famine, with children most affected.

Such a diabolical plan by Netanyahu's government must be stopped at all costs. We urge the international community to take a firm stand against further escalation in Gaza. Israel must be held accountable for violating international laws and human rights in the strip. While Netanyahu's new plan has drawn global criticism—from China, Turkey, the UK, EU, UN, and Arab nations—condemnation alone is not enough. Bold action is needed to end the war in Gaza and to ensure unrestricted access to humanitarian aid. And Israel must be compelled to comply with the ICJ ruling to end its occupation, realise the two-state solution, and uphold the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



The Louvre opens

On this day in 1793, the Louvre opened in Paris, and it later became the most visited museum in the world.

LOOKING BACK AT THE JULY UPRISING

How law was manoeuvred for human rights violations



Mohammad Golam Sarwar,
a Chevening and Commonwealth scholar, is PhD
researcher in law and alternative development at
SOAS, University of London. He is also an assistant
professor (on study leave) in the Department of Law at
the University of Dhaka.

MOHAMMAD GOLAM SARWAR

The mass uprising in July-August 2024 primarily evolved to reform the unjust and discriminatory quota system in public employment, which later turned into a nation-awakening anti-discrimination movement. The march for equality and zero discrimination, led by students and joined by masses from all walks of society, was unlawfully attacked and suppressed by law enforcers of the then government. The massive and violent crackdown led to serious human rights violations, including crimes against humanity and mass killings. As the UN fact-finding report estimates, the unlawful use of lethal weapons by law enforcers and unjustified shoot-on-sight order killed as many as 1,400 people, including many children, and injured thousands.

During the movement, thousands of student protesters were arbitrarily and unlawfully detained and tortured, violating the right to liberty of the person and due process guaranteed under the constitution and international human rights laws. Apart from mass killing and arbitrary detentions, the imposition of internet shutdowns violated civil and political rights, including the right to freedom of expression, information, and peaceful assembly. In all cases of human rights violations, either the law was used to justify the cause in the name of "national security," "use of force as self-defence," and "public interest," or it played a complicit role in weaponising state mechanisms for oppression, harassment, and torture.

The July uprising also exposed how law has been deeply manoeuvred as a tool to commit human rights violations. The past government promulgated some draconian and repressive laws that helped sustain the regime at the cost of recurring human rights violations. The Digital Security Act (DSA), which was a footprint of an earlier repressive provision of Section 57 of the ICT Act, enabled digital authoritarianism in Bangladesh, leading to numerous arrests of rights activists, journalists, human rights defenders, students, and even ordinary citizens. A study by the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) found that under the DSA, 7,001 cases were filed against 21,867 individuals between October 8, 2018 and January 31, 2023.

This repressive law was designed in such a way that its misuse was not required—the very use of the law enabled harassment, intimidation, and torture, silencing dissent.

The overly broad and vague provisions in the digital laws have provided unchecked power to the law



The July uprising exposed how law has been used as a tool to commit human rights violations, empowering law enforcement agencies to suppress dissenters and protesters with impunity. This photo was taken in Purana Paltan, Dhaka on July 19, 2024.

FILE PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

enforcement authorities, allowing them to weaponise the law by detaining individuals on mere suspicion without a warrant. This provision was indiscriminately used during the uprising. The legally empowered, unfettered authorities of state agencies were extensively used to block content and data from digital spheres and social media, violating due process as per human rights standards.

The intended outcome of the digital laws was a culture of fear, intimidation, and self-censorship. These laws, in their crafting and application, prioritised political agendas over safeguarding digital rights. While human rights in the digital spheres are constantly evolving, repressive digital laws have helped expand authoritarian rule by criminalising free speech, increasing surveillance, and silencing detractors. Defamation laws were also

rights violations was armoured by institutional inability and weakness. For example, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was legally barred from directly investigating human rights violations committed by the security forces. This legal bar, coupled with its lack of independence influenced by political imperatives, made this watchdog body a toothless and ineffective institution.

Notably, even though more than eight months have passed since the resignation of the NHRC's chairman and members in November last year, a new commission has yet to be formed. The interim government had the opportunity to remove the legal barriers facing the NHRC, enhance its institutional capacity, and establish a strong and effective commission through a transparent, politically neutral process. However, that has not

and democratic deficit.

The July uprising enabled a renewed opportunity to embark on transformative and systemic legal reforms necessary for a re-visioned Bangladesh. The ongoing reform agenda, though it sounds transformative in words, remains elusive in reality. The collective voices and aspirations of the masses to challenge the entrenched power structures, as manifested in the July uprising, by redefining the social contract between the state and its people, are not adequately articulated in the reform agenda. The people's uprising gave us a rare opportunity to re-examine the foundational principles of governance, justice, and accountability, and reimagine our legal and political landscape that serves the people, not the powerful. This opportunity should not be wasted.

Netanyahu and taking over Gaza



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BINOY KAMPMARK

To say that Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has lost the plot is to assume he ever had one. With a dearth of ideas as to how to come up with a "final solution" to the Palestinian problem, he has received a majority approval from his cabinet colleagues to take over Gaza City. It took a late night meeting with the security cabinet lasting some 10 hours.

A statement released on the morning of August 8 from his office mentioned a five-point plan intended to defeat Hamas and conclude the war. None of this is an improved version of what has come before: the intended disarming of Hamas, the return of all hostages, demilitarising the Gaza Strip, assuming security control of the territory, and creating "an alternative civil administration that is neither Hamas nor the Palestinian Authority."

There is also not much difference here from recent proposals made by French President Emmanuel Macron, UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, with one fundamental difference: the Israelis want no current Palestinian representative authority to govern the people they so loathe. What all the proposals share is a core belief that the Palestinians are reduced to a subordinate status, forever policed and monitored by watchful authorities.

Their representatives are to be vetted by the Israelis and any number of international partners. Genuine sovereignty can go away.

The Israeli military has announced that it "will prepare to take control of Gaza City while providing humanitarian aid to the civilian population outside the combat zones." Little change, then, given the current model of aid distribution that features daily massacres of the desperate and the starving overseen by trigger-itchy personnel from both the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and the obscenely named Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF). The OHCHR, the UN human rights office, claims that at least 1,373 Palestinians seeking food have been killed since May 27, at least 859 of them in proximity of the GHF's distribution points. Another 514 have perished along the routes traversed by food convoys.

UN human rights chief Volker Türk has done his best to reiterate a certain ghastly obviousness in the plan. The military takeover "runs contrary to the ruling of the International Court of Justice that Israel bring its occupation to an end as soon as possible, to the realisation of the agreed two-state solution, and to the right of Palestinians to self-determination." The takeover would entail further

escalation, resulting in "more massive displacement, more killing, more unbearable suffering, senseless destruction, and atrocity crimes."

The IDF's chief of staff, Lt Gen Eyal Zamir, is not a fan of the plan, and concerned that it would do more to imperil the surviving Israeli hostages held in Gaza. *The New York Times* reports that the country's military leadership would prefer a fresh ceasefire, with the IDF suffering from the effects of attrition from the conflict. The head of Israel's National Security Council, Tzachi Hanegbi, is in furious agreement: such an operation would further endanger the surviving Israeli hostages. Mossad Director David Barnea also adds his name to the list of sceptics.

Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid did not shy away from excoriating the cabinet decision, something he called "a disaster" that would breed further disasters. The far-right figures of Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich had "dragged" Netanyahu into a strategy that would lead to the death of the hostages and Israeli troops while costing billions to the Israeli taxpayers.

An announcement from Hamas proved suitably contemptuous of the latest Netanyahu gambit. "We warn the criminal occupation that this criminal adventure will cost it dearly. It will not be a walk in the park. Our people and their resistance are resilient to defeat or surrender, and Netanyahu's plans, ambitions, and delusions will fail miserably." The group also thought it fitting to name the United States as "fully responsible for the occupation's crimes, due to its political cover and direct military support for its aggression."

In a turn-up for the books for those opposing Netanyahu's blood-soaked

adventurism, some of Israel's closest allies are going beyond muttering criticism. Modest as it is, Germany has announced that weapons exports to Israel for use in the strip has been suspended "until further notice." (Between 2020 and 2024, Germany accounted for a third of Israel's arms imports.) A statement from German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, while acknowledging the usual proviso that Israel had "the right to defend itself against Hamas terrorism," expressed concern that "even tougher military action by the Israeli army in the Gaza Strip" undermined prospects for releasing the hostages and pursuing negotiations for a ceasefire. Merz further warned that Israel "not take any further steps toward annexing the West Bank."

For his part, Starmer called Israel's "offensive to further escalate its offensive in Gaza [...] wrong, and we urge it to reconsider immediately. This action will do nothing to bring an end to this conflict or to help secure the release of the hostages. It will only bring more bloodshed."

Türk, if somewhat hollowly, demands an end to the war in Gaza with a rosy vision: an arrangement where Israelis and Palestinians are "allowed to live side by side in peace." Admirable as this aspiration is, it is optimistic in its transcendence, it misunderstands the currency of hate and vengeance currently traded in Netanyahu's cabinet and swathes of the Israeli populace. This is not a matter of side by side, but above and below, living in a state of permanent conflict, suppression and suspicion.

This article first appeared on Countercurrents.org on August 9, 2025.

Why opinion polls still matter



AN OPEN DIALOGUE

is an economist and employed at a non-profit financial intermediary in the US. He previously worked for the World Bank and Harvard University.

ABDULLAH SHIBLI

A recent opinion poll capturing the views of young Bangladeshis aged 15-35 years has attracted attention both at home and abroad. One of the key findings of the survey, conducted by the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) and ActionAid Bangladesh, was that the youth have very little interest in political participation. I mentioned this disinterest in my column last month and received some pushback from readers. One of them, a physician working in Bangladesh, wrote to me, "Can you please explain to me how you reconcile the disinclination of the youth population to participate in political activities with the fervour they showed during the Monsoon Revolution of 2024?"

We are aware that the results of opinion polls need to be taken with a grain of salt. Most polls have some bias if you dig deeper into the sampling frame, sample size, and statistical tools of a survey. The SANEM survey was taken to task on the pages of this daily by Md Rubaiyat Sarwar, managing director of Innovision, a research and consulting organisation, on technical grounds. In his column, appropriately titled "What the SANEM poll reveals and what it does not," Sarwar pointed out certain weak points of the survey, including a small sample size and the bias introduced by a large percentage of non-respondents.

Incidentally, Innovision is among the research organisations that are in the "opinion survey" market. Earlier in March, it released the results of a survey of citizens' election-related perceptions using a larger sample size of 10,696 respondents across eight divisions and 64 districts.

Opinion polls are, in a sense, a necessary evil. They can often incur the wrath of those in power, or of individuals whose views are not corroborated by, or match, the information provided by a survey. Even in a country like the US, which prides itself on being the most open society in the world, polls are often dismissed as "fake." Recently, US President Donald Trump fired his chief of the Bureau of Labour Statistics (BLS) after the



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

BLS published a job report that did not show the current administration in a favourable light. Trump even accused the former BLS commissioner of manipulating the data. I recall when Matia Chowdhury, an Awami League minister in 2013, characterised an opinion survey on voter preference for political parties by *The Daily Star* as "a waste of time and money."

As a social scientist, I usually find opinion polls useful. However, they are based on sample surveys and may not be suitable for everyone's consumption. Public opinion and economic surveys, nonetheless, are a critical part of the economic, social and political landscape of a country. While some polls, such as the inflation survey, are vital

data on unemployment, market conditions, and the incidence of poverty are hard to obtain in Bangladesh. At this critical time for our country, better statistics can help the government control inflation and enable the central bank to manage monetary policy more effectively.

On a scale of 0 to 10, opinion polls conducted by many of our pollsters would rate 3 or 4 at best, while those carried out by market research experts would score a 9. The Federal Reserve of the US, the country's central bank, whose mission includes correctly measuring and forecasting inflation from different angles, relies on sample surveys to make many decisions on interest rates and monetary policy—

decisions that affect the global economy.

Politicians generally dislike opinion polls. Some Bangladeshi leaders often say, "Do not spread rumours; they are a criminal offence." After the recent opinion poll results by various institutions were published, some sceptics were heard saying, "Oh, forget about the opinion polls, how much do they reflect reality?" Others label poll results as conjecture, hypotheses, or even phoney.

asked why they lost the mayoral elections that year, it might have spared the country the decade of trauma that followed.

Public opinion polls, especially those related to elections, have faced increasing scrutiny and scepticism in recent years. While they remain a valuable tool for gauging public sentiment, several challenges and factors can affect their accuracy and lead some to question their credibility:

Declining response rates: It has become harder for pollsters to reach a representative sample of the population as fewer people answer calls or participate in surveys. This means that those who do respond may not accurately reflect the broader public, introducing potential bias into the results.

Challenges in identifying and reaching target audiences: Mobile phone users often do not respond to anonymous or "spam" calls. Additionally, some demographics, such as younger voters, may be less likely to participate in polls.

The increasing influence of social media: While social media can provide insights into public sentiment, it also poses challenges. Influencers can spread misinformation and disinformation, potentially affecting voter opinions and distorting the broader political landscape. This can make it difficult to disentangle genuine public opinion from the effects of social media trends and biases.

Question wording and order effects: The way questions are phrased and their order can subtly influence responses, leading to skewed results.

Social desirability bias: Some respondents may give answers they believe are socially acceptable rather than their true opinions.

Difficulty predicting voter turnout: Accurately predicting who will actually vote is a major challenge in election polling, and misjudging turnout can significantly impact the accuracy of predictions.

However, it is important to note that many reputable polling organisations are aware of these challenges and strive to employ rigorous methodologies.

While opinion polls face genuine challenges, it is crucial to evaluate individual polls with a critical eye, considering their methodology and potential biases, according to Brookings. It is also important to consider the overall landscape of available polling data, rather than focusing solely on individual polls. Responsible and transparent polling practices, coupled with a nuanced understanding of their limitations, can help build an ecosystem that sustains youth participation in political activism and provides reliable feedback to policymakers.

Challenges for critical journalism

LETTERS FROM THE UK

Dr Geof Wood

is a development anthropologist and author of several books and numerous journal articles, with a regional focus on South Asia. He is also emeritus professor of international development at the University of Bath, UK.

GEOF WOOD

I have been silent for a while, but not asleep. The silence has been for complicated reasons, a little bit due to health distractions, but also other writing commitments as well as bureaucratic entanglements associated with approaching 80 years! But these are not the main reasons, which are to do with meaningful "journalism" in a rapidly moving global scenario.

I subscribe to *The Guardian* in the UK—which could be described as a sibling to *The Daily Star* and *Prothom Alo*—seeking truth from a liberal, inclusive and socially progressive perspective. But the challenge for such a daily is how to offer informed insight and reflective commentary when the picture might have changed significantly between composition and publication. I have witnessed this problem with well-established *Guardian* writers, struggling to avoid banality but stating the obvious for any mildly informed and concerned reader, with their efforts easily dismissed as "yesterday's news." One way to cope with this trap is to "stand back" from immediate events and offer long-range speculation—from "on high," as it were. But these pieces are themselves quickly undermined by pomposity and hollowness,

and mostly no different from conversations around evening meals in homes across the country. So they become arid too, and indeed open to ridicule.

Personally, nearing 80, I have not witnessed such a period of paralysis among the chattering classes. They simply cannot find a way to write anything interesting in a period of extreme volatility and threat to the lives and livelihoods of so many people across the world. In the UK, we demonstrate against genocide in Gaza among a bemused local population inured to the repeated news of atrocities as if our demonstrations are themselves out of date, and yet perceived by the UK state to be sufficiently dangerous as to ban more of the participating organisations. The bombing of Iran or Ukraine resembles a disaster movie on TV, explosions lighting up the night sky almost as a piece of art, followed the next day by a photo montage of wreckage and fatality numbers.

Aside from war upon us (in which I include the colonisation of the West Bank), there is other rapidly moving political news which also shares livelihood destruction in common: e.g. just last week, a Labour government sought to remove essential support to the

disabled in the UK to keep bond yields down (i.e. interest rates on government debt); further cuts to overseas aid in both the UK and US to satisfy nationalistic populism and boost defence spending; crackdowns on immigrants, even if they are long standing, tax paying, and providing essential public services; an acceptance of uber inequality revealed through unwillingness to tax wealth gained through wage suppression, pervasive rent-seeking through quasi-monopolies, corruption and financial manipulation; arbitrary sacking of research staff within medicine and science (i.e. not just the "woke" humanities and social sciences) in the US, leaving professional career staff and their families without health insurance cover, without livelihoods, and with crucial knowledge lost; the recently Venice married Bezos also celebrating his one millionth warehouse robot—displacing more labour; and news of an equity company acquiring a small estate with a country house in Dorset, England; evicting long standing tenants in the estate village and closing public pathways for "health and safety" reasons.

Any of us can pile on versions of the gloom. But can we write sensibly about it? A common thread in this gloom is, naturally, uncertainty and insecurity, and we should definitely think about both their origins and consequences. Origins clearly require a political economy analysis which combines the technological displacement of labour (not necessarily a bad thing) with increasing concentration of profits and/or economic rents in fewer hands and classes—a socially alienating path of economic progression. So let us focus on how to combat what Yanis Varoufakis refers

to as Technofeudalism (2024) or, in a recent piece for *The Guardian*, "feudo capitalism," which is clearly a route to destruction for all of us and our descendants who have not managed to migrate to Mars along with Elon Musk and his descendants. (It puzzles me why no one pays attention these days to Rosa Luxemburg's underconsumption thesis. Who will buy the cars if robots displace the labour manufacturing them?)

When asked recently on a UK TV discussion show, titled *Peston*, about how to deal with the threats of AI, Geoff Hinton, the Nobel Prize winning physicist, replied in one word, "Socialism!" Anna Coote of the New Economics Foundation in the UK has been promoting the argument that labour, or paid work, is not the necessary or sufficient precondition of well-being—in contrast to the Labour Party's obsession with dignity through labour. There are many other routes to dignity via "social contribution," as noted by Guy Standing's recording of unpaid, or unvalorised, care work, which of course is mainly done by women. George Monbiot, a contributing writer to *The Guardian*, and separately James Ferguson, famously known for his book *The Anti-Politics Machine*, promote the notion of a citizen's income which separates the principle of income from work to enable all citizens to enjoy the fruits of a nation's resources (e.g. minerals, oil, forestry, hydro power, political stability) instead of just the few. So, there is another discourse out there. Let's hear it.

The consequences of this era of mass insecurity are people having to work harder for less, often several different jobs in a day or week, without weekly or regular leisure, to

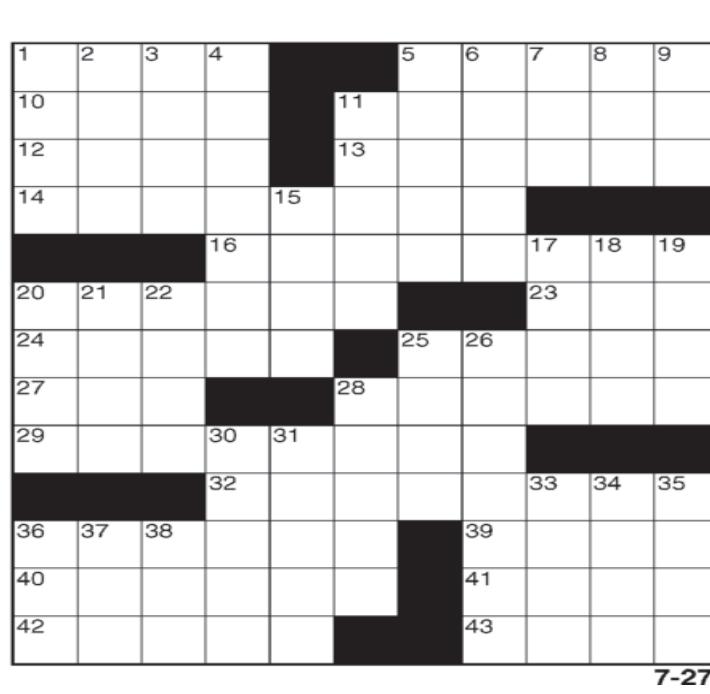
make ends meet. Part of the socioeconomic condition of ordinary folk is not having the time to reflect and think of how they are oppressed and alienated by feudo-capitalism, even though they feel it. Their horizons are necessarily short. They are therefore structurally politically apathetic, and they are also highly vulnerable to snake oil—easy millenarian solutions and populism, which usually entails scapegoats and othering. Recall Jews in 1930s post-Weimar Germany, or immigrants in Farage's UK or Trump's America. The present widespread success of such populism pulls in the whole political discourse—for example, a scared governing Labour Party in the UK being heavily tempted to adopt Farage's Reform Party stance. These are the consequences of feudo-capitalism and it can only be confronted by a progressive regime using the power of the state to separate the narrow class of rent-seekers from their rents to redistribute as citizens' incomes—as a right, not state charity—as the way to manage contemporary forms of capitalism and avoid the mass psychology arising from insecurity, which is the fallout from unprincipled capitalism that now serves the few, not the many, and threatens us all.

For me, that is how we should be writing about present conjunctural crises dominated at present by demagogic nationalism and racial othering, dominated by the metaphor of the commercial deal and real estate mentality. And not just writing for the chattering few but communicating such analysis to the many; journalists not just gathering information for their writing careers but promulgating too. My recent silence is over. The Western social crisis deepens. No retirement for me!

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO
dsoopinion@gmail.com.

FROM PAGE 1

In July 2024, as The Daily Star analysed ballistics being used in the protest sites, Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain, now labour and shipping adviser, had told this newspaper, "The 7.62mm rifles used by police have two modes -- single firing and rapid firing. In the videos we have seen, they have mostly used the rapid-fire mode or automatic mode, which are mostly used in wars." He had called them the "best Chinese killing machines".

In January this year, the Police Headquarters' Arms and Ammunition Entitlement Committee itself recommended replacing the 7.62mm rifles with pistols to "reduce casualties".

The police headquarters did not respond to our emails and text messages about the justification of procurement of such lethal weapons, and what they plan to do with those weapons in the future.

AN UNEXPLAINED ARSENAL

The police's weaponry extended well beyond 7.62 Type 56 rifles. In 2022, they acquired two categories of machine guns.

One was the 9mm MSG-9P submachine gun (SMG) from Turkey. Just one shipment of these guns weighed 7.52 tonnes, and was procured at a cost of Tk 51.4 crore.

Although its exact firing range, muzzle velocity and rate of fire (rounds per minute) is not clear, other similar models can shoot several hundred rounds per minute. With twin 30-round magazines and rapid-fire capacity, the manufacturer's website boasts its "superior firepower in close-quarters combat".

The other was a more ominous acquisition: 15 units of the crew-served 12.7x99 mm NATO machine

Equipped to inflict heavy casualties

gun, also called Browning Machine Gun. This specific type of long-range weapon has to be mounted on a tripod and is used for shooting distant targets.

The Daily Star has found no evidence that the Browning Machine Gun was deployed during the uprising.

A former senior official of the

gun, also called Browning Machine Gun. This specific type of long-range weapon has to be mounted on a tripod and is used for shooting distant targets.

"It is unthinkable that the police would need this," he added.

A LEGACY OF MILITARISATION
The Daily Star had previously reported that the police began militarising

escalated over the decade.

Between 2021 and 2022, police procured 14,600 Glocks (handheld pistols) and 8,000 other 9mm pistols, backed by 15 lakh rounds of ammunition.

The UN Fact-finding mission received a report from the police during its investigation, where the police divulged that the 7.62mm

Court lawyer and researcher at Lawyers for Energy, Environment and Development, said his team recorded at least 4,634 instances of live bullet use by analysing 100 cases filed by the police during the uprising.

"We observed from the police's own declarations that they had used lethal weapons more than non-lethal weapons. The usage suggests that they had a massive amount of lethal weapons," said Dr Iqbal.

His team documented the use of 7.62mm semiautomatic rifles, submachine guns, BD08 assault rifles, Taurus 9mm revolvers and Type 54 pistols.

Lead pellets have been proven to be deadly in the field, leading to the deaths of many protesters, including Farhaan Faiyaz, a Class XI student at Dhaka Residential Model College. He was killed on July 18, 2024, during the quota reform protests in Dhamondi and his body was peppered with shotgun pellets.

Between 2021 and 2023, the police purchased 18,000 pieces of 12-bore shotguns and spent Tk 16.5 crores on purchasing lead pellets.

The UN report confirmed their use in "numerous locations."

QUESTIONS OF LEGALITY

Major Gen (retd) ANM Muniruzzaman, president of Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies, said police are legally barred from importing "prohibited bore" weapons without a clearance from the Bangladesh Army's Directorate of Weapon, Equipment & Statistics.

Bangladeshi law categorises firearms as "prohibited bore" and "non-prohibited bore", with the latter being smaller calibre handguns. All the lethal firearms mentioned above are "prohibited bore" according to Muniruzzaman.

Multiple sources from the customs department said that the shipments of the SMGs and machine guns were cleared by the home ministry.

Meanwhile, the clearance papers of the 18,000 pieces of 7.62mm semiautomatics show that the firearms were cleared by the inspector general of police from Police Headquarters, while the Chattogram Metropolitan Police signed to release the shipment from Chattogram Customs.

The documents obtained do not mention whether permission was sought from the army's weapons directorate.

FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE

Turkey was a top supplier of weapons to Bangladesh Police, with eight companies providing Tk 134 crore worth of ammunition.

Purchases included submachine guns, pistols, 12-bore shotguns, lead pellets, and CornerShot attachments.

The United States was another top source, with six suppliers delivering Tk 56 crore worth of weapons, including crew-served machine guns and Glock pistols.

China followed, selling Tk 44 crore in arms through six suppliers. China provided 18,000 semi-automatic rifles for Tk 30 crore and also supplied ammunition over multiple years.

The police also imported lead pellets worth Tk 8.5 crore from Spain and Cyprus.

Note: The Daily Star relied on shipment and import records for this story. In the case of certain shipments for lead bullets and rubber bullets, the quantity imported was not mentioned, but the net weight of the consignment was mentioned. In those cases, we obtained the individual weights of each of the bullets from supplier websites and arrived at estimates for the quantity.

Indigenous communities

FROM PAGE 12

It cited past attacks -- from the killing of three Santal men in Gobindaganj in 2016 to the torching of the CHT Regional Council office in 2024 -- as examples where justice has been slow or absent.

The organisation urged the government to ensure independent investigations, prosecute perpetrators to the fullest extent of the law and protect the rights and dignity of indigenous communities.

Last year's July uprising aimed to eliminate all forms of discrimination, Pallab Chakma, founder of the Kapaeng Foundation, told The Daily Star.

"But what we have seen is that we remain just as vulnerable as we were since Independence. We were excluded during the drafting of the 1972 Constitution, and even after the July uprising, we continue to be excluded."

There was no representation of indigenous people in the major reform commissions, including the Constitution Reform Commission, he said.

"What have we demanded? We have only demanded constitutional recognition. Is that too much to ask?"

The indigenous community is worse off since the interim government assumed office, Chakma said.

"Our girls were raped and murdered. Our people were killed. Our lands were grabbed. Attempts were made to incite communal violence across the Chittagong Hill Tracts. But we received justice for any of these incidents?"

He demanded that the government bring all perpetrators to justice, ensure both accountability and constitutional recognition for the indigenous communities and ensure all the rights they are entitled to.

The interim government did not even include a single word regarding indigenous communities in the much-discussed July Declaration, said Dipayon Khisa, a central committee member of Parbatya Chattogram Jana Samhati Samiti.

"As far as we know, there is no such clause that mentions indigenous issues in the July Declaration formulated by the National Consensus Commission. The commission did not even invite any group representing indigenous communities. Even the government, which claims to be working for national reform, appears indifferent to our issues."

Govt bins ex-secy's remarks about advisers

FROM PAGE 12

involved in widespread corruption.

He made the allegation while speaking on Friday as a guest at a seminar titled "Expectations of the July Uprising and the Future of Public Administration", organised by the Bangladesh Administrative Service Association (BASA), a platform of administration cadre officials.

Although he identified one or two ministries, he did not mention any names. However, he claimed to have evidence to support his allegations.

The cabinet secretary's statement said, "If Mr Abdus Sattar possesses credible

Working to restore

FROM PAGE 12

responsibilities, all actions will strictly follow the rules, regulations and laws. We will not deviate from this path."

About the voter apathy, he further said, "Over the years, people have become disengaged from the voting process. Many no longer feel the urge to go to polling stations. A mindset has developed where people assume their votes don't matter, that someone else will cast them anyway. Changing this mentality is one of our biggest challenges."

He stressed that strong law and order is a prerequisite for credible elections. "The law and order situation is currently stable, and we aim to make it even better so that citizens can vote peacefully and without fear."

The CEC called for the media's cooperation to raise awareness and promote voter engagement. "Awareness remains key, and the media plays a vital role in this regard. We welcome both the cooperation

and the constructive criticism from professional journalists."

He, however, expressed concerns over misinformation and the unregulated use of digital platforms. "Misuse of artificial intelligence has become a greater threat than traditional weapons. While we do not see ethical journalism as a challenge, those who spread misinformation via social media without proper training or ethics pose a serious problem."

The CEC also revealed that the Election Commission is taking steps to exclude individuals with a history of misconduct from poll-related duties.

"While we can't bring in people from abroad to conduct elections, we are working strategically to ensure that only credible personnel are involved."

He recalled the elections of 1991 and 1996, widely regarded as free and fair, conducted by the people of this country. "We must place our faith in the people. If we can convince them of our sincerity and commitment, we believe they will rise to the occasion and uphold democratic values."

600 acres set aside

FROM PAGE 12

US government.

For instance, if a T-shirt is made with at least 20 percent American cotton, the US customs will not apply the 20 percent tariff on the value of the good.

Some local garment exporters can use up to 40 percent US cotton in making the garment.

So, the local spinners, millers, traders and users will favour the import of American cotton despite the higher prices, Russell said.

The duty benefit on the garment exports made out of American cotton was a long-time demand of Bangladeshi garment makers, said Faruque Hassan, former president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

"So the move to scale up cotton imports from the US was a good decision for Bangladesh," he said.

However, it would be difficult to increase the import of US cotton in a year as many mills have a shortfall of working capital and the banks may not be interested in financing them

as their business is not going well, said a cotton importer asking not to be named to speak candidly on the issue.

But, the demand for woven items from Bangladesh to the US is higher, he said.

If the export of woven items to the US increases, so will the import of American cotton, he added.

The Trump administration negotiated a 20 percent tariff with Bangladesh with a major condition of reducing the \$6 billion trade gap in a year.

During the negotiation, Bangladesh committed to reducing the trade gap with more imports of cotton, wheat, soybean seeds, aircrafts and LPG and building warehouses for cotton stockpiling.

The government will have to reduce the 75 percent trade gap within one year and the import of cotton, soybean and wheat can help reduce this gap easily, said a private sector representative who was present during the negotiation with the United States Trade Representative last week.

Ukraine won't gift

FROM PAGE 12

"It is truly important that the Russians do not succeed in deceiving anyone again," Zelensky said after a call with French President Emmanuel Macron, without elaborating further.

Three rounds of negotiations between Russia and Ukraine this year have failed to bear fruit, and it remains unclear whether a summit could bring peace any closer as the warring sides' positions are still far apart.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, with millions forced to flee their homes.

Putin has resisted multiple calls from the United States, Europe and Kyiv for a ceasefire.

99% of govt reforms

FROM PAGE 12

Association of Bangladesh (DAB) yesterday, the BNP leader said if his party gets the public mandate to form the government, it will need everyone's cooperation to implement the 31 proposals, including the health sector reforms.

"In particular, we will need your (doctors') support to carry out the specific point in the 31 points that deal with healthcare. Because implementing these 31 points is not something the government alone, our party's MPs alone, or just our leaders can do. To make this happen, we will need the cooperation of every single person," he said.

The National Council-2025 of DAB, a pro-BNP platform for doctors, was held at the auditorium of Willes Little Flower School and College in the capital's Kakrail area.

Tarique said people believe that the BNP would at least take the initiative to ensure a better future, especially as the party has the "highest potential" to run the country through an election. "For that reason, they expect the BNP to deliver something better, a positive change... BNP must take the first steps to bring about that change."

Tarique also said ensuring government accountability to people requires the establishment of democratic practices across all sectors of the country.

"The people of Bangladesh have many expectations from the BNP. One of the most fundamental among them is to establish a proper system and ensure accountability," he said.

The BNP leader said people from

all walks of life are now looking forward to seeing a positive change and a transformation in the state system. "If we can gradually build a transparent, fair and democratic system everywhere, we will be able to ensure accountability at all levels," he said.

Tarique said it is not entirely true that there is no democratic practice within political parties. "Today's DAB council proves that the claim of no democratic practice inside political parties is not entirely accurate."

He mentioned that since DAB has begun practising democracy, BNP will also be able to gradually implement democratic practices at various levels within the party. "I firmly believe that, Insha'Allah, we can gradually introduce accountability at all levels -- from local to national -- across the country," the BNP leader said.

Drawing from his long experience of living in London, he explained that in the UK, doctors who face abuse receive justice, and if patients or others are denied proper service, they too receive justice, as there is accountability in the state system. "Such a system of accountability is needed in Bangladesh."

Tarique said it is not only about patients, but about everyone -- wherever they go, they should receive the service they are entitled to. "This is because, through years of effort, they built a system of accountability in society and in the state system. But this has not yet been developed in Bangladesh."

Speaking at the programme, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir called Tarique the "future

prime minister" of Bangladesh if BNP wins the upcoming national election.

"Our acting chairman is not only our present leader but also our future leader, our future torchbearer. The future prime minister of the country is sitting here today," he said.

Praising Tarique's wife, Dr Zubaida Rahman, as a renowned physician who graduated in medicine, Fakhrul urged Tarique to give special attention to the country's healthcare system if the party comes to power.

With a population of 180 million, he said, ensuring healthcare in Bangladesh is a huge responsibility and expressed hope that Tarique, as future prime minister, would prioritise this sector.

As Fakhrul referred to Tarique as the country's future leader, the entire auditorium erupted in applause, with doctors warmly congratulating him.

The BNP secretary general said the pharmaceutical industry in Bangladesh is facing a serious crisis as some manufacturers recently told him that the policies and laws introduced by this government are making it very difficult for factories to operate. "Many factories that once competed globally and exported medicines are now at risk of shutting down."

He highlighted that Tarique's 31 point reform outline includes important changes for the health sector which are crucial for the nation.

Fakhrul said building a prosperous Bangladesh means ensuring not just democracy and voting rights, but also people's rights to health, food, and survival.

New council seals

FROM PAGE 12

was not illegal, but there may have been moral lapses," he said. "If there are such mistakes, I, on behalf of the Jatiya Party, apologise unconditionally."

The latest split follows a civil suit filed by Chunnu and nine other senior leaders that led a Dhaka court to issue a temporary injunction earlier this month barring Quader from organisational activities.

The rift deepened when Quader removed 10 leaders, including Chunnu and Anisul, from their posts last month.

Chunnu accused Quader of "obstinacy, unconstitutional activities, and an autocratic mindset".

NEWS

UTTARA JET CRASH UK team arrives to provide advanced care to the injured

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A specialised UK Emergency Medical Team arrived in Bangladesh yesterday to provide advanced care to those injured in the tragic aircraft crash at Milestone School and College in Uttara's Diabari area on July 21.

The nine member team comprises highly experienced clinical professionals, including infectious disease specialists, intensive care doctors, infection prevention and control nurses, and rehabilitation specialists, the UK High Commission said in a statement.

Over the next three weeks, they will work alongside local physicians to deliver critical care and rehabilitation services to injured students receiving treatment at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, it added.

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Sarah Cooke said, "The UK stands in solidarity with those affected by this tragic incident and wants to extend its support. I am confident that the specialised treatment offered by the UK medical team will accelerate the recovery and rehabilitation of the injured students."

At least 34 persons, mostly students, were killed and more than 150 others injured in that fighter jet crash.



Traffic police towed several battery-run auto-rickshaws from Farmgate to Mohammadpur yesterday for operating illegally on restricted roads. The photo was taken in the capital's Asadgate area. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Students lock CU hall canteen for serving stale food

A CORRESPONDENT, CU

Students of Chittagong University's AF Rahman Hall locked the hall canteen and an adjacent shop yesterday, alleging that they were selling unhygienic and stale food.

The incident took place around 2:30pm.

Witnesses said trouble began when the owner of the canteen served food to a student without washing his hands. When the student objected to the matter, the owner reportedly replied, "Eat it if you want, or leave it."

Angered by this, students

locked the doors of the canteen.

During their visit, the hall's residential teacher Morshedul Haque, assistant proctors Korban Ali and Nurul Hamid Kanan found stale khichuri and rotten eggs.

Hall manager Zainal Abedin claimed the rotten eggs had been set aside to return them to suppliers, although they were stored in the same refrigerator where fresh food was kept.

Assistant Proctor Nurul Hamid Kanan said, "We will discuss the matter with hall authorities and the top administration. Until then, the facilities will remain closed."

2 bodies recovered from Karnaphuli

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

River police recovered two bodies floating on the Karnaphuli River near Patenga Sea Beach yesterday, two days after a fishing trawler capsized in the Bay of Bengal.

Eight fishermen remain missing while 11 were rescued after the trawler sank off the Chattogram coast on Thursday afternoon following a collision with another vessel.

OC Md Arif of Sadarghat River Police said locals spotted the bodies near Ghat 15 and alerted authorities.

The bodies have yet to be identified, but police suspect they may belong to the missing fishermen. "We have informed the families so they can come to identify the bodies," the OC added.

Following the incident, the coast guard launched a search and rescue operation to find the missing fishermen. Another fishing boat nearby rescued the survivors after they swam towards it.

No progress on separate judiciary secretariat

FROM PAGE 3

marking a major step towards judicial autonomy.

A law ministry official said, "We've drafted the ordinance for establishing the secretariat and held a couple of meetings with the Supreme Court. The draft is now nearly final. There's no further update."

He declined to provide more details.

On October 27 last year, the SC submitted a proposal to the law ministry along with a concept paper explaining the reasons and objectives behind establishing a separate judicial secretariat.

The proposal included a draft organogram titled "Secretariat for the Judicial Ordinance," so the law ministry could take steps to set up the secretariat and appoint a secretary, additional and deputy secretaries, and other staff, according to ministry sources.

In the concept paper, the apex court noted that meaningful separation of the judiciary had long been elusive, mainly because successive governments

lacked the political will to implement it.

However, a few days later, the ministry returned the proposal to the SC, requesting modifications.

On April 21, the court semi-revised a draft titled "Supreme Court Secretariat Ordinance 2025" to the ministry, along with a list of proposed amendments to the Rules of Business 1996, the Allocation of Business, and the secretariat's organogram.

It also urged the ministry to take necessary steps.

According to SC sources, the proposed ordinance aims to institutionalise judicial independence. It outlines a framework for recruitment, promotion, transfer, budgeting, training, and professional development of lower court judges and staff under the Supreme Court secretariat.

On March 17, Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed said the judiciary can only fulfil its responsibilities effectively when institutional independence is ensured by establishing an independent judicial secretariat.

Article 116 currently states: "The control (including the power of posting, promotion, and grant of leave) and discipline of persons employed in the judicial service and magistrates exercising

judicial functions shall vest in the president and shall be exercised by him in consultation with the Supreme Court."

The commission proposed enacting a separate law or ordinance to establish the secretariat, amending the Rules of Business, 1996, and creating rules and guidelines for its operation.

Speaking on the matter on July 31, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul said the government recently formed a separate service led by the chief justice to create posts for judicial officers, which is a step towards establishing the separate judiciary secretariat.

"This is being done step by step," he said, expressing hope that the secretariat's formation would be completed during the interim government's tenure.

Article 116 currently states: "The control (including the power of posting, promotion, and grant of leave) and discipline of persons employed in the judicial service and magistrates exercising

Biman flight faces

FROM PAGE 3

an Abu Dhabi-bound flight had to return after a toilet malfunction on Friday.

Last Wednesday, a Bangkok-bound flight returned mid-air because of unusual engine vibrations.

Due to such frequent technical problems on Biman flights, passengers have grown anxious and increasingly dissatisfied.

They expressed concern about their safety because of these repeated incidents.

Sources say Biman's Boeing 737 and Dash 8 aircraft have recently been experiencing recurring technical faults.

Aviation experts believe these problems are caused by negligence in timely repairs and maintenance, as well as a shortage of

skilled manpower.

As a result, flight schedules are disrupted and passenger confidence is rapidly declining.

Last Wednesday, a Bangkok-bound flight returned mid-air because of unusual engine vibrations.

Due to such frequent technical problems on Biman flights, passengers have grown anxious and increasingly dissatisfied.

They expressed concern about their safety because of these repeated incidents.

Yesterday, after the issue of BG 585, the flight's captain apologised to passengers and assured them that all measures would be taken for a safe journey.

However, passengers said assurances alone are not enough and called for practical solutions and consistent safety guarantees.

DHAKA SUNDAY AUGUST 10, 2025
SRABAN 26, 1432 BS

The Daily Star

9

Land, rights, recognition

FROM PAGE 3

He said the uprising in 2024 is being called a revolution, but it was merely the fall of a government.

"The real revolution is a social revolution, through which social ownership will be established and people will be liberated," he said. "But Bangladesh has now become a colony of the rich. Colonial rulers loot and siphon off wealth – this is what is currently happening in Bangladesh."

With the fall of the previous government, it was believed that fascism had ended, but capitalist fascism has taken an extreme form, strengthening right-wing forces, he said.

Regarding the way forward, the educationist said, "We need to build a social revolution. Those who believe in socialism and social ownership must come together to form a united front. This united front will not be like the hollow front of 1954. It will be that of the leftists and it will be strong. Bangladesh's future depends on this united front."

He stressed that unity cannot be achieved alone or in isolation and must be built despite ideological differences.

He also condemned the recent display of pictures of Al-Badr and Razakars at the TSC, as part of a photo exhibition, calling it a shocking incident.

"This attempt will become stronger if the leftists do not remain united," he said, adding that those who politicise religion are also bourgeois and support private ownership.

"Therefore, those of us who want to bring social change must come together to form a united front," he added.

International Indigenous Day Celebration Committee, started from Mahajan Para Surjoshikha Club and ended at Khagraper, with participants in traditional dress parading through the streets.

A discussion followed, during which speakers presented seven demands: signing the UN declaration on indigenous rights; constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples and inclusion of their history, culture and heritage in textbooks; full implementation of the CHT Accord; formation of a separate land commission for plains indigenous peoples; ensuring traditional and customary land rights in the CHT and plains; justice for rape victims in Khagrachhari and across the country; and the unconditional release of members of the Bawm community.

The discussion was chaired by Chathowai Mong Marma, president of the celebration committee. Distinguished social worker and indigenous leader Sudhakar Tripura was the chief guest, with Monotosh Tripura as moderator.

Three more divisions

FROM PAGE 3

to 3,423 cases and 16 deaths as of yesterday.

Asked about the rise, particularly in deaths, Chattogram Civil Surgeon Jahangir Alam said late hospital admissions have contributed to this. Additionally, many patients arrived with multiple complications.

In response to another question, he said the increase in the density of Aedes larvae, caused by various factors, is driving the rise in dengue cases.

Both the city corporation and his office are working to improve the situation, he told this correspondent last night.

As for Khulna, the division had only 163 dengue cases and two deaths until June 1.

However, by yesterday, the numbers increased to 1,200 cases and four deaths.

Chief adviser

FROM PAGE 3

Named an Honorary MBE in February 2025, Anam was recognised for her work in social justice, inclusion, and gender equality – values shared by the UK and Bangladesh.

The UK has partnered with the Manusher Jonno Foundation for over two decades, supporting more than 460 grassroots organisations to promote dignity, inclusion, and justice nationwide.

বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা

নং. সংস্থা/ব-৫৯/রে-১২৪৫

তারিখ: ০৯ আগস্ট ২০২৫

আবশ্যিক

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PRIORITISE BREASTFEEDING: Create a sustainable support systems

Breastfeeding is one of the most effective ways to ensure a baby's health, development, and survival in the earliest stages of life. It acts as their first vaccine, providing protection against diseases including diarrhoea and pneumonia.

Yet only 48% of infants under six months are exclusively breastfed – well below the World Health Assembly target of 60% by 2030. This gap is due to overlapping challenges faced by new mothers, health workers, and health systems. Millions of mothers do not receive timely, skilled support when they need it most. Only a fifth of countries include infant



and young child feeding training for doctors and nurses, meaning most mothers leave hospitals without proper guidance on breastfeeding or introducing complementary feeding. Many health systems remain under-resourced, fragmented, or poorly equipped to deliver consistent, evidence-based breastfeeding support.

Investment in breastfeeding support remains critically low, even though every dollar invested yields \$35 in economic returns.

As we mark World Breastfeeding Week under the theme "Prioritise breastfeeding: Create sustainable support systems", WHO and UNICEF call on governments, health administrators, and partners to:

- Invest in equitable, quality maternal and newborn care, including breastfeeding support;
- Increase national budget allocations for breastfeeding programmes;
- Integrate breastfeeding counselling into all maternal and child health services;
- Equip all health providers with essential breastfeeding skills;
- Strengthen community health systems for ongoing support;
- Enforce the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes in all health settings.

Strengthening breastfeeding support is a health, moral, and economic imperative.

SOURCE: WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

10 early warning signs of kidney problems you should not ignore

Kidneys play a vital role in filtering waste, regulating fluid balance, and maintaining electrolytes in our body. When they fail to function properly, it can lead to serious health issues. Recognising the early warning signs of kidney problems can help prevent further damage. Here are 10 key symptoms that may indicate your kidneys are not working as they should.

1. Constant fatigue: Fatigue is one of the most common early signs of kidney problems. When kidneys are not filtering waste properly, toxins build up in your body, leading to tiredness. Kidney dysfunction also reduces erythropoietin production, which causes anaemia, leaving you feeling weak and unable to concentrate.

2. Poor sleep: Kidney disease is often linked to sleep apnoea, a condition where breathing stops during sleep. Sleep apnoea can worsen kidney function by reducing oxygen levels. On the other hand, kidney disease can lead to fluid buildup in the lungs, causing breathing difficulties and disturbing sleep.

3. Itchy skin: When kidneys cannot remove waste from the blood, it can cause toxins to build up and lead to itchy, dry skin. This can also lead to rashes and other skin problems due to imbalances in minerals and nutrients.

4. Swelling in the feet, legs, or face: Kidney dysfunction can cause fluid retention, leading to swelling, especially in the feet, ankles, legs, and face. Puffy eyes are a common sign that the kidneys are struggling to remove excess fluids from the body.

5. Muscle cramps: Electrolyte imbalances caused by kidney problems can lead to muscle cramps. Your kidneys regulate important minerals like potassium and calcium, and an imbalance in these can affect how your muscles function, causing cramps and discomfort.

6. Shortness of breath: Kidney disease can cause anaemia, leading to low oxygen levels in the blood and feelings of breathlessness. Fluid buildup in the lungs can also make breathing more difficult, especially when lying down.

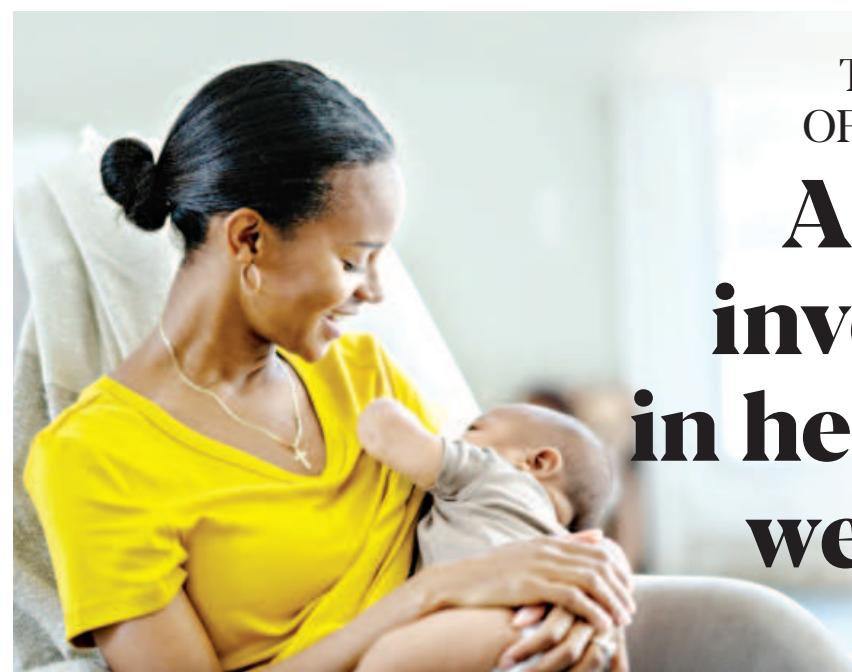
7. Brain fog: Toxin buildup due to kidney dysfunction can affect brain function. This can lead to confusion, difficulty concentrating, memory problems, or dizziness – symptoms often described as "brain fog".

8. Loss of appetite: Kidney issues can cause nausea and upset your stomach, leading to a reduced appetite. Over time, this can result in weight loss. If you notice you are eating less or feeling nauseous often, it could be related to kidney problems.

9. Foul-smelling breath: When kidneys cannot filter out toxins, it can cause a condition called uremia, which leads to foul smelling, ammonia-like breath. This occurs because waste products accumulate in the bloodstream, affecting your mouth and taste buds.

10. Changes in urine: Foamy, brown, or bloody urine could be a sign of kidney dysfunction. Foamy urine may indicate protein leakage, while brown or pale urine can point to waste buildup. Blood in the urine can be caused by infections, kidney stones, or other kidney-related issues.

Recognising these early warning signs of kidney problems is critical for timely treatment and prevention of further damage. If you notice any of these symptoms, it is important to seek medical intervention.



STAR HEALTH DESK

World Breastfeeding Week, celebrated annually during the first week of August.

Breastfeeding is one of the most powerful ways to ensure the health and survival of infants, providing crucial nutrients and antibodies that protect against common diseases such as diarrhoea, pneumonia, and infections. But its benefits go far beyond infancy, impacting both the child's long-term health and the mother's well-being. Despite these remarkable benefits, only 48% of infants globally are exclusively breastfed for the first six months, well below the World Health Organisation (WHO) target of 60% by 2030.

Why breastfeeding matters

Breastfeeding is the gold standard in infant nutrition, offering not only essential nutrients but also immune protection that formula milk cannot provide. In the early months of life, breast milk acts as a natural vaccine, offering infants vital protection against infections and diseases that can be life-threatening. The World Health Organisation and UNICEF recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life to support optimal growth, development, and health.

Moreover, breastfeeding plays a role in reducing healthcare costs, as it lowers the incidence of childhood diseases that often require expensive

treatments and hospitalisations. In the long run, breastfeeding contributes to better cognitive development, which can positively impact a child's educational and social outcomes.

The long-term benefits of breastfeeding

While the immediate benefits for infants are well-documented, breastfeeding also has significant long-term health effects. Children who are breastfed are less likely to develop chronic diseases such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular issues later in life. These benefits stem from the healthy fats, proteins, and antibodies found in breast milk, which help promote healthy development during the early stages of life.

For mothers, the benefits are just as significant. Breastfeeding has been shown to reduce the risk of postpartum haemorrhage, and women who breastfeed have a lower risk of developing breast and ovarian cancers, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease. Furthermore, breastfeeding helps mothers recover faster from childbirth and contributes to bonding with their newborns, which is crucial for emotional well-being.

The need for support and education

Despite the clear benefits of breastfeeding, many mothers around the world do not receive the support they need to breastfeed successfully. One of the main challenges is

a lack of skilled breastfeeding counselling during the crucial first days and months after birth. Research indicates that only 20% of countries provide training in infant and young child feeding for healthcare providers, meaning many new mothers leave hospitals without essential breastfeeding guidance.

Ensuring that all healthcare workers are properly trained in breastfeeding support is essential for helping mothers navigate the challenges they face. These challenges can range from latching difficulties to returning to work, where mothers may struggle to maintain breastfeeding while balancing their professional responsibilities. Providing ongoing, skilled breastfeeding counselling in hospitals, health clinics, and community settings can help address these issues and ensure that mothers receive the guidance they need to breastfeed successfully.

Breastfeeding offers unmatched health benefits, from protecting babies against disease to promoting lifelong health for both mothers and children. However, to fully realise these benefits, societies must prioritise breastfeeding support through education, skilled counselling, and policies that protect and empower mothers.

By investing in breastfeeding today, we are making a commitment to the health, well-being, and economic prosperity of future generations.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BREASTFEEDING A lifelong investment in health and well-being

WALKING The simple, effective exercise for everyone

Walking is one of the most accessible and effective forms of exercise, requiring little more than a good pair of shoes. Whether you are a fitness enthusiast or just starting on your journey to better health, walking provides numerous benefits that make it an ideal choice for people of all ages and fitness levels.

This low-impact activity is easy on the joints, making it perfect for those with mobility concerns or beginners looking for a gentle introduction to exercise. A brisk 30-minute walk, done most days of the week, can strengthen your heart, reduce blood pressure, and improve bone health. It is also an excellent way to manage stress, improve your mood, and enhance sleep quality.

One of the best things about walking is its flexibility. You can walk virtually anywhere—whether it is around your neighbourhood, in a park, on a treadmill, or through a mall on a rainy day. You do not need any special equipment, and it is entirely free. As your stamina increases, you can challenge yourself by walking faster, for longer periods, or by adding inclines to engage your muscles further.

Though walking does not specifically target areas like your core or arms, it is highly effective for toning the legs and strengthening the glutes. For those looking to add variety, walking clubs or family walks after dinner provide social engagement and added motivation.

Overall, walking is an easy, convenient, and highly beneficial exercise that is perfect for anyone looking to improve their physical and mental well-being.



Can a 'cortisol cocktail' actually reduce stress?

In recent years, the term "cortisol cocktail" has gained attention in wellness circles as a potential remedy for stress. But what exactly is it, and does it really work?

Cortisol is often called the "stress hormone" because it is released by the adrenal glands in response to stress. While it plays a crucial role in the body's fight-or-flight response, chronic stress can lead to elevated cortisol levels, which may contribute to anxiety, weight gain, and even heart disease.

A "cortisol cocktail" typically refers to a blend of ingredients—such as adaptogenic herbs, vitamins, and minerals—that are believed to help regulate cortisol levels and combat the effects of stress. Common ingredients include ashwagandha, rhodiola, magnesium, and B vitamins, all known for their ability to help the body manage stress in different ways. Ashwagandha, for example, is thought to reduce cortisol levels, while magnesium supports muscle relaxation and reduces tension.

While some studies suggest that adaptogens and certain supplements can help manage stress, it is important to note that the concept of a cortisol cocktail is still largely unproven in clinical settings. Many of the ingredients in these blends have shown promise in small-scale studies, but there is no definitive evidence to confirm that combining them in a "cocktail" will have a noticeable impact on cortisol or overall stress levels.

Ultimately, reducing chronic stress is a multifaceted effort that involves proper diet, exercise, sleep, and stress management techniques. While a cortisol cocktail may provide temporary relief, it should not be relied upon as a long-term solution.

Nutrition Begins at the Root

The Daily Star (TDS): How have ACI's high-quality seeds, modern machinery, and crop protection products contributed to improved nutrition outcomes among smallholder farming households? What evidence or farmer feedback supports this?

Dr. F H Ansarey (FHA): ACI's approach to combating malnutrition focuses on biofortified seeds and nutrient-dense crop varieties, alongside mechanisation and safe crop protection methods. ACI dhan1, a short-duration Aman rice enriched with ~24.8 ppm zinc, improves dietary diversity while enabling multiple cropping cycles. Wheat varieties ACI gom1 and gom2, with high yield, protein and gluten content, have proven successful in enhancing both income and food quality for households. Valencia potato, with high dry matter and vitamin C content, has supported farmer profits and household meals.

TDS: Why is it crucial to consider nutrition outcomes at the production stage, and how does ACI ensure that its products and services are accessible, relevant, and beneficial to farmers' health and nutrition?

FHA: For over 60% of rural households, what they grow directly determines what they eat. Traditional agricultural models have prioritised yield over nutritional quality, leading to widespread micronutrient deficiencies. ACI has integrated nutrition goals into its seed and input development to promote diversity, nutrient density, and food safety.

ACI has built a national network of over 4,380 retail points. Products are available in small pack sizes (1g–100g), accompanied by seasonal promotions tailored to low-income farmers. Additional support is provided through mobile agro-clinics, SMS and WhatsApp helplines, and digital advisory services.

TDS: How has ACI adapted its outreach and seed distribution strategies to improve access for remote or underserved communities, particularly in addressing the needs of smallholder farmers?

FHA: ACI has implemented inclusive outreach models, including field demonstrations, school-based nutrition plots, and homestead garden initiatives. Through its partnership with the Suchona Project in Sylhet and



technology bundles such as drip irrigation and early-maturing seeds.

TDS: What evaluation methods does ACI use to assess the impact of its agricultural inputs and support services on nutritional outcomes and sustainable agricultural practices at the community level?

FHA: ACI applies a combination of on-farm trials and Participatory Variety Evaluations (PVEs) to assess local adaptability and food preferences. Additional evaluation methods include surveys, focus group discussions, harvest tracking, and pre-post household

Dr. F H Ansarey
President,
ACI Agribusinesses

surveys measuring dietary diversity and food availability. Feedback is also collected through digital CRM systems and helplines.

Extension efforts are supported through the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and local farmer meetings. ACI aligns crop recommendations with agro-ecological zones and connects marginal households to its field and trade channels. Its contract farming and outgrower models have shown promising results in reducing chemical fertiliser use and encouraging organic inputs and mixed cropping.

This content has been published under 'Catalyzing Markets' - a media campaign jointly initiated by iDE and The Daily Star. This interview is conducted by Md. Zahidur Rabbi

iDE, a global nonprofit organisation in 12 countries since 1984, drives poverty reduction through market-driven solutions in Bangladesh, scaling agriculture, WASH, climate resilience, clean energy, and women's empowerment.



History beckons Butler's U-20s

SPORTS REPORTER

Having made history with a maiden Women's Asian Cup berth last month, Bangladesh are within touching distance of yet another historic achievement with a first ever U-20 Women's Asian Cup beckoning.

What looked like an uphill task before the campaign started now looks very much within the reach of Peter Butler's charges, thanks to their enterprising football in the Laotian capital of Vientiane over the last four days.

Bangladesh started their Group H campaign with an assured 3-1 victory against the hosts before dispatching Timor-Leste with an 8-0 drubbing, helping themselves to the top of the table with six points and a positive goal difference of 10.

The fact that South Korea -- ranked 21st in the world as opposed to Bangladesh's 104th -- are second behind Bangladesh, courtesy of goals scored count, speaks volumes of how dominating the women and red and green have been so far.

With South Korea on a positive goal difference of 10 too, but behind Bangladesh due to having scored one goal less, they will have to beat Bangladesh in the last match today to grab the one spot from the group for the final round, which will be held in Thailand in April next year.

The top teams from the eight groups alongside three best runners-up finishers will go through to the final round, joining hosts Thailand as the 12th team.

The South Asian champions know they will be through as group winners with either a victory or a draw. Even a defeat by a small margin could be enough for them to progress, given the current standings of the other teams and the match-ups on the final match day today.

With one-day gap each between the match days, Butler's charges went through recovery -- stretching, gym and swimming -- at the team hotel on Saturday.

With South Korea labouring to a 1-0 win against Laos on Friday night, the Bangladesh players should be confident enough of securing the top spot in the group with a victory and not wait for few more hours to learn their fate once the other groups are done with.

As Butler said after the Timor-Leste game, Bangladesh will "give it their best shot."

Slot's new-look Liverpool aim for instant silverware

AGENCIES

Liverpool manager Arne Slot begins his reign with the chance to lift silverware at the first attempt when his side face Crystal Palace in Sunday's Community Shield at Wembley.

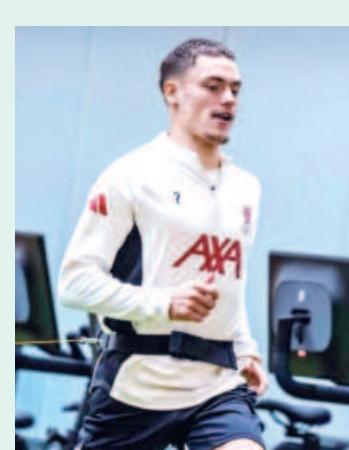
The fixture pits last season's Premier League champions against the FA Cup winners, and for Slot, it's an opportunity to make an instant statement.

Despite storming to a record-equalling 20th English league crown with four matches to spare, Liverpool have undergone significant changes over the summer.

A nearly £300 million recruitment drive brought in German playmaker Florian Wirtz, French forward Hugo Ekitike, and dynamic full-backs Milos Kerkez and Jeremie Frimpong. All four could debut at Wembley, giving fans a glimpse of a refreshed squad designed to defend the title and compete on all fronts.

Slot emphasised the rarity of winning a trophy in the opening match of the campaign, but warned of the threat posed by Palace, who stunned Manchester City to claim their first major honour in May. The build-up has been tinged with emotion following the tragic death of Diogo Jota in a car accident last month.

Liverpool will wear a "Forever 20" emblem on their shirts all season in tribute



- FA Cup winners have beaten Premier League champions in seven of the last nine Community Shields.
- Liverpool will play their 17th Community Shield; Crystal Palace are making their debut.
- The last four debutants lost, including Southampton (1976) and Wimbledon (1988) -- both beaten by Liverpool.
- Liverpool have won only one of their past six Community Shields as league champions.

to the Portuguese forward, whose number has been retired. "The tributes have been emotional and impressive," Slot said.

Wirtz arrives from Bayer Leverkusen for a club-record £100 million, having produced 57 goals and 65 assists in 197 games. Ekitike, signed from Eintracht Frankfurt for £69 million, brings pace and directness to complement Liverpool's attacking options. At the back, Kerkez will challenge Andy Robertson, while Frimpong replaces the departed Trent Alexander-Arnold, now at

Real Madrid.

Liverpool have also seen Luis Diaz join Bayern Munich and Jarell Quansah depart for Leverkusen, leaving gaps for the new signings to fill.

Sunday will be a test of how quickly Liverpool's new faces can gel under Slot's philosophy. Win, and the champions begin their title defence on Friday against Bournemouth with early momentum; lose, and questions over cohesion may come sooner than expected.

SPORTS REPORTER

Five-time Bangladesh Premier League champions Bashundhara Kings will depart Doha for Doha this morning to play their AFC Challenge League playoff against Syrian Premier League runners-up Al-Karamah SC -- but with minimal preparation and tempered expectations.

The rising powerhouse of Bangladesh football endured a challenging season last year, finishing third in the domestic league and parting ways with key players such as Robson Robinho and Miguel Ferreira, the latter departing midway through the campaign. Although the Kings managed to clinch the Federation Cup and the inaugural one-off Challenge Cup, their continental campaign ended in disappointment, finishing bottom of their AFC Challenge League group with no wins.

Now, they find themselves in the playoff stage -- alongside Abahani Limited, who will host Kyrgyz side Muras United in Doha on the same day -- set to face Al-Karamah SC, a former AFC Champions League and AFC Cup runners-up from Syria.

However, the Kings' preparation for the crucial tie has been far from ideal. The team had only two weeks of training before heading to Qatar and will have just a single day to prepare on location before taking on the Syrian giants.

'I fail to fathom the value of women cricketers'

Former Bangladesh captain **Rumana Ahmed** has been absent from the national fold since last year's Asia Cup, yet her voice has only grown louder online. Speaking to **The Daily Star's** **Samsul Arefin Khan**, the 34-year-old all-rounder shared her concerns over dwindling domestic opportunities and a future she fears is slipping away. The excerpts of the conversation are as follows:

DS: You've been vocal about women's cricket for quite some time. What's driving this?

Rumana Ahmed (RA): I've become frustrated seeing that we are always being treated differently, and we don't see the concerned bodies thinking much of our girls.

DS: The Women's Bangladesh Premier League (WBPL) didn't happen, domestic opportunities are shrinking, and there's no preparation before the fast-approaching World Cup. How do you see the current state?

RA: WBPL has never been materialised. Every year, they promise to hold the event from next year. Then, the discussion ends with it. The board even failed to draw a proper plan to give the women's team an ideal scenario for World Cup preparation. Moreover, they have only one tournament [Women's Dhaka Premier League] each year to judge the players, and there is favouritism in selecting the players as well. To be honest, I fail to fathom the value of women cricketers in Bangladesh.

DS: Is the board neglecting the pipeline, relying on just 18-20 players?

RA: The men's team benefits from various support squads with specific roles, but sadly, nothing like that exists for women's cricket.

DS: How do you rate Nazmul Abedeen Fahim's work since taking charge of the women's wing?

RA: We also had high expectations of him. But I only witnessed the number of games reduced in his tenure, rather than increased. Before he took charge, we played in the NCL [National Cricket League] and BCL [Bangladesh Cricket League]. This year, in the BCL, there were a total of three matches, but the tournament ended after two games. They planned to host the match later, but they didn't organise that. As domestic tournaments, only the Premier League took place this year. They are only working with 20-25 cricketers, so how do you form the pipeline?

DS: Reports say ex-coach Hashan Tillakaratne didn't want senior players. Is it true?

RA: He discriminated a lot in the team, bringing senior-junior grouping into the team... He had a favourite group of five to six players, and he always made plans with them. He never questioned [Fargana Haque] Pinky for scoring with a low strike-rate. But at the same time, he asked someone to hit from the beginning.

DS: What's your future plan?

RA: What will I think? If they don't come with an explanation related to my performance or fitness -- which I'm ready to prove -- then what should I do?



DS: A big team like Rupali Bank skipped this year's WDPL. Did that hurt players financially?

RA: Our women players earn some money from this one tournament. But the players' payment was reduced drastically this year. The teams didn't pay the money on time, whereas the payment amount is also very low. Good teams don't want to come here right now, as there is no councillorship in women's cricket.

DS: What urgent steps are needed for women's cricket?

RA: I think the women's selection panel should be improved. There is only one selector right now, and everything is going under his order. The number of domestic tournaments should be increased. I have played a lot of cricket for Bangladesh, but now I'm not getting the chance to play in domestic cricket, let alone the national team. So where can I show myself and prove myself for the national team?

DS: Did BCB offer you, Salma Khatun and Jahana Alam retirement roles?

RA: I've not received such a proposal so far... We are still working hard, and we have done a lot for women's cricket in the country. Actually, I don't know who our guardian is now.

DS: Reports say ex-coach Hashan Tillakaratne didn't want senior players. Is it true?

RA: He discriminated a lot in the team, bringing senior-junior grouping into the team... He had a favourite group of five to six players, and he always made plans with them. He never questioned [Fargana Haque] Pinky for scoring with a low strike-rate. But at the same time, he asked someone to hit from the beginning.

DS: What's your future plan?

RA: What will I think? If they don't come with an explanation related to my performance or fitness -- which I'm ready to prove -- then what should I do?



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Ritu Porna Chakma, the dazzling star of the Bangladesh women's football team, proudly holds both the Sports Person of the Year 2024 and Fans' Favourite Athlete trophies at the City Group-Prothom Alo Sports Awards, held at a hotel in the capital yesterday. "We want to take Bangladesh beyond Asia and onto the global stage," Ritu declared with determination. In other awards, Ritu's teammate Tohura Khatun was named Best Female Athlete, chess prodigy Manor Reza Neer claimed Best Emerging Sportsperson, the runners-up titles went to Bangladesh men's cricket stars Taskin Ahmed and Mehidy Hasan Miraz, and the Lifetime Achievement Award glittered in the hands of the nation's sprinting legend Mosharraf Hossain Shamim.

Mymensingh replace Dhaka Metro in NCL

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has decided to include Mymensingh Division in place of Dhaka Metro in this year's first-class edition of the National Cricket League (NCL).

However, as fixtures for the forthcoming NCL T20 have already been finalised, Dhaka Metro will still compete in the T20 edition, scheduled to start on September 14.

The decision was made during a meeting of the board of directors held yesterday, with BCB president Aminul Islam Bulbul joining virtually from Australia.

In other decisions, the BCB resolved to build a house for women's footballer Ritu Chakma. They also appointed Alex Marshall as a consultant for the BCB's Anti-Corruption Unit and reappointed Tony Hemming as head of turf management for two years.

Additionally, Julian Wood has been brought in as a specialised batting coach, while the contract of sports psychologist David Scott has been extended.

The board, however, could not finalise the event management company for the next edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20.

"A total of five companies have applied to manage the BPL. We will make a decision within the next two to three days," BCB media and communication chairman Iftekhar Rahman Mithu told reporters after the six-hour meeting.

Meanwhile, the BCB decided to involve the ICC's Integrity Unit in operating the next BPL. They will also review financial defaulters in the league, take legal action where necessary, and expedite arbitration processes for franchises such as the Chittagong Kings in the coming days.

TEAM	OPPOSITIONS	YEAR	MARGIN OF WIN
England	Australia	1938	Innings and 579 runs
Australia	South Africa	2002	Innings and 360 runs
New Zealand	Zimbabwe	2025	Innings and 359 runs
West Indies	India	1958	Innings and 336 runs
Australia	England	1946	Innings and 332 runs

PHOTO: ZIMBABWE CRICKET

Half-baked Kings set for Asian challenge

SPORTS REPORTER

Longtime Abahani captain Mohammad Ridoy, who recently switched allegiance to Bashundhara Kings, acknowledged the lack of adequate preparation in a conversation with **The Daily Star**.

"The players had been away from competitive football for a while, even though many of us continued working on our fitness individually," Ridoy said. "But if we had just a bit more time to train together, things could definitely have been better."

Adding to the concerns is the fact that Kings' head coach and several foreign recruits will only join the squad in Doha a day or two before the fixture. The club has brought back Brazilian striker Dorielton Gomez and signed Rafael Augusto from Abahani, alongside Nigerian forwards Sunday Emmanuel and Tony Emmanuel from Mohammadan during the current transfer window.

They will also be bolstered by national team defender Tariq Kazi and England-based youngster Cuba Mitchell, with newly-appointed head coach Sergio Farias set to take charge of the team in Doha.

Ridoy, who joined Kings training on August 1 after representing Abahani for six seasons, is under no illusions about the scale of the task ahead.

"AFC competitions are always tough," Ridoy remarked. "No matter who the opponent is, it's always going to be a big challenge for us."



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NO. 1 CEMENT BRAND

Working to
restore public
trust in polls
system: CEC

BSS, Rangpur



Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) AMM Nasir Uddin said yesterday that the most critical challenge of the government and the Election Commission is to ensure that the upcoming national election is conducted in a free, fair and impartial manner.

"People have lost confidence in the election system, the Election Commission, and the administrative machinery involved in the electoral process. We are working tirelessly to restore this lost trust."

He made the remarks while addressing a views exchange meeting at the Regional Election Officer's Office in Rangpur.

Reiterating the EC's commitment to neutrality and transparency, the CEC said, "As long as the Election Commission remains conscious of its

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History has
been distorted
in the July
Declaration

Says Prof Anu
Muhammad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Jahangirnagar University professor Anu Muhammad yesterday accused the interim government of distorting history in the July Declaration.

"History has been distorted in the July Declaration, which demonstrates the interim government's lack of transparency, self-contradiction, and disregard for public opinion."

He made the remarks while addressing a discussion titled "One Year of the Interim Government: Reviewing Responsibilities and Roles" organised by the civic platform Democratic Rights Committee at the Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF) auditorium in the capital's Bijoynagar.

Presiding over the discussion, Prof Anu, a member of the committee, said in order to ensure credible elections, the government must act impartially and implement necessary administrative and organisational reforms.

He acknowledged positive

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



Ukraine won't gift
land to occupiers
Says Zelensky as Trump-Putin set
to meet on August 15 in Alaska

AFP, Kyiv

Ukraine won't surrender land to Russia to buy peace, President Volodymyr Zelensky warned yesterday, after Washington and Moscow agreed to hold a summit in a bid to end the war.

Presidents Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump will meet in the US state of Alaska on August 15, to try to resolve the three-year conflict, despite warnings from Ukraine and Europe that Kyiv must be part of negotiations.

Announcing the summit on Friday, Trump said that "there'll be some swapping of territories to the betterment of both" Ukraine and Russia, without providing further details.

"Ukrainians will not give their land to the occupier," Zelensky said on social media hours later.

"Any decisions against us, any decisions without Ukraine, are also decisions against peace. They will achieve nothing," he said, adding that the war "cannot be ended without us, without Ukraine".

Zelensky also urged Ukraine's allies to take "clear steps" towards achieving a sustainable peace, during a call with Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

National security advisors from Kyiv's allies -- including the United States, EU nations and the UK -- were gathering in Britain yesterday to align their views ahead of the Putin-Trump summit.



People from several indigenous communities of the Chattogram Hill Tracts, including Pangkhu, Khumi, Lushai, Mro, Marma, Bawm, Chak, Tanchangya, Khiyang, Tripura and Chakma, brought out a rally in Khagrachhari yesterday to mark the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

PHOTO: JOYANTI DEWAN

INT'L DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Indigenous communities now just as vulnerable

Says a report of Kapaeeng Foundation

MD ABBAS

Bangladesh's indigenous peoples continued to face grave risks in the first seven months of the year despite expectations of an improvement following the July uprising, according to a report by Kapaeeng Foundation.

From January to July, the rights organisation for indigenous people of Bangladesh documented alarming incidents of land grabbing, criminalisation, sexual violence, torture, arbitrary detention and harassment, particularly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

Both state and non-state actors were involved in many of the violations, said the report, which was released yesterday on the occasion of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

On January 16, a mob attack in Dhaka by a group calling itself "Students for Sovereignty" left at least 18 indigenous students critically injured.

While five suspects were arrested, three were later released on bail, and no trial has yet taken place.

The organisation recorded 24 cases of violence against indigenous women during the period, with 21 of them taking place in the CHT.

**The organisation
recorded 24 cases
of violence against
indigenous women
during the first
seven months of this
year, with 21 of them
taking place in the
Chattogram Hill Tracts.**

170 victims in 32 incidents of civil and political rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, detention, beatings, house raids, threats and forced religious conversion.

In one case, 30 indigenous children were reportedly converted to Islam.

Kapaeeng warned of a "deep-seated culture of impunity" that emboldens perpetrators.

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The Lalbagh stretch of the Gabtoli-Sadarghat Beribadh Road remains riddled with potholes, garbage, and stagnant water. Its condition worsens every few months due to substandard construction and use of heavy vehicles, leading to traffic congestion and frequent accidents in the area. The photo was taken yesterday.

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

600 acres set aside for US cotton hub

Govt starts work to reduce
trade gap with America

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The bid to reduce the trade gap with the US is progressing at full steam, with the government allocating 600 acres of land for building a cotton warehouse and local importers targeting American cotton imports worth \$1 billion this year.

The warehouse, on 600 acres of land at the Mirsarai economic zone in Chattogram, will be built by American and local entrepreneurs, said Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman.

The move would pave the way for higher cotton imports from the US as it would reduce the import time to a day or two from more than 45 days at present.

By the end of this fiscal year, Bangladesh can increase the import of American cotton to \$1 billion, which will help reduce the trade deficit between the two countries, said Showkat Aziz Russell, president of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association.

At present, Bangladesh imports about \$370 million worth of cotton from the US, which is about 7 percent of total imports of the white fibre in a year.

Garment exporters are also demanding yarn spun out of American cotton for the favourable tariff rate from the

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2

New council seals
another JP split
Anisul made chairman, Howlader
secy gen of new faction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

99% of govt
reforms were
presented by
the BNP
Says Tarique

UNB, Dhaka

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman has said almost 99 percent of the reforms the current government is talking about were actually presented to the nation by his party about two and a half years ago.

He said BNP, along with like minded political parties that stood on the streets, fought to remove dictatorship and create an environment where people could breathe freely, presented the 31 point reform proposal to the nation.

While virtually addressing the council session of the Doctors

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SEE PAGE 8 COL 4