

Dhaka set to soar as developers have their way

Planners voice concern over draft amendment to DAP allowing even taller structures

HELEMUL ALAM

Bowing to persistent demands from real estate developers, the government has decided to raise the limit on how much floor space can be built on a piece of land -- known as the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) -- in most parts of the capital.

This will spur a vertical expansion of Dhaka -- letting developers build upward with taller towers in an already overcrowded city.

Most of the capital's 68 zones have seen a rise in FAR ranging from 20 to 80 percent, according to a draft amendment to Dhaka's Detailed Area Plan (DAP) 2022.

FAR is the ratio of the total floor area of a building to the size of the land upon

which it is built. For example, FAR of 2.0 means the total floor area is twice the size of the land.

A higher FAR means more people can live or work in a given area, which may lead to congestion and put pressure on infrastructure.

The draft shows that FAR has been raised to 4.4 from 2 in Khilkhet residential area; 4.8 from 2.5 in Mirpur DOHS; 3.3 from 2 in Badda; 3.1 from 2 in Faridabad; 3.5 from 2 in Rampura; 3.4 from 2.8 in Mirpur; and 3.3 from 2 in Basabo-Khilgaon area.

However, Gulshan-Banani and Dhanmondi, two of the city's upscale neighbourhoods, have seen a slight drop

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A young child carefully steps on stones to get across a road submerged in pitch-black, foul-smelling sewage in the Mir Hazirbagh area of South Jurain, Dhaka. Students and office-goers have been wading through this stagnant filth daily since the area's sewerage collapsed nearly two years ago. During the monsoon, residents suffer the most with the water flooding their homes. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR) CHANGES		
ZONE	EXISTING FAR	PROPOSED FAR
Khilkhet R/A	2	4.4
Mirpur DOHS	2.5	4.8
Niketan	2	3.8
Rampura	2	3.5
Basabo-Khilgaon	2	3.3
Tejgaon industrial area	2.1	3.2
Mohakhali	2.2	3.3

JULY NATIONAL CHARTER Implementation timeline missing from final draft

Consensus commission sends copies to parties

MD ABBAS

The National Consensus Commission yesterday sent the final draft of the July National Charter to political parties, without specifying a deadline for implementing the proposed reforms, a shift from its earlier stance.

In the initial draft issued on July 28, the commission had called on parties to commit to completing all reforms within two years of assuming office after the

next general election.

However, it now says the recommendations deemed "immediately implementable" should be carried out by the interim government and relevant authorities without delay, using appropriate and effective measures, before the polls.

It did not, however, specify which reforms are considered immediately implementable.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

Trump puts peace onus on Ukraine Agrees with Putin on necessity of ending war instead of truce

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump yesterday said Ukraine should make a deal to end the war with Russia because "Russia is a very big power, and they're not," after hosting a summit where Vladimir Putin was reported to have demanded more Ukrainian land.

In a subsequent briefing with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, a source familiar with the discussion cited Trump as saying the Russian leader had offered to freeze most front lines if Kyiv's forces ceded all of Donetsk,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

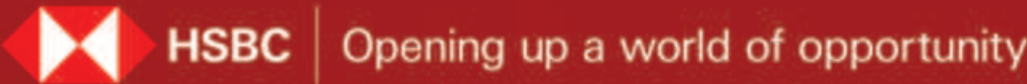
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MY DHAKA

A lifeline for low-income working mothers

BRAC IED, BRAC University equipping communities with trained home-based caregivers

NILIMA JAHAN and
TAHIRA SHAMSUTSA

Before the sun rises over Dhaka's Korail slum, many mothers set out early for a long day of work, carrying the unspoken worry of who will care for their children while they are away.

For many, the answer is uncertain. Some skip work, others leave their little ones with toddler siblings or neighbours, and in heartbreaking cases, children are tied or locked up alone at home.

To help change this harsh reality, women like Nasrin Sultana Nishi and Salma Akter have transformed their modest homes into safe havens for children whose mothers work long hours in domestic jobs, caregiving, or factories.

For 22-year-old Monira, a domestic worker and mother of four-year-old Sanha, Nishi's initiative has been life-changing.

"I often drop Sanha off by 8:00am. Sometimes work runs out, and I have to find new jobs. But I'm not afraid to leave her at 'Nishi Apa's Daycare' because she's one of us -- we trust her."

Monira smiled as she recalled how Sanha now teaches her about manners -- lessons learned at daycare. "She tells me how to talk to people, how to behave, what's right and what's not. It amazes me."

According to Bangladesh's Labour Force Survey 2022, women's participation in the workforce has continued to rise, yet affordable, safe, and development-focused childcare for low-income mothers remains scarce.

Since 2019, BRAC has supported informal neighbourhood childcare by training caregivers, introducing safety and hygiene standards, and creating a structured home-based daycare model. The network has grown from 19 to 455 caregivers across Dhaka, Tongi, Gazipur, and Savar. In Dhaka alone, 104 caregivers look after nearly 1,820 children aged four months to eight years.

Instead of fixed fees, caregivers



Children playing with a caregiver in a home-based daycare centre in Korail slum in the capital.

PHOTO: BRAC

charge what mothers can afford, primarily serving garment workers and domestic helpers.

BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University, has provided technical support to refine the model, which also empowers women economically.

Nishi, 28, a mother of one herself, began her daycare nearly four years ago. "Most of the mothers are domestic workers," she said, watching five toddlers play in her small courtyard. "Since 2023, I've completed 11 BRAC training sessions on hygiene, safety, and supporting children's mental and emotional growth."

Pointing to safety switches and buckets stored out of reach, she explained, "I learned boys and girls should be bathed separately, and water buckets must be kept away from babies. These small details keep children safe."

Though her income is modest, Nishi takes pride in her work. "These children become part of my life. If mothers cannot cook, I do. I want them to feel safe and loved here."

Across the slum, 42-year-old Salma Akter has offered similar care for over two decades. Currently caring for six

children, she earns around Tk 2,300 a month.

"Money has never been the main motivation. Mothers work knowing their children are safe, while I gain independence and contribute to my family."

After training with BRAC recently, she said, "I've learned how to comfort upset children and encourage their independence during feeding. These skills really matter."

Ferdousi Khanom, senior lecturer and early childhood development academic lead at BRAC IED, BRAC University, said the model was developed through research and caregiver feedback.

It trains care entrepreneurs in attachment, safety, safeguarding, stimulation, and inclusivity, and engages children in culturally relevant activities that promote physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, and language development.

"After initial training, caregivers receive regular on-site mentorship and monitoring.... A detailed checklist tracks adherence to safety, hygiene, and learning standards. Supervisors visit centres twice weekly to provide real-

time feedback," she said.

BRAC has also developed minimum quality standards tailored to home-based childcare, balancing feasibility with essential protection and development needs.

Since its inception, the model has boosted mothers' ability to work and improve livelihoods by offering reliable, culturally grounded childcare.

Morsheda Khatun, a garment worker in Gazipur, now confidently leaves her child at a local daycare. "My child greets, behaves well, and even recites rhymes when guests arrive -- things she learned at daycare."

Former preschool teacher Kobita opened her own daycare in Savar after learning about the model. Now caring for 10 children with two assistants, she plans to expand, crediting BRAC's training for her success.

The programme also addresses mental health, with para-counselors visiting centres twice weekly to support children showing signs of withdrawal and help mothers cope with stress. "These mothers carry a lot of stress, and their children often absorb that," said Rokeya Akhter, a para-counselor in Korail.

Challenges, however, remain: frequent migration and job instability among mothers affect children's enrollment, while social stigma around childcare work hinders recognition, Khanom noted.

BRAC is working with community leaders and local governments to promote home-based childcare as a respected service. "If the government were to formally acknowledge the role and impact of home-based childcare and integrate this model into the Childcare Act 2021, it could pave the way for a sustainable, long-term solution," she said.

For mothers like Monira, the benefits are undeniable. "With more training, our children would learn even more. Already, my daughter is ahead of where I was at her age. That means everything."

Yunus seeks Malaysia's clout for resolving Rohingya crisis

BERNAMA, Kuala Lumpur



Bangladesh hopes to leverage Malaysia's influence as Asean chair to bolster international efforts in resolving the long-standing Rohingya refugee crisis, Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus said in an exclusive interview with Malaysian state media Bernama.

"We are hoping that Malaysia will exercise its influence throughout the negotiation process to help us overcome this problem," he told Bernama before concluding his 3-day official visit to Malaysia on August 13.

Yunus warned that the crisis has worsened amid ongoing clashes in Myanmar's Rakhine State between the Arakan Army and government forces, triggering fresh waves of Rohingyas fleeing across the border into Bangladesh.

"In the last 18 months alone, 150,000 new Rohingyas have arrived, in addition to the 1.2 million already in Bangladesh. It [the crisis] is becoming more and more acute. And worst of all, the US has cut off all funds to maintain them. So that is a huge problem for us," he said.

He added that three international conferences on the Rohingya issue will be convened in the coming months to seek a sustainable solution.

The first is scheduled in Cox's Bazar at the end of this month, coinciding with the eighth anniversary of the Rohingya exodus in 2017. The second high-level meeting will take place on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in September, while the third is planned for year-end in Doha, Qatar.

Repatriation efforts have made little progress amid armed conflict in Myanmar since the 2021 coup.

ASSAULTED ON AUG 15 Rickshaw-puller sent to jail in July uprising case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent to jail a rickshaw-puller, who was taken into police custody after being assaulted by a mob for trying to pay tribute to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on Friday, in connection with an attempted murder case linked to the July uprising.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Israt Jenifar Jerin passed the order after police produced him before the court, seeking his confinement in jail, a sub-inspector working in the court told The Daily Star.

Azizur, the rickshaw-puller, was beaten up by a mob when he went to Dhanmondi-32 on the 50th death anniversary of Mujib, carrying a bouquet to pay tribute.

Witnesses said that when Azizur was surrounded, he kept saying, "I am an ordinary person of this country, not linked to any political party. I came here to pay tribute because I love Bangabandhu."

One of the people snatched the bouquet -- which carried a sticker inscribed with "National Mourning Day, August 15" along with Azizur's details -- and tore it apart.

Some in the crowd punched him before police arrived and took him into custody.

Police said Azizur was sent to jail in a case filed with Dhanmondi Police Station on April 2.

According to the case statement, plaintiff Ariful Islam was shot in the back when he was going from New Market to Science Lab around 2:30pm on August 4, 2024, during the July uprising.

Dhaka set to soar

FROM PAGE 1

in their already very high FARs -- the former to 5.5 from 5.7, and the latter to 5 from 5.1.

The draft amendment was approved in principle at a stakeholders' meeting chaired by Housing and Public Works Adviser Adilur Rahman Khan at his ministry on August 10.

The approval has drawn mixed reactions from city planners, architects, environmentalists, and real estate developers.

Urban planners have warned that it could undermine the sustainability of Dhaka city, already overburdened with more than two crore residents in its 1,528-square-kilometer area.

An increase in FAR means a developer will be able to build a structure much taller than the one permitted by the existing rules, said Adil Mohammed Khan, president of Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP).

Giving an example, he said a developer is now allowed to construct a five-storey building on a five-katha plot in Khilkhet residential area. Once the new rules take effect, the developer will be able to build a nine-storey structure on the same plot.

"Dhaka's population density is already high. It frequently sees severe traffic congestion and is prone to waterlogging in the rainy season. A higher FAR will worsen these problems," said Adil, also a member of the technical committee that finalised the draft.

He pointed out that allowing the construction of additional floors will put utility services under strain and also reduce light and airflow into buildings.

The city planners initially opposed the idea of increasing FAR but eventually accepted it to break the deadlock with other stakeholders including real estate developers, he added.

Mohammad Fazle Reza Sumon, former president of BIP, said DAP 2022 was designed to curb indiscriminate and unplanned development that Dhaka city witnessed under the 2008 Building Construction Rules with much higher FAR.

"The vision of DAP 2022 was to prevent Purbachal from becoming another Uttara and ensure that Dhaka's new wards -- 42, 43, 44, and 45 -- don't turn into areas like Badda, Senpara Parbata and Mirbagh," said Sumon.

He mentioned that the revised FAR is somewhat better than what Real Estate

& Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB), and Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB) had asked for.

The push to amend DAP began soon after a gazette on it was published on August 24, 2022, with developers and landowners opposing FAR restrictions.

At the end of last year, Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) began drafting an amendment following intensified lobbying and pressure from real estate developers.

On December 15, 2024, the government formed a seven-member advisory committee to oversee the process of making amendments to DAP under Rajuk's jurisdiction.

In March this year, the proposal was reviewed by an evaluation committee that included seven advisers to the interim government.

This correspondent called Adviser Adilur on his mobile phone several times and also sent a text message yesterday but he didn't respond.

Asked, Syeda Rizwana Hasan, adviser to the environment, forest and climate change ministry, said it was difficult for some stakeholders to accept DAP 2022, which marked a sudden 180-degree policy shift from the previous one.

"REHAB had objected to the FAR in the current DAP. Following a Rajuk initiative, an agreement on revised FAR was reached between various professional bodies at the last meeting," said Rizwana, also a member of the advisory committee.

Welcoming the government move, REHAB has said an amendment to the DAP 2022 is long overdue.

"A strict restriction on FAR reduces available space for residential and commercial projects, making many of them financially unviable. This impedes our ability to meet growing housing demand," said REHAB Senior Vice-President Liakat Ali Bhuiyan.

"Though FAR has been increased, we are still not satisfied with some areas in the DAP," he said.

Md Ashrafur Islam, chief town planner of Rajuk, said the draft will now be sent to the DAP Advisory Council Committee for final approval.

The provision for updating DAP every five years is a notable feature of the revised plan, Islam mentioned.

"To facilitate this, a technical committee will be formed within a year to help Rajuk upgrade and refine DAP," he added.

Trump puts peace onus on Ukraine

FROM PAGE 1

the industrial region that is one of Moscow's main targets.

Zelensky rejected the demand, the source said. Russia already controls a fifth of Ukraine, including about three-quarters of Donetsk province, which it first entered in 2014.

In a major shift, Trump also said he had agreed with Putin that negotiators should go straight to a peace settlement -- not via a ceasefire, as Ukraine and its European allies, until now with US support, have been demanding.

However, Trump and European leaders said they wanted a new summit that includes Zelensky.

Zelensky said he would travel to Washington on Monday to discuss next steps, while Kyiv's European allies welcomed Trump's efforts but vowed to back Ukraine and tighten sanctions on Russia, and again urged the US to offer security guarantees for Ukraine.

Sources said European leaders had also been invited to attend the talks.

Trump's meeting with Putin in Alaska on Friday, the first US-Russia summit since Moscow launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, lasted just three hours.

"It was determined by all that the best way to end the horrific war between Russia and Ukraine is to go directly to a Peace Agreement, which would end the war, and not a mere Ceasefire Agreement, which often times do not hold up," Trump posted on Truth Social.

"If all works out, we will then schedule a meeting with President Putin. Potentially, millions of people's lives will be saved."

That statement will be welcomed in Moscow, which says it wants a full settlement -- not a pause -- but that this will be complex because positions are "diametrically opposed".

After the summit, Trump spoke first with Zelensky, the White House said. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte and European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen later joined the call, officials said.

The European leaders, who had been wary of being left out of the Alaska meeting, held their own talks

- ▶ Trump and Putin cite progress but offer no details
- ▶ Putin reportedly demanded more Ukrainian land
- ▶ Zelensky to visit Washington on Monday

yesterday and said they supported the proposed three-way summit.

"As long as the killing in Ukraine continues, we stand ready to uphold the pressure on Russia. We will continue to strengthen sanctions

about that now".

Monday's talks will be held in the White House Oval Office. Zelensky said after a lengthy conversation with Trump following the Alaska summit that he supported the idea of a three-way meeting.

But Putin made no mention of meeting Zelensky when speaking to reporters. His aide Yuri Ushakov told the Russian state news agency TASS that a three-way summit had not been discussed.

In an interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity, Trump signalled that he and Putin had discussed land transfers and security guarantees for Ukraine, and had "largely agreed".

"I think we're pretty close to a deal," he said, adding, "Ukraine has to agree to it. Maybe they'll say 'no'."

Asked what he would advise



US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin shake hands after their arrival for a US-Russia summit on Ukraine at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage, Alaska, on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

and wider economic measures to put pressure on Russia's war economy until there is a just and lasting peace," they said.

Before the summit, Trump had warned of "severe consequences" if Russia did not accept a ceasefire.

But when asked about those consequences during a Fox News interview after the talks, Trump said that "because of what happened today, I think I don't have to think

Zelensky to do, Trump said: "Gotta make a deal."

"Look, Russia is a very big power, and they're not," he added. "They're great soldiers."

Zelensky has underlined the need for security guarantees for Kyiv to deter Russia from invading again in the future. He said he and Trump had discussed "positive signals from the American side" on taking part.

Putin did not signal any movement

in Russia's long-held positions on the war, but said he agreed with Trump that Ukraine's security must be "ensured".

"We expect that Kyiv and the European capitals will perceive all of this in a constructive manner and will not create any obstacles. That they will not attempt to disrupt the emerging progress through provocation or behind-the-scenes intrigue," said the Russian leader.

According to a source, the US proposed security guarantees for Ukraine similar to -- but separate from -- those enjoyed by Nato member countries.

"As one of the security guarantees for Ukraine, the American side proposed a non-Nato Article 5 type guarantee, supposedly agreed with (Russian leader Vladimir) Putin," the diplomatic source said on condition they not be identified in any way.

Nato's collective security is based on its Article 5 principle: if one member is attacked, the entire alliance comes to its defence.

There was no immediate comment on the matter from Moscow.

For Putin, the very fact of sitting down with the US president represented a victory. The Kremlin leader had been ostracised by Western leaders since the start of the war, and just a week earlier had faced a threat of new sanctions from Trump.

Cold War historian Sergey Radchenko wrote: "Putin is a determined opponent, and, yes, he basically won this round because he got something for nothing. Still, Trump did not sell out Ukraine."

Oleksandr Merezhko, head of the Ukrainian parliament's foreign affairs committee, said that, by dropping any focus on a truce, "Trump is taking Russian President Vladimir Putin's position".

Trump ended the joint press conference by telling Putin, "I'd like to thank you very much, and we'll speak to you very soon and probably see you again very soon."

"Next time in Moscow," a smiling Putin responded in English. Trump said he might "get a little heat on that one" but that he ld "possibly see it happening."

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COACHING CENTRE RAID

Army seizes arms, ammo, arrests three

STAR REPORT

The Bangladesh Army detained three individuals and recovered arms, ammunition, explosive-making materials, and communication equipment during a special operation at a coaching centre called "Doctor English" in Rajshahi city early yesterday.

The operation was carried out in the Dorikhorbona area around 1:30am, following a month-long intelligence surveillance, the Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR) said in a press release yesterday.

During the raid, the army seized two foreign revolvers with ammunition, one air gun, six locally made weapons, a military-grade binocular and optical scope, a foreign-made dagger, advanced walkie-talkie sets, GPS devices, a taser gun, local and foreign cartridges, a large number of unused SIM cards, explosive-making materials, several computer sets, cash, local and foreign liquor, and nitrogen cartridges "which could be used in explosions and will be neutralised by the bomb disposal unit," the ISPR statement said.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



A bus emits thick black smoke, choking the air and harming pedestrians and residents. Despite ongoing discussions on Dhaka's poor air quality and the need to regulate city buses, such unfit vehicles continue to ply the streets. The photo was taken in the capital's Tikatuli area yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

People united to resist efforts to derail polls

Says Salahuddin

UNB, Dhaka

BNP senior leader Salahuddin Ahmed yesterday said the people of Bangladesh are united and determined to resist evil efforts to derail the upcoming national election and the country's democratic transition.

"Those who are now casting doubts about the election through various statements against democracy are neither on the side of democracy nor on the side of the people of Bangladesh," he said while speaking at a milad and doa mahfil.

Salahuddin, a BNP Standing Committee member, said for one reason or another, some are subtly making statements intended to delay, disrupt, or even resist the election.

"But the people of Bangladesh are united. They are determined to exercise their right to vote for democracy. Whoever makes such statements or raises false arguments to obstruct the democratic journey, the people will stand firmly against them," he warned.

The programme was arranged by Jatiyatabadi

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5



Water gone, wounds remain

As rivers retreat, signs of destruction
surface in the north



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Floodwaters along the Teesta and Dudhkumar river basins have receded, but families in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, and Rangpur are still grappling with severe hardships.

Many who returned home after spending weeks in shelters found their croplands buried under sand, houses damaged, and livestock lacking sufficient fodder.

Strong currents left deep pits in homesteads and yards, while poultry, goats and cattle were washed away in several areas.

Agriculture officials said Aman paddy largely survived the

flood, but vegetable fields were devastated.

Abdullah Al Mamun, deputy director of the Department of Agricultural Extension in Kurigram, yesterday said Aman may even benefit from fresh silt deposits.

"Vegetables suffered some damage, but on a limited scale. Where sand accumulated, farmers can still find fertile silt beneath it if it is cleared," he said.

Water Development Board officials also warned of riverbank erosion in several areas.

"The flood situation has

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

A tug of war over 'plough' symbol

JP factions seek EC recognition after council, injunctions

RASHIDUL HASAN

The two factions of the Jatiya Party -- one led by GM Quader after the lifting of injunctions against him, and the other by Anisul Islam Mahmud following the party's council -- are locked in a dispute over control of the party.

Both sides have approached the Election Commission to claim legitimacy and the right to use the party's "plough" symbol.

After holding the council and forming a new committee, Anisul's faction amended the party constitution and sought the EC's recognition, including the party's registration and symbol. GM Quader, however, informed the EC that the council and committee were illegal.

According to sources, following the party's 10th council under Anisul, a letter was submitted to the EC secretary with details of the newly elected leadership. The letter stated that the controversial clause 20/1/a of the JP constitution, which gave the chairman absolute power, had been annulled.

The amendment requires presidium approval before expelling or relieving any central member or dissolving district bodies, and even if the chairman takes such action, it must be

approved at a presidium meeting.

On August 10, a day after the council, the list of the top four leaders of the new committee was submitted to the EC. The faction, claiming itself as the party's mainstream, argued that only its committee had the legal right to the plough symbol. They also said they would send a legal notice to GM Quader to hand over the party office and funds and refrain from using registration number 12.

Meanwhile, GM Quader's faction submitted a letter to the EC, citing clauses of the party constitution that they argued made the council illegal. They said those who convened it had been relieved from the party and that only the chairman has the authority to call a council.

Led by JP secretary general Shameem Haidar Patwary, Quader's faction told reporters on Thursday that no one other than GM Quader could use the plough symbol or claim the chairmanship. He made the remarks after meeting Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin at Nirbachan Bhaban.

Patwary said under section 20(Kha) of the party charter, only the chairman can appoint an acting chairman. "There is no alternative

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6



Two held over Banani shisha lounge killing

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Gazipur

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) has arrested two key suspects in the murder of Rahat Hossain Rabbi at a shisha lounge in Banani.

The accused, identified as Munna, 27, and Maksudur Rahman Hamza, 26, were arrested in Cumilla during a joint operation by Rab-1 and Rab-II.

According to a press release issued yesterday morning by Rab-1 Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police and media officer Salaman Noor Alam, the suspects have been handed over to Banani Police Station.

Rahat's father, Robiul Awal, has filed a murder case in connection with the incident.

The incident occurred in the early hours of August 14 at the Three Sixty Shisha Lounge in Banani. Rahat

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

EC alone cannot ensure fair polls

Says Badiul Alam Majumdar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election Reform Commission chief Badiul Alam Majumdar yesterday said the Election Commission alone cannot ensure a fair election without the cooperation and will of the government.

He made the remarks at a mock parliament event titled "The Election Commission's role is key to ensuring a fair upcoming national election," held at the FDC in the capital. The event was organised by Debate for Democracy.

Badiul Alam said, "There is no uncertainty about the upcoming election. It is essential that the election be held within the timeframe announced for February."

He added, "This time, a level playing field will be maintained in the election. If all stakeholders act responsibly, voters will stand in queues and cast their votes without hesitation. However, if political parties remain engaged in hooliganism, muscle power, and the game of money, a good election will not be possible. While the Election Commission's role is central in holding a fair election, all stakeholders -- including candidates, voters, civil society, and the media -- must act responsibly."

He further warned that if the election is held without reforms, it may become controversial. Subservient student politics is not acceptable, he said, adding that students should not act as musclemen for any political party. The outcome of student union elections in

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6



Battery-run rickshaws and vans operate illegally on the Buriganga bridge in the capital's Babu Bazar that connects the city and Keraniganj. Their movement on the bridge increases the risk of accidents, with many often driving erratically and going against traffic. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Janmashtami celebrated nationwide



STAR REPORT

Hindus across the country celebrated Janmashtami, the auspicious birth anniversary of Lord Sri Krishna, yesterday.

Various programmes were organised in Dhaka and across Bangladesh. The events included Sri Bhagavad Gita Yajna (recitation), colourful Janmashtami processions, Krishna puja, religious discussions, kirtan, arati, distribution of prasad, cultural competitions, and cultural performances.

The main attraction, a grand procession, was brought out from Palashi intersection in the capital in the afternoon under the initiative of the Bangladesh Puja Uddhayan Parishad and the Mahanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee.

After the inaugural ceremony, the procession, like every year, passed through Jagannath Hall, Shaheed Minar, Doel Chattar, High Court intersection, Bangabazar, and Golap Shah Mazar

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Burglaries at Khulna bank, Patuakhali ATM booth

STAR REPORT

Miscreants have stolen around Tk 16 lakh after breaking into the locker of a Krishi Bank branch in Rupsha upazila of Khulna, said police.

The burglary is believed to have occurred sometime between Thursday afternoon and 10:00pm on Friday.

Around 10:00pm Friday, a security guard noticed the padlock on the main entrance's collapsible gate was broken. He alerted locals, who then informed police.

Rupsha Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Mahfuzur Rahman told The Daily Star, "We have collected CCTV footage and a detailed analysis is underway."

He added that no guards were on duty at the bank that night. "Our initial findings suggest the theft was possible due to lapses in the bank's security measures," he said.

Bank officials could not be reached for comment.

Meanwhile, in Patuakhali town, a

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



A man cautiously walks along a footpath in Rajshahi city, where multiple uncovered manholes pose a serious hazard. The theft of manhole covers from drains along footpaths has worsened the risk. While red flags mark some of the open drains, many footpaths in the city remain dangerous for pedestrians. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

RU students still face poor food, housing woes

Merit-based seat allocation shows progress



NUR AHSAN MRIDUL

Following the July uprising, Rajshahi University (RU) authorities had promised sweeping reforms in hall management, particularly in dining services and seat allocation.

However, many students feel that little has changed since then. They said while some transparency has been introduced in hall seat allocation, food quality remains poor, and the persistent accommodation crisis continues to frustrate thousands.

A chronic shortage of seats

RU has around 32,000 students but its 17 residential halls can house only about 10,000. This means nearly two-thirds of the students live outside campus. Since the uprising, no new dormitory projects have

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

Three workers electrocuted to death in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people working at a construction site were electrocuted to death in the capital's Bashundhara Residential Area yesterday afternoon.

The deceased were identified as Faridul Islam, 40, of Alauddin Bazar area of Lalmonirhat's Patgram upazila, Rabbi, 17, son of Tobarak Hossain of Islam Nagar village of the upazila, and Liton, 35, of Jamgram village, said police.

The incident happened on Road 14 of Bashundhara's E-Block around 12:30pm.

Citing locals, Vatura Police Station Officer-in-Charge Rakibul Hasan said four workers were inside an underground water tank at an under-construction building in the area when they were electrocuted.

The three died on the spot while one suffered burns, said OC Rakibul.

The official said they suspect faulty wiring may have led to the accident.

Water shortage deepens in Tangail

Half the municipality lacks supply lines; project planned for new pipelines, treatment plants

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Tangail municipality does not have adequate water supply lines compared to the demand of its customers, leaving a large number of residents deprived of civic amenities.

The municipality currently has three elevated reservoirs and four treatment plants. Of these, a high reservoir and two treatment plants are in the College Para area, a high reservoir in the Bagan Bari area, a high reservoir and a treatment plant in the Sabalia area, and another treatment plant in the Kagmari area. There is also a water tank adjacent to the Zila Sadar field.

Out of the municipality's 18 wards, wards 2, 4, 8, 9 and 10 have no water supply lines. Partial areas of wards 1, 3, 5, 7, 12, 15 and 17 are covered, while wards 6, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 18 have supply lines but with very low water pressure.

According to AHM Jahangir Alam Khan, assistant engineer of the city's water supply department, the number of registered customer connections is 8,176, but only 4,500 are operational. The monthly bill is Tk 250 for a 0.5-inch diameter connection, Tk 600 for 0.75-inch, Tk 1,600 for 1-inch, Tk 3,600 for 1.5-inch and Tk 7,200 for 2-inch connections, he said.

The water supply centre has 17 permanent employees and 33 daily-basis workers. A demand and collection report for June shows that the daily demand for water is 25 million litres, while the daily supply stands at 9.3 million litres, leaving

a shortage of 15.7 million litres.

"To supply water according to demand, high reservoirs and treatment plants will have to be increased," he said.

Residents complain that the crisis has left them in severe difficulty.

Raham Ali of West Akur Takur Para in Ward 3 said he has had no water from his supply line for over a year, yet bills continue to arrive.

Md Rubel Miah of Purba Adalat Para said water does not flow properly, and what little comes is dirty and smelly, forcing him to shut off the connection.

Raihan Miah of Akur Takur Para said installing deep tube wells

is too expensive for most families. "We are interested in taking supply water as the water from deep tube wells is purified in the high reservoir of the municipality and then supplied, but there is not enough supply from the municipality," he said.

Contacted, Municipality Administrator Md Shihab Raihan said, "After taking charge here, I realised that despite the demand for water in various areas, there is no water supply system from the municipality."

"To this end, I have contacted the higher authorities of the government and the Inclusive Sanitation Project. A project will start by the end of this year. It will build 20 kilometres of water pipelines in Tangail town and four more water treatment plants. I hope that when this project is fully implemented, the town residents will no longer have this water problem," he added.

Water gone, wounds

FROM PAGE 3

improved, with water flowing below the danger mark since yesterday. However, erosion may occur as waters recede," said Shunil Kumar, executive engineer of the board in Lalmonirhat.

For many farmers, however, recovery seems uncertain.

"One of my goats and several ducks and chickens were washed away. I am now struggling to feed three cows and six goats, as all the grass in nearby fields has died," said Soleman Ali, 60, of Char Ichli village in Rangpur's Gangachara upazila.

In Lalmonirhat's Hatibandha upazila, 65-year-old Sukchan Bewa said her house was left in ruins.

"The fence and door of my house were swept away, and a pit has formed in my yard. I don't have the money to repair my home. Even though the floodwater is gone, my suffering hasn't ended," she said.

Others pointed to mixed impacts on cropland.

Abdar Ali, 65, of Gangachara upazila, said five bighas of Aman paddy survived but his vegetable

fields were destroyed.

"Floodwaters have receded from my homestead, but surrounding fields are still submerged, leaving no fodder for livestock," he added.

Farmers in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari and Sadar upazilas also reported both losses and gains.

While sand rendered some land infertile, new silt layers were seen as a blessing for future harvests. "Out of my nine bighas, one is buried under sand, but four have new silt deposits that will give bumper crops. Without floods, silt never comes to our riverbank lands," said Mobarok Ali, 68, from Gobardhan village.

The mixed picture was echoed by others also.

In Nageshwari upazila of Kurigram, farmer Mahesh Chandra Das said, "Six bighas of Aman remained under water for three days but survived. Half of my vegetables were destroyed. Still, the silt deposition will ensure a good yield this year." While the waters may have gone, the struggle for recovery in northern districts has only just begun.



CHUNARUGHAT IN HABIGANJ

Unregulated sand lifting threatens Deochara bridge

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Unregulated and illegal sand extraction beneath the Deochara Bridge in Chunarughat upazila of Habiganj has put the vital infrastructure at serious risk, raising fears among locals that a collapse may be imminent.

The bridge, located in Daragaon village under Satiajuri Union, serves as a key link on the Sribari road, a major route for transporting agricultural produce.

Residents allege that a group of local sand traders has been using dredger machines under the cover of darkness to extract sand directly beneath the bridge without any official permission.

Despite several drives by the administration, the illegal activity continues. A deep cavity has already formed beside the bridge due to relentless dredging, weakening its foundation.

Locals said the bridge visibly shakes when water flows beneath it, and the surface has begun to sink.

"If this continues, the bridge might collapse any time," said Noor Uddin Sumon, a journalist in the area.

He said that unless the illegal dredging is halted and those responsible are held accountable, the bridge and the surrounding road network could face irreversible damage.

According to the law, no sand can be extracted within one kilometre on either side of the bridge. But the lessees have violated this condition, lifting sand with dredgers one after another and storing it at the wharf. Overloaded trucks are also transporting sand from the area every day, causing damage to roads and the embankment, he added.

UP Chairman Abdulur Rahman said, "Despite multiple warnings, these illegal miners are not stopping. We urge the administration to take stronger action."

Locals named three individuals – Rahmat Ali, Raham Ali and Rustam Ali – as ringleaders of the sand-extraction syndicate. "I am not involved in sand mining. Some people are using my name to tarnish my reputation," said Rahmat Ali.

Raham and Rustam also denied the allegations.

Chunarughat UNO Mohammad Robin Mia said the administration is actively conducting drives to halt illegal sand extraction.

Sakhawat Hossain passes away

CITY DESK

Sakhawat Hossain, a former marine and mechanical engineer, former engineering manager at ICI Bangladesh Limited, and chief engineer at BIWTC, died on Thursday. He was 87, said a press release.

He left behind his wife, a son, a daughter, and four grandchildren to mourn his death.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held today after the Zohr prayers at Gulshan Azad Mosque in Dhaka, and he will be buried at Mirpur Kalshi graveyard.



Gulshan Central Masjid and Iddgah Society

111, Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan, Dhaka-1212

Tender Notice

Tenders have been invited for Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 1000 KVA Substation Equipment for Gulshan Central Masjid and Iddgah Society.

Last Date & Time for Submission of Tender: 30.08.2025, Time 04.30 PM & Tender Opening: 01.09.2025, Time 07.30 PM. For the description of items, technical specifications, drawings and relevant documents please visit our website: www.gcmisbd.org/e-tendernotice/

Or <https://listwr.com/SNIKYT/> Participants of the tender are requested to submit their tender proposals to The Secretary General, Gulshan Central Masjid & Iddgah Society, 111 Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan, Dhaka. Email: gcmisbd@gmail.com. Contact person: Abu Sayed, Cell: 01712588175.

NB: At the time of submission of Tender 2% earnest money by Pay Order in the name of 'Gulshan Central Masjid & Iddgah Society' must be deposited and 10% performance guarantee of the total tender value must be submitted before the work order. The deposited earnest money will be reimbursed after 6 (six) months subject to performance.

The purchaser reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings.



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২০২৬ সালের ক্যালেন্ডার ও ডায়েরি মুদ্রণের জন্য

দরপত্র আহ্বান

বাংলাদেশের বৃহত্তম বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংক পূবালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি. প্রথম শ্রেণির মুদ্রণকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহের কাছ থেকে সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহ্বান করছে, যারা বীচের 'ক্রম ০১' বা 'ক্রম ০২' এর যে কোনো একটি অথবা উভয়টির জন্য দর জমা দিতে পারবেন। তবে শর্ত অনুসারে উল্লেখিত কাজের দরপত্র পৃথক খামে জমা দিতে হবে। কাজের বিবরণঃ

১. ক) ২০২৬ সালের দেয়াল ক্যালেন্ডার ও খাম মুদ্রণ, বাঁধাই ও সরবরাহ।

খ) ২০২৬ সালের ডেস্ক ক্যালেন্ডার (খামসহ) মুদ্রণ, বাঁধাই ও সরবরাহ।

২. ২০২৬ সালের ডায়েরি (বক্সসহ) মুদ্রণ, বাঁধাই ও সরবরাহ।

মুদ্রণ ও সরবরাহ সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্য সম্বলিত সিডিউল ১৭ আগস্ট ২০২৫ তারিখ হতে ২৮ আগস্ট ২০২৫ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে ব্যাংকের জনসংযোগ সেল (প্রধান কার্যালয়, ১৩তম তলা) থেকে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। আগামী ৩১ আগস্ট ২০২৫ তারিখ রবিবার সকাল ১১.০০ টার মধ্যে ব্যাংকের প্রধান কার্যালয়ের সংস্থাপন ও সাধারণ সেবা বিভাগে (১৩তম তলা) রক্ষিত টেন্ডার ব্যাগে দরপত্র জমা দিতে হবে এবং ঐদিনই সকাল ১১.৩০ মিনিটে উপস্থিত দরপত্র দাতাদের সামনে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্র খোলা হবে।

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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Superintendent

250 Bedded District Sadar Hospital, Sherpur

sherpur@hospi.dghs.gov.bd

Ref No. DHS/DSL/2025-26/2673

Date: 14/08/2025

e-Tender Notice

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). For more details, please contact support desk contact numbers. e-Tender are invited in e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Dr Md. Selim Miah, Superintendent, 250 Bedded District Sadar Hospital, Sherpur for the procurement of,

Tender Id	Name of goods	Tender/proposal publication date & time	Tender/proposal last selling date & time	Tender/proposal closing/opening date & time
1136639	Procurement of Other Stationary for the F.Y 2025-2026 at 250 Bedded District Sadar Hospital, Sherpur.	17-Aug-2025 12:00	31-Aug-2025 16:00	01-Sep-2025 12:00
1136640	Procurement of Cleaning & Others (Laundry Items) for the F.Y 2025-2026 at 250 Bedded District Sadar Hospital, Sherpur.	17-Aug-2025 12:00	31-Aug-2025 16:00	01-Sep-2025 12:00
1136641	Procurement of Diet for the F.Y 2025-2026 at 250 Bedded District Sadar Hospital, Sherpur.	17-Aug-2025 12:00	31-Aug-2025 16:00	01-Sep-2025 12:00

e-Tender details can be downloaded on e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for pursuer.

e-Tender will be accepted only as stated in above list; accepted tenders will be opened online immediate as stated in above list.

Dr. Md. Selim Mah

Superintendent

250 Bedded District Sadar Hospital
Sherpur

GD-1806



Trump, not Putin, budes

AFP, Anchorage

Donald Trump wanted to go bold – a high-pomp, high-stakes summit with Vladimir Putin to test whether the Russian leader would compromise on the Ukraine war.

In the end, it looks like it was Trump, not Putin, who budged.

Putin, visibly delighted as he set foot in the West for the first time since ordering the 2022 invasion, made no apparent concession at the talks at an Alaska air base.

In a brief joint media appearance with Trump, who unusually took no questions, Putin again spoke of addressing the “root causes” of the Ukraine war and warned Kyiv and Europeans against disrupting “emerging progress” with the United States, the top defender of Ukraine under Trump’s predecessor Joe Biden.

Trump, who bills himself as a master negotiator, acknowledged there was “no deal” but said there were “very few” areas of disagreement, although he was vague on what they were.

But posting hours later on his Truth Social account, Trump said he wanted Russia and Ukraine to “go directly to a peace agreement, which would end the war” and not a ceasefire.

Trump’s own administration had been pushing a ceasefire for months, with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky signing on after intense pressure from Trump. Putin had repeatedly rejected truce offers and kept up attacks on Ukraine, seeking to maximise battlefield advantage.

Trump had vowed to be firm with Putin after wide criticism of the US president’s cowed appearance before him at a 2018

summit in Helsinki.

But Putin again found ways to flatter and trigger Trump, who, in his second term, constantly speaks unprompted about his many grievances.

Putin told Trump before the cameras that there would have been no war – which Putin himself launched – if Trump were president in 2022 rather than Biden, a frequent Trump talking point.



Trump bemoaned the effect on ties with Putin of what he again called the “hoax” of the findings by US intelligence that Russia meddled in the 2016 election to help him.

In an interview with Fox News host Sean Hannity after the summit, Trump said that “one of the most interesting things” Putin told him was about... the US voting system.

Trump said approvingly that Putin – who has held power in Russia since 2000 and was declared the winner of elections last year with 88 percent of the vote – told him of the risks of mail-in ballots and said of Trump’s 2020 loss to Biden, “You won that election by so much.”

US election authorities and experts have found no evidence of wide-scale fraud from

mail-in ballots in the 2020 election, which Trump, uniquely in US history, refused to concede.

Trump’s Democratic rivals voiced outrage that the summit secured no breakthrough and said it only served to normalise Putin, who faces an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court.

“By quite literally rolling out the red carpet, Trump has legitimised Russia’s aggression and whitewashed Putin’s war crimes. It’s shameful,” said Gregory Meeks, the top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Experts said it was too early to write off the summit completely, as much is not known about what was discussed behind closed doors. Trump will meet Zelensky on Monday at the White House.

Jennifer Kavanagh, director of military analysis at Defense Priorities, which backs US restraint, said that Trump’s critics have been proven wrong in saying he would “give Ukraine to Putin or force Kyiv to accept surrender.”

“His focus has been and remains getting Putin to the negotiating table. Mr Trump deserves credit rather than condemnation for his efforts so far,” she said.

But Kristine Berzina, a senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund, said an initial read was that “Putin scored a victory by showing up, and Trump’s limited words and tense demeanor left Putin to control the narrative.”

“For a man so attached to showmanship, Trump unusually allowed Putin to be the star of what should have been the Trump show,” she said.

Trump says Xi won’t invade Taiwan while he is in office

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump said on Friday that Chinese President Xi Jinping told him China would not invade Taiwan while Trump is in office.

Trump made the comments in an interview with Fox News, ahead of talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin over Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

“I will tell you, you know, you have a very similar thing with President Xi of China and Taiwan, but I don’t believe there’s any way it’s going to happen as long as I’m here. We’ll see,” Trump said during an interview on Fox News’ “Special Report.”

“He told me, ‘I will never do it as long as you’re president.’ President Xi told me that, and I said, ‘Well, I appreciate that,’ but he also said, ‘But I am very patient, and China is very patient.’” Trump said.

Trump and Xi held their first confirmed call of Trump’s second presidential term in June. Trump also said in April that Xi had called him but did not specify when that call took place.

China views Taiwan as its own territory and has vowed to “reunify” with the democratic and separately governed island, by force if necessary. Taiwan strongly objects to China’s sovereignty claims.

Although Washington is Taiwan’s main arms supplier and international backer, the US – like most countries – has no formal diplomatic ties with the island.

While Taiwan’s government has yet to respond to Trump’s remarks, a senior lawmaker from the ruling Democratic Progressive Party said that Taiwan was grateful for support from “our major ally”.



Pakistan floods toll rises to 340

AFP, Peshawar

Rescuers were struggling to retrieve bodies from debris after flash floods triggered by heavy monsoon rains across northern Pakistan killed at least 344 people in the past 48 hours, authorities said yesterday.

The majority of deaths, 328, were reported in mountainous Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority said.

Most were killed in flash floods and collapsing houses, while at least 120 others were injured.

The provincial government has declared the severely affected mountainous districts of Buner, Bajaur, Swat, Shangla, Mansehra and Battagram as disaster-hit areas.

The meteorological department has issued a heavy rain alert for Pakistan’s northwest, urging people to take “precautionary measures”.

The monsoon season brings South Asia about three-quarters of its annual rainfall, vital for agriculture and food security, but it also brings destruction. Landslides and flash floods are common during the season, which usually begins in June and eases by the end of September.

‘Netanyahu has become a ‘problem’

AFP, Copenhagen

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen yesterday said that Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu has become a “problem”, adding she would try to put pressure on Israel over the Gaza war as her country currently holds the EU presidency.

“Netanyahu is now a problem in himself,” Frederiksen said in an interview with the Jyllands-Posten daily, adding that the Israeli government was going “too far.”

The centre right leader slammed the “absolutely appalling and catastrophic” humanitarian situation in Gaza.

“We are one of the countries that wants to increase pressure on Israel, but we have not yet obtained the support of EU members,” she said.

Frederiksen added that she wanted to consider “political pressure, sanctions, whether against settlers, ministers, or even Israel as a whole,” referring to trade or research sanctions.

China’s Wang to visit India on Monday

AFP, Beijing

China’s top diplomat will visit India next week for talks about their shared boundary, Beijing’s foreign ministry said yesterday, as the two countries consider resuming border trade after a five-year halt.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi will visit India on Delhi’s invitation from Monday until Wednesday for “the 24th special representatives meeting on the China-India border issue”, a spokesperson said in a statement.

Past trade between the neighbours across icy, high-altitude Himalayan border passes was usually small in volume, but any resumption is significant for its symbolism.

It stopped following a deadly 2020 clash between border troops.



National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel conduct a search and rescue operation at the site of a flash flood at a village in the Kishtwar district of India’s Jammu and Kashmir yesterday. The latest deadly flood crashed through a Himalayan village, killing at least 60 and washing away dozens more.

PHOTO: AFP

Indian media reported this week that Wang was expected to hold talks in New Delhi on Monday.

He will meet Indian national security adviser Ajit Doval, New Delhi’s foreign ministry confirmed in a statement yesterday. Wang will also hold talks with his Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, who visited Beijing in July, the statement said.

The two major economic powers have long competed for strategic influence across South Asia.

However, they have moved to mend ties after being caught up in global trade and geopolitical turbulence triggered by US President Donald Trump’s tariff blitz.

Chinese and Indian officials have said in recent weeks that the two countries were discussing the resumption of border trade.

BUYING RUSSIAN OIL No imminent plans to penalise China: Trump

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump said on Friday he did not immediately need to consider retaliatory tariffs on countries such as China for buying Russian oil, but might have to “in two or three weeks.”

Trump has threatened sanctions on Moscow and secondary sanctions on countries that buy its oil if no moves are made to end the war in Ukraine. China and India are the top two buyers of Russian oil.

The president last week imposed an additional 25% tariff on Indian goods, citing its continued imports of Russian oil.

In his executive order, Trump explained that Russia’s continued

military actions in Ukraine constituted a “national emergency” and it was therefore “necessary and appropriate” to place heightened tariffs on India, a major consumer of its petroleum products.

However, Trump has not taken similar action against China.

He was asked by Fox News’ Sean Hannity if he was now considering such action against Beijing after he and Russian President Vladimir Putin failed to produce an agreement to resolve or pause Moscow’s war in Ukraine.

“Well, because of what happened today, I think I don’t have to think about that,” Trump said after his summit with Putin in Alaska.

“Now, I may have to think about it in two weeks or three weeks or something, but we don’t have to think about that right now. I think, you know, the meeting went very well.”

Chinese President Xi Jinping’s slowing economy will suffer if Trump follows through on a promise to ramp up Russia-related sanctions and tariffs.

Xi and Trump are working on a trade deal that could lower tensions – and import taxes – between the world’s two biggest economies. But China could be the biggest remaining target, outside of Russia, if Trump ramps up punitive measures.

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Empower the police, end mob rule

Govt, political parties must collaborate to restore law and order

The frightening number of incidents of mob violence resulting in deaths or critical injuries highlights how fragile public safety has become. Crime in general has continued to rise despite various efforts. According to a *Prothom Alo* report, crimes such as murder, robbery, abduction, and rape have increased since last year, while mob violence is proving the most difficult to control. Unfortunately, despite the passing of a year since the July uprising, police morale still remains low, making the force largely ineffective in tackling crime, particularly mob violence.

The recent incidents of two innocent men being beaten to death in Rangpur by a mob, and a journalist viciously attacked by extortionists in broad daylight, demonstrate how the police, despite being present on the ground, often lack the confidence to take action. Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) has recorded 111 deaths from mob violence between January this year and August 10. Meanwhile, according to police sources, in the past year there have been 560 cases in which police personnel were attacked or beaten. From last September to this February, around 225 cases were recorded in which mobs attacked police, as per *Prothom Alo*.

The picture that emerges from this is clear: police are still feeling unempowered while criminals and mobs continue feeling invincible. In some cases, mob violence occurs at the instigation of politically connected individuals or those claiming to be “pro-uprising” actors. Given the police’s horrific role during the July uprising and the subsequent violent backlash after August 5, 2024, it is unsurprising that officers are hesitant or afraid to take forceful action, particularly when a mob is involved.

The government thus faces an enormous challenge. It must empower the police by significantly increasing recruitment and training, ensure competent replacements for senior officers who have been removed or are absent, and issue firm directives regarding the maintenance of law and order. The government can also establish specially trained, well-equipped units to prevent mob violence, capable of rapid deployment to volatile areas and trained in crowd control and de-escalation. Community policing can be introduced or strengthened to rebuild trust between the public and the police. However, these measures will be effective only if political parties proactively support the police when crimes are committed by individuals under their patronage. Political parties must do more—much more—than expel a member accused of a crime, as they do now.

The home ministry should also ensure that each case of mob violence is properly investigated, with as many perpetrators as possible arrested and punished. At the same time, the government can launch a coordinated awareness campaign to educate citizens that mob justice is illegal and punishable, while simultaneously building trust in the justice system through proper prosecutions and convictions for crimes. In the days leading up to the election, the government, political parties, and the public all must work together to prevent mob violence.

Chalan Beel must not be harmed

Environmental assessment key before any approval of Rabindra University project

With the permanent campus project of Rabindra University in Sirajganj set to be placed for approval at this week’s Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) meeting, environmentalists have voiced concerns over the proposed site at Chalan Beel, which spans 1,000 square kilometres across 41 upazilas in six districts. They warn that constructing the campus there will damage the beel’s aquatic ecosystem and obstruct natural water flow, potentially increasing waterlogging and flooding in surrounding areas. The Chalan Beel Rokkha Andolon has already urged the planning ministry to relocate the proposed site from Buripothajia in Shahjadpur. However, university teachers and students say these concerns are “unfounded”, arguing that the chosen site lies far off the centre of the beel. The question is: before selecting the site, did the authorities conduct any environmental impact assessment?

Rabindra University was established in 2016 with classes beginning in April 2018. For the past seven years, however, academic and administrative activities have been conducted in eight rented buildings scattered across Shahjadpur municipality. To meet students’ long-standing demand for a permanent campus with improved facilities, 100 acres of land were designated for the university in a part of Chalan Beel at Buripothajia, about 11 kilometres from Shahjadpur town. Over the past week, students staged several road blockades pushing for the project’s approval.

However, according to a government report, the proposed site remains submerged under water for four months of the year. To build the campus, the area will need to be filled to a height of 9 to 14 metres. Additionally, a road and bridge will be required for access to the campus, along with an embankment. Already, the filling of four acres of the designated 100 acres has begun obstructing the Baral River’s water flow. If the remaining 96 acres are filled, environmentalists claim, water flow in Chalan Beel and Baral River will be severely affected during monsoon while the biodiversity will also suffer. The VC of Rabindra University, however, claims that the proposed site is not classified as beel land, and that the Department of Environment cleared it back in 2019.

These contradictory statements from university authorities and environmentalists create confusion about the actual situation on the ground. We, therefore, urge the government to conduct a proper environmental impact assessment before approving the project. If needed, the campus can be built elsewhere, such as in the Sirajganj Economic Zone, as many have suggested. While Rabindra University definitely needs a permanent campus, it must not be built at the cost of damaging the environmentally crucial Chalan Beel.

Can monetary policy rescue the economy?



OPEN SKY

Dr Birupaksha Paul
is a professor of economics at the State University of New York at Cortland, USA.

BIRUPAKSHA PAUL

bank. Still, BB has miles to go before it can really celebrate its success.

Given an import bill of around \$6 billion per month, the current reserves can cover about four months of imports—an inadequate buffer, especially when compared with some comparable economies, given heightened geopolitical tensions surrounding Bangladesh. India’s economy is usually eight to ten times larger than Bangladesh’s, but its current reserves are around 25 times

returns, straining our reserves again. So, BB cannot feel complacent until reserves hit around \$40 billion, which would still be less than the highest level of reserves held in August 2021.

The central bank’s dual mandate is to maximise employment or growth after maintaining a tolerable level of inflation, which seems to be around four percent for a developing economy. Given the interim government’s weakness in handling mob violence and political uncertainty surrounding the election, most investors remain conservative or nervous about what happens next. Domestic private credit growth slowed to as low as 6.5 percent in June 2025—the lowest in two decades. BB aims to achieve private credit growth of 7.2 percent by December 2025 and 8 percent by June 2026. But that seems inadequate to support the government’s target of 5.5 percent GDP growth in FY2026, which

show any credible improvement in this regard.

BB’s policy objective is to tame inflation by reducing credit growth, a task that requires raising the policy rate substantially. But unchecked credit expansion in the public sector may fuel inflation again, jeopardising the policy objective of BB. If inflation is not contained, it could prompt further depreciation of the exchange rate and consequently another round of imported inflation. This raises the question of where BB is compromising its intent to reduce inflation through its own actions.

Average inflation was 9.9 percent in July last year. It peaked at 10.34 percent in January 2025 and then fell to 9.8 percent in July 2025. This decrease, despite being desirable, is not quite encouraging. Rather, it suggests a state of inflation persistence, requiring an investigation into whether monetary



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

greater. Of course, countries like China and India maintain high reserve levels because of their strategic positions. Bangladesh, staying in between these two global giants, must insulate itself by maintaining a safe level of reserves—which may be eight months’ imports, as is the global average.

India’s import cover was equivalent to 11 months in May last year, while China’s was as high as 15 months last July. Bangladesh’s monthly import bill of around \$6 billion is currently much lower due to a sharp 25 percent decline in capital machinery imports. Hence, the monthly import bill could be around \$8 billion once normalcy

BB also intends to comply with.

Public sector credit growth remained high at 13.5 percent in June 2025—twice the rate of private sector credit growth—suggesting that the government is again encroaching on monetary space that private investors could otherwise utilise. Growth is targeted to reach even higher, at 20.4 percent in December and 18.1 percent in June 2026, reflecting fiscal incapacity and growing inefficiency of the government in collecting revenue. Fiscal trespassing into the banking space had been a persistent concern during the Awami League regime, and the current monetary policy does not

policy alone can weaken inflation. Probably not.

Additionally, institutional factors such as syndication, extortion, threats, and business insecurity have formed hidden rigidities that prevent inflation from falling. Monetary policy cannot handle these institutional and political factors, which are contributing to the sustenance of high inflation, debilitating investment spirits, low revenue, and rising unemployment. Thus, the effectiveness of monetary policy remains constrained despite the pressing need for low inflation, respectable GDP growth, and increased job opportunities.

There is no automatic demographic dividend



Abu Afsarul Haider
is an entrepreneur. He can be reached at
afsarulhaider@gmail.com.

ABU AFSARUL HAIDER

Bangladesh’s population has reached 17.57 crore, according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), making it the eighth most populous country in the world. With an annual growth rate of around 1.22 percent, approximately 21 lakh people are being added each year. While some see this huge population as a potential economic strength, others view it as a growing burden. To put it differently, is Bangladesh’s rising population a challenge or an opportunity for sustainable development? To answer this, we need to examine key aspects of the nation’s demographic and socio-economic realities.

Turning the population into an asset requires a strong focus on improving education and skill development to create a more capable and innovative workforce. It also demands greater investment in healthcare, human development, and policies that promote economic opportunities and social inclusion. Unfortunately, in our so-called “role model” approach to development, education and healthcare—two of the most vital pillars for building human resources—have been largely neglected. Bangladesh spends only around two percent of its GDP on education, the lowest among South Asian countries. As a result, nearly 40 percent of adults in Bangladesh remain illiterate, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics’ Literacy Assessment Survey 2023. The survey shows that 60.77 percent of people aged 15 and above are

considered literate, with literacy rates of 62.84 percent for males and 58.24 percent for females.

Although Bangladesh has recorded steady GDP growth of over six percent annually over the past decade, this economic growth has not created enough decent, well-paying jobs for its growing young population. Official data shows that more than seven crore people are currently employed in the country, but about 85 percent of them are engaged in the informal sector—working as rickshaw-pullers, street vendors, day labourers, or in farming, transport, and construction. Such jobs lack job security, fair wages, and social protection. Presently, around 27.4 lakh people are officially unemployed, with the unemployment rate estimated at 4.63 percent. However, experts believe the real figure is considerably higher. The data also reveals that nearly 68 lakh people are underemployed or underutilised, including more than 13 lakh graduates who remain unable to find suitable employment matching their qualifications. This growing mismatch between education and job opportunities remains a major challenge for sustainable development.

The link between population health and economic progress is well established. Without a healthy population, a healthy economy is impossible. Currently, the country invests only 0.7 percent of GDP and two percent of the national budget in health. In the 2024 Global Hunger Index (GHI), Bangladesh ranked 84th

out of 127 countries. The GHI measures hunger and malnutrition using four key indicators: undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting, and child mortality. According to the report, around 12 percent of Bangladesh’s population is undernourished, 23.6 percent of children under five are stunted, 11 percent are underweight, and 2.9 percent die before reaching their fifth birthday. Bangladesh is also falling behind in ensuring proper nutrition for infants and young children, with high rates of micronutrient deficiencies, especially vitamin A, iron, iodine, and zinc. A UNICEF report titled “Child Food Poverty: Nutrition Deprivation in Early Childhood” shows that two in every three children under five in Bangladesh suffer from child food poverty.

Rapid population growth is also reducing the availability of capital per person and limiting access to essential services such as food, water, housing, sanitation, healthcare, education, and employment. This, in turn, fuels poverty, inequality, crime, and environmental damage. Bangladesh is already one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with nearly 1,300 people living per square kilometre. This intense demographic pressure is straining its natural resources, including forests, rivers, and agricultural land. Each year, the country loses a significant amount of farmland, driven not only by population growth but also by rapid industrialisation, unplanned urbanisation, and rural settlement. According to the Soil Resource Development Institute (SRDI), nearly 69,000 hectares of farmland are disappearing annually, threatening future food security.

The environmental consequences of this are far-reaching. Several studies have shown that growing population, coupled with poor governance and flawed urban planning, is accelerating the degradation of rivers, wetlands, and forests. A recent report by the National River Conservation Commission

revealed that of the 770 rivers that once flowed across the country, only 405 remain, with over 100 having vanished since independence. Many housing projects, both government and private, have been built on wetlands. As a result, wetland areas have been shrinking, particularly in and around Dhaka. This has led to serious environmental problems.

According to a report by this daily, since 2010, Dhaka has lost approximately 43,200 acres of wetlands out of a total of 187,958 acres. This means that around 22 percent of the city’s wetlands have vanished in just over a decade. Deforestation has also reached alarming levels, with an estimated 246,000 hectares of forest lost between 2001 and 2023, according to Global Forest Watch.

To end on a slightly positive note, Bangladesh’s growing population presents both a challenge and an opportunity. At present, around two-thirds of the population—nearly 11.5 crore people—are of working age, between 15 and 64 years. Some policymakers describe this large working-age population as a “demographic dividend.” However, the term is often misunderstood, with many assuming its benefits will come automatically. That is far from reality. Unlocking the true potential of this demographic advantage depends entirely on strategic investments in education, skills development, healthcare, and decent job creation. Without these critical measures, the growing number of unemployed and underemployed youth will only fuel social frustration, inequality, and unrest. The sooner we recognise this and take effective action, the greater the chances of transforming our population burden into an opportunity—not only for economic growth but also for social stability and environmental sustainability. The future depends on the choices we make today.

July Declaration and the challenge of historical reckoning



Psymhe Wadud
teaches law at the University of Dhaka, and is in charge of Law & Our Rights at The Daily Star.

PSYMHE WADUD

It has been a year since the student-led mass uprising, and now there is a document—the July Declaration—to inscribe in history the experiences of July-August 2024. The relevant stakeholders deserve appreciation for finalising the document, particularly for how it traverses across times and remains grounded in the ideals of the rule of law, human rights, and non-discrimination. In a way, the document was meant to reckon with the past and pave the way for the future. However, there is much to discuss and debate about how far the declaration has been successful on both counts.

The declaration notes that the people of Bangladesh express the intention “to establish a democratic state [...] through promised constitutional reforms brought about in the national parliament constituted through free and fair elections to be held at a reasonable time” (Para 25). It further says that “...the people of Bangladesh express their desire that the student-mass uprising of 2024 will get proper state and constitutional recognition and that the July Declaration will feature in the schedule of the reformed constitution as framed by the government formed through the next national election” (Para 27).

One may fail to recognise how the expression of people’s desire could, in fact, be encapsulated, or whether consensus-building only among the political parties truly sufficed in gleaning the true expression of people’s desire. While I, too, am

The conflation of legal terminologies, potential mislabelling of atrocities, and the general lack of nuance in this regard does a disservice, among others, to the 1971 victims of various acts of genocide, including mass rapes and forced impregnation. All those crimes were perpetrated as *actus reus* of the genocide carried out by the Pakistan Army and their native collaborators.



‘Drafters of July Declaration were expected not to modulate but to neutrally explain the historical subtleties and contingencies that make up our lived political reality.’
ILLUSTRATION: ANWAR SOHEL

interested in responses to these questions, the two assertions above seem to have at least dispelled some long-standing confusion regarding the process of constitutional reform. As it transpires, the national election will precede the “promised” constitutional reform, thereby deferring to the wisdom of an elected parliament. In this context, in terms of interpreting the future, the declaration has been somewhat useful.

In terms of reckoning with the past, however, it seems to have been amiss, and confuses more than it illuminates. Among others, illustrative is the contention that “due to the constitution-making procedure in 1972, the constitution’s structural weakness [...], the post-liberation Awami

League government failed to realise the mass aspirations of the Liberation War [...]” (Para 3). This assertion is speculative and, in one way or another, sits uneasily with the Fourth Amendment, which whittled down liberal democracy by bringing in one-party rule and also the militarised democratic deficit between 1975 and 1990. In fact, this assertion indemnifies the political actors and parties by unduly blaming an inanimate constitution.

More importantly, its engagement with legal terminologies obscures significant historical contingencies and offsets political realities. Notably, even the most intense (and otherwise important) critiques appreciated the declaration for “it places 1971 in its rightful position in the nation’s history and states that the fight was for a liberal democratic state” (as journalist David Bergman put it). I, however, think substantive thought and effort should have been put into how 1971 was described, particularly in terms of the terminologies used.

The declaration mentions the “*nirbichar gonohotya*” committed in 1971 in Para 1. With reference to crimes committed by the Awami League regime, it refers to the term “*gonohotya*” again in Para 23. Notably, the UN fact-finding report described the crimes committed by the regime in July-August 2024 as possible crimes against humanity. In a similar vein, the International Crimes Tribunal prosecutor brought charges of

crimes and atrocities either through the use of parenthetical clarification or simply by employing appropriate legal terminology.

The use of the word “*nirbichar*”, or “indiscriminate”, to qualify the 1971 *gonohotya* (Para 1 of the declaration) further adds to the confusion. While the word “indiscriminate” could be a fair and suitable qualifier in the context of mass killing, in my opinion, it does not qualify a genocide as such. For a document that arguably seeks to carry the history of the nation forward, the drafters of the declaration should have been mindful of this valuable nuance as well.

The conflation of legal terminologies, potential mislabelling of atrocities, and the general lack of nuance in this regard does a disservice, among others, to the 1971 victims of various acts of genocide, including mass rapes and forced impregnation. All those crimes were perpetrated as *actus reus* of the genocide carried out by the Pakistan Army and their native collaborators. Notably, in this context, Bangladesh’s Proclamation of Independence had referred to the “numerous acts of genocide” and “unprecedented tortures” committed by the Pakistani authorities. Perhaps the drafters of the July Declaration should have perused the Proclamation, at least while crafting its first paragraph.

Bangladesh has not yet been able to secure international recognition of the 1971 *gonohotya* (not in the sense of mass killing, but as genocide). For this, successive governments are to blame, and so are the powers at the helm of world politics. I believe this is one of the reasons why people, particularly the powerful, sometimes go on to conveniently devalue our Liberation War. Similarly, there already are, and will continue to be, factions within us who would choose to unsee or deregister July-August 2024. State-sanctioned atrocities perpetrated in July-August last year were outrageous, among other reasons, because our very statehood emerged from the spiral wounds of the 1971 genocide and war crimes. Indeed, the July Declaration should have seized the opportunity to shed the right light on the 1971 genocide, play its part in the fight for recognition, and pave the way for a political future that mindfully reckons with past atrocities, including those of July-August 2024.

The July Declaration was expected to historicise the past, enact the present, and interpret the future—all with linguistic prowess. Drafters were expected not to modulate but to neutrally explain the historical subtleties and contingencies that make up our lived political reality. Indeed, I expected significantly more from the document given its overarching context and the bloodied histories we are steeped in.

Trump’s tariff tsunami drowns global order



Hussain A Samad
is a development researcher at the World Bank in Washington, DC. He can be reached at hsamad2000@yahoo.com.

HUSSAIN A SAMAD

For Indian exporters, the news from Washington last week felt less like a trade policy announcement and more like a declaration of economic warfare. A staggering 50 percent tariff has been imposed on Indian goods, a move justified by the White House as a response to India’s ongoing trade with Russia. The irony, however, is as steep as the tariff itself: the United States, the very nation wielding this economic hammer, continues its own commerce with Moscow, particularly in strategic materials.

This action against India is not an isolated incident but the latest and most jarring act in a global drama where the rules of trade have been systematically dismantled. What began as an election pledge to correct trade imbalances has spiralled into a chaotic, unilateral strategy, culminating in a move that has sent shockwaves from New Delhi across the world. The shock in diplomatic circles is tempered only by a grim sense of familiarity; this is the playbook of US President Donald Trump, where trade law has become a weapon for political whim.

The pattern is undeniable. The world has watched as tariff threats were reportedly levelled against Canada not for unfair trade, but for its diplomatic decision to recognise Palestinian statehood—an action that drew private condemnation from other G7 allies concerned about the precedent. Brazil was similarly threatened, not over commerce, but allegedly for pursuing the domestic prosecution of Brazil’s former President Jair Bolsonaro, a political ally of the White House—a move that legal scholars decried as a flagrant attempt to interfere with the sovereign judicial process of another nation. These are not trade disputes; they are raw geopolitical power plays, using the language of economics as a thin veil to cloak a bare-

knuckled approach to international relations. At the heart of this strategy is the manipulation of US law. The administration’s legal arsenal consists of decades-old statutes, now being stretched to breaking point. Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, born out of Cold War fears of being unable to produce tanks and ships, was designed to safeguard national security by protecting critical defence industries. Today, its definition has been contorted to label economic competition from staunch allies in the automotive and steel industries as a “threat.”

Similarly, Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 was created during an era when the US was grappling with the rise of Japan and sought tools to combat specific unfair practices, such as intellectual property theft or closed markets. It has since been

President Trump’s ultimate goal appears to be a world remade to his transactional specifications—using economic force to bend nations to his will, disrupting existing alliances to forge new, more favourable deals. But can this truly be achieved? The global economy is not a series of bilateral deals to be won or lost; it is a complex, interconnected ecosystem. Disrupting it unilaterally has, so far, sown more chaos than it has reaped clear victories, creating inflationary pressures at home and resentment abroad.

transformed from a scalpel for targeted disputes into a sledgehammer, used to launch a full-scale trade war with China that has cost consumers and producers billions. Finally, the powerful International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) of 1977, a tool designed to sanction states like Iran or North Korea, has been invoked to declare a “national emergency” over immigration, turning a humanitarian and logistical issue into a

“victory” more of a public relations achievement than a substantive economic shift.

The consequences of the broader strategy are now a daily reality, rippling across the globe. Businesses, from small suppliers to multinational corporations, face crippling uncertainty, postponing capital investments and hiring plans. A tit-for-tat cycle of retaliation has hurt US farmers, who lost



FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

With the US increasingly willing to use its economic and financial might as a tool of coercion, nations are growing wary of their dependence on the US dollar.

pretext for economic sanctions. The chasm between the original intent of these laws and their current application is vast.

It was not always about such geopolitical chess moves. The original argument, sold to millions of US voters during fiery campaign rallies, was simpler: fix the trade deficit. The theory was that tariffs would act as a protective wall, making foreign goods more expensive and forcing a renaissance of US manufacturing. The renegotiation of NAFTA into the USMCA stands as the primary exhibit for supporters, who argue that the threat of tariffs forced Mexico and Canada into a deal more favourable for US workers. However, many economists argue that the changes were largely cosmetic and that the agreement’s real-world impact has been minimal, making

access to the Chinese market, as much as their foreign counterparts. Most critically, the trust that underpins the global, rules-based trading system—centred around institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO)—is evaporating. The WTO’s appellate body, which acts as a supreme court for trade disputes, has been rendered irrelevant, leaving nations with little recourse beyond direct retaliation.

One long-term consequence, however, could be the accelerated push towards de-dollarisation. With the US increasingly willing to use its economic and financial might as a tool of coercion, nations are growing wary of their dependence on the US dollar. This “weaponisation of the dollar” makes holding dollar reserves or relying on

the US-centric financial system significantly risky for any country that might find itself at odds with US foreign policy. To insulate themselves from this vulnerability, countries from China and Russia to Brazil and other BRICS nations are actively building parallel systems for trade settlement, such as yuan-ruble or rupee-ruble mechanisms. This erosion of the dollar’s status as the world’s primary reserve currency could have significant long-term implications for US’s ability to finance its national debt and exert global influence. Moreover, the US domestic economy might also suffer, as the cost of living, especially for low- and middle-income households, may rise.

President Trump’s ultimate goal appears to be a world remade to his transactional specifications—using economic force to bend nations to his will, disrupting existing alliances to forge new, more favourable deals. But can this truly be achieved? The global economy is not a series of bilateral deals to be won or lost; it is a complex, interconnected ecosystem. Disrupting it unilaterally has, so far, sown more chaos than it has reaped clear victories, creating inflationary pressures at home and resentment abroad.

The lessons from this era are being written in real time, in the frantic calculations of businesses and the strained conversations in foreign ministries. We are learning that using economic tools for political ends is a high-risk gamble that can inflict long-term reputational damage, portraying the US not as a reliable partner but as an unpredictable actor. We see that unilateralism has limits and can spur the creation of new trading blocs that actively seek to bypass the US economy and its currency. Most importantly, we are witnessing a direct challenge to the post-World War II liberal order, which, for all its flaws, provided a framework for unprecedented global prosperity.

As India grapples with this latest tariff onslaught, the world watches and asks: is this aggressive posturing a means to a new, more favourable US-led order, or is the chaos itself the end goal? The answer will define the landscape of global commerce for a generation to come, determining whether we move towards a future of managed cooperation or one of fractured, zero-sum competition.

Spotlight on this year's BEST DIRECTOR FOR SERIES



Shihab Shaheen



Anam Biswas



Kazi Asad

PHOTOS:
STAR & COLLECTED

From heartfelt dramas to chilling thrillers, this year's Best Director (Series) nominees at Blender's Choice—The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards 2024 showcase the remarkable range and creativity shaping Bangladeshi streaming content. Each director brings a distinct vision, whether reimagining literature, exploring regional authenticity, or bending genres, to expertly tell stories that echo deeply with audiences and critics alike.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Let us have a look at the nominees this year.

In *Rongila Kitab*, Anam Biswas transforms Kingkor Ahsan's novel of the same name with creative freedom, elevating a subplot into the central story while retaining its emotional essence. His direction blends love, danger, and survival with thorough production and authentic performances from Pori Moni and



Vicky Zahed

Mostafizur Noor Imran. Acclaimed for the show's realism and emotional depth, Biswas definitely deserves the nomination for Best Director (Series) in the popular category.

Kazi Asad's *Adhunik Bangla Hotel* is a three-part anthology blending psychological horror, fantasy, and mythology, with each episode inspired by Shariful Hasan's short stories. Starring Mosharraf Karim in varied roles, the narratives begin with everyday moments around Bangla dishes before spiraling into eerie, supernatural territory. Asad's direction stands out for its atmospheric night shoots, authentic rural settings, and gradual shift from realism to chilling suspense. These qualities have earned him a well deserved nomination.

Mohammad Touqir Islam anchors *Sinpaat* in gritty realism, rooted in

Rajshahi-Pabna culture and featuring non-professional local actors. The narrative emerges from true events—especially those in Shohel Sheikh's life—and unfolds in authentic settings within small towns. The pacing is deliberate, driven by character depth over action. The director's commitment to regional authenticity and character-as-story creates an immersive, atmospheric crime drama. Touqir is a much-deserved nominee.

Shihab Shaheen's *Golam Mamun*



Mohammad Touqir Islam

spins off the popular character from *Buker Moddhye Agun*, unfolding as a tense crime thriller. The director's storytelling is compact and suspenseful, blending gritty realism with sharp dialogue, strong performances by Ziaul Faruq Apurba and Sabila Nur, and a brooding Dhaka backdrop. These strengths have secured Shihab Shaheen's nomination.

Vicky Zahed's *Chokro* is a 20-episode mystery-thriller inspired by a tragic 2007 family incident in Mymensingh. Known for his signature genre-bending storytelling, Vicky adapts this unsettling real event into a haunting narrative that explores human psychology and supernatural undercurrents. Despite numerous production setbacks—including the tragic loss of crew members—the director persisted, delivering a chilling, atmospheric series that quickly secured a second season.

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	B.Sc. in Mathematics

Deadline: 27 August 2025 Admission Test: 30 August 2025

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Five arrested

FROM PAGE 12

"The recovered stones will be returned to the Sada Pathor area, while drives will continue to stop stone looting."

Separately, another 2,500 cubic feet of stones were seized from Binnakandi area in Gowainghat upazila's Fatehpur union during a drive led by Gowainghat UNO Ratan Kumar Adhikari.

Ctg-Dhaka

FROM PAGE 12

The inauguration ceremony was chaired by BPC Chairman Md Amin Ul Ahsan and attended by Energy Secretary Saiful Islam, Bangladesh Army's Engineer-in-Chief Major General Hasanuzzaman, and Project Director Colonel Sultan Mahmud.

Officials said the project is part of the government's efforts to strengthen the country's energy security.

Costs, deadlines

FROM PAGE 12

now aims for June 2027 completion.

As of May, the financial progress of the project is 82 percent while the physical progress is 89 percent.

Meanwhile, the ministry of youth and sports is seeking a two-year extension and a 73 percent increase in cost for its project to build mini stadiums in 186 upazilas.

The revised project, if passed, will cover 201 upazilas, cost Tk 2,855 crore and take two years extra.

Land acquisition, filling of earth, depreciation of the taka against the US dollar, land-related disputes and changes in the schedule of rates account for the escalation in estimated cost.

1,760 aid seekers killed in Gaza

FROM PAGE 12

The Israeli military said plans had been approved for a new offensive in Gaza, aimed at defeating Hamas and freeing all the remaining hostages.

The military intends to take control of Gaza City and nearby refugee camps, some of the most densely populated parts of the territory, which has been devastated by more than 22 months of war.

In recent days, Gaza City residents have told AFP of more frequent air strikes targeting residential areas, while earlier this week Hamas denounced "aggressive" Israeli ground

incursions in the area.

The Israeli government's plans to expand the war have sparked an international outcry as well as domestic opposition.

Arab and world leaders have rejected the idea of moving Gaza's population to any country. Palestinians say that would be like another "Nakba" (catastrophe) when hundreds of thousands fled or were forced out during the Arab-Israeli war of 1948.

Qatar yesterday said that it, along with 31 Arab and Islamic countries, the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Gulf Cooperation

Council (GCC), condemns Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's statements regarding what he called "Greater Israel".

Qatar's Foreign Ministry, in a statement posted on X, said the Israeli PM's comments "represent a gross disregard and a blatant and dangerous violation of the rules of international law and the foundations of stable international relations".

UN-backed experts have warned of widespread famine unfolding in the territory, where Israel has drastically curtailed the amount of humanitarian aid it allows in.

Meanwhile, three sources told Reuters that South Sudan and Israel are discussing a deal to resettle Palestinians from war-torn Gaza in the troubled African nation.

The sources, who have knowledge of the matter but spoke on condition of anonymity, said no agreement had been reached, but talks between South Sudan and Israel were ongoing.

The plan, if carried further, would envisage people moving from an enclave to a nation in the heart of Africa riven by years of political and ethnically-driven violence.

Election will be held

FROM PAGE 12

educated segment of society, yet often the hardest to guide. If you truly want to see progress, the change must begin with you," he said.

Speaking about the food prices, Jahangir said recent floods and heavy rainfall had pushed up vegetable prices. He accused middlemen — often from privileged backgrounds — of profiting at the expense of both farmers and consumers.

"Farmers are not getting fair prices for potatoes, while consumers are paying more for vegetables because of middlemen. If farmers don't get fair returns, they won't cultivate potatoes next season, which could again drive prices up," he warned.

On environmental concerns, Jahangir called for a nationwide shift from polythene bags to jute

alternatives.

"Polythene damages soil, blocks drainage, and does not decompose. It has no benefit ... If we replace polythene with jute bags, it will help farmers, improve public health, and protect the environment. If we return to jute bags, everyone will benefit," he said.

The adviser also issued a stern warning against extortion rackets, particularly in the Mohammadpur and Mirpur areas.

"Let me be clear: no extortionist will be allowed to remain in Bangladesh, no matter how powerful they are. Anyone involved in extortion will be brought to justice. But we need your cooperation in identifying them and supporting law enforcement instead of shielding them," Jahangir said.

Bangladesh belongs to people of every faith

FROM PAGE 12

him to join the celebration.

"This joyful celebration has begun with songs and dance, and I am grateful that you have included us in this festivity. Thousands of devotees have gathered here today, and we are thankful to be part of your joy."

"This is the Bangladesh of harmony where Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, ethnic

people, and Bangalees have lived together peacefully for centuries. On this auspicious day, our pledge should be to maintain this harmony and brotherhood forever. This country belongs to everyone. There will be no division here — not by

religion, caste, or creed. We are all citizens of this land, and each of us has equal rights over it. Together, we look forward to a golden future."

Waker stressed that the armed forces, including the navy and air force, remain committed to ensuring this spirit of unity. "Across Bangladesh, the armed forces are deployed to support you....," he said.

Calling on devotees to carry forward the teachings of Lord Krishna, the army chief said, "Let his teachings radiate from here to everywhere, inspiring us to live together in peace and unity."

3 Bangladeshis to compete in Japan's SpoGomi World Cup



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three young Bangladeshis will represent the country at the 2nd SpoGomi World Cup in Japan this October.

The participants – Md Imran Hossain, Md Jubair Sheikh, and Md Tanvir, all students of Daffodil International University – competed as Team Eco Fighters and secured victory in the Bangladesh qualifiers held yesterday in Dhaka.

Originating in Japan, SpoGomi is a team-based competition where participants collect litter from designated areas within a set time and sort it into categories. Teams earn points based on the type and weight of collected waste.

The contest aims to promote environmental awareness and public engagement in waste management in a fun and competitive manner.

The Bangladesh qualifier took place at the Sandhya Malati ground of the Rajuk Uttara Apartment Project in Uttara Sector 18.

Seventy teams competed, with Team Eco Fighters scoring the highest. Each team had one hour to collect waste and 20 minutes to sort it.

Different categories carried different point values. Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Administrator Mohammad Azaz highlighted the importance of civic responsibility in keeping the city clean.

“We want to advance the city's cleanliness through community participation. Without awareness and cooperation from all walks of life, it is impossible to keep the city clean,” he said.

He also criticised unauthorised markets occupying sidewalks, making waste management more difficult. “We clean the city's garbage all night, but by noon it becomes dirty again due to citizens' negligence. Without public awareness and active participation, the city cannot remain clean,” he added.

Janmashtami

FROM PAGE 3

before concluding at Bahadur Shah Park in Old Dhaka. Earlier in the morning, the Mahanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee organised a Gita Yajna at the Dhakeshwari National Temple, seeking peace and prosperity for the country and the nation. It was conducted by Shankar Math and Mission from Sitakunda, Chattogram.

Additionally, the

International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) undertook a four-day programme marking Janmashtami. The activities included recitation of the Srimad Bhagavatam Gita, devotional songs and kirtan, bhog arati, distribution of maha prasad, discussion meetings, cultural programmes, and religious drama and kirtan mela.

Stop pushing unnecessary tests

FROM PAGE 12

“Look into the matter seriously,” he said.

Prescribing unnecessary medical tests is another complaint, he said, citing the case of his house help who was prescribed 14 tests by a Dhaka hospital.

Aggrieved by the sheer number of tests prescribed, the house help went to his hometown, Mymensingh, for treatment by a doctor he knew and was cured without any tests.

“Stop this torture. It's fine if you charge the rich more, but please end the practice of prescribing 14 or 15 tests for poor patients.”

Another complaint is about compelling patients to buy medicine from a particular company, he said.

“In any part of the world, do doctors set aside specific times in hospitals or clinics for pharmaceutical company representatives? Is there any country where this happens? Are you agents of pharmaceutical companies? Are the doctors of major hospitals in this

country intermediaries for pharmaceutical companies? Where are you placing yourselves?”

Wrong test results and low salaries of service providers are the other complaints, he said, while urging more investment in manpower to improve the quality of services.

People would not need to go to India or Bangkok for treatment if they received proper care here, he added.

People receive treatment from both government and private medical facilities, so the standards of these two types of facilities should not differ, Rahman said.

Similarly, the quality of education in government and private medical colleges cannot be different as both produce doctors.

The government will establish a Health Facilities Accreditation Council to ensure quality, he said.

The practice of undue profit must be stopped, he said, adding that healthcare providers should limit themselves to justifiable

profits.

Talking about the low salaries of service providers, he said that doctors at most medical facilities earn less than Tk 30,000 monthly while nurses receive about Tk 12,000.

“In which country in the world do people work for such low wages, except Cuba, where the government provides everything? This has reached a shameful level.”

Subsequently, he urged healthcare providers to establish a salary structure keeping their social dignity in mind.

The government wants a salary board for health service providers and sought the owners' support in this regard.

He also termed the annual renewal of licences for private medical facilities as irrational.

The government is working to review the process, he said, adding that the authorities must ensure proper inspections within the fixed period.

Cruel toll of ambulance syndicate

FROM PAGE 12

While Abu Taher remains absconding, the name of Jahangir Hossain, the driver of the sole government ambulance at Shariatpur General Hospital, is not in the case. When contacted, Jahangir denied involvement, claiming he heard of the death through social media.

The case also names Md Billal, and Abdul Hai, along with five to six unidentified suspects.

Hai, president of the Ambulance Owners' Welfare Association, denied involvement with the syndicate. He said the baby had breathing problems from birth and that a verbal altercation occurred between drivers and the family. “Eventually, the baby died in the ambulance. Life and death are in the hands of Allah,” he said.

Civil Surgeon Dr Mohammad Rehan Uddin acknowledged the allegations against his driver and promised an investigation committee. “If proven guilty, departmental action will be taken. Legal action will follow in coordination with police and administration,” he said.

Shariatpur General

Hospital Superintendent Dr Habibur Rahman reiterated that the fare for a trip to Dhaka is fixed at Tk 4,000 and anyone charging higher will face disciplinary measures.

But syndicate-controlled ambulances charge Tk 6,000-8,000, adding extra “toll fees” of Tk 3,000-4,000, despite exemptions at highways and places like the Padma Bridge, said Jafrul Hasan, who has recently taken his kidney patient mother to Dhaka.

If families try to hire ambulances from other districts at lower costs, those vehicles are detained, sometimes even with patients inside, he said.

Shariatpur has around 45 ambulances, one government and the rest private. Victims, ambulance drivers, and locals told The Daily Star that the syndicate extorts commissions of Tk 2,000-3,000 from ambulances leaving Shariatpur hospitals. Drivers from outside are paid only part of the fare, while the syndicate pockets the rest.

Since the tragedy, ambulance services at Shariatpur Sadar Hospital have dwindled sharply, with only one or two vehicles

operating, leaving families in urgent need exposed and vulnerable.

The harrowing chain of events began when Nur Hossain's wife was admitted to New Metro Diagnostic Center and Clinic with labour pain on Thursday.

After a failed natural delivery, she underwent a caesarean section at 3:00pm. The baby was first taken to Fatema Medical before being referred to Shariatpur Sadar Hospital, where doctors advised urgent transfer to Dhaka.

By 6:45pm, the family had secured a Dhaka-bound ambulance for Tk 5,000. But as hope seemed within reach, around a dozen people intercepted the vehicle, seized the keys, and demanded the child be taken in a local ambulance instead.

For half an hour, the family pleaded, protested, and prayed. By 7:15pm, the baby had died.

“Had I known my child would die over a Tk 2,000 dispute, I would have paid the higher fare. I demand justice and strict punishment for the perpetrators,” Nur Hossain said, his grief raw and unfiltered.

RU students still face poor food

FROM PAGE 4

been initiated while two halls, which were under construction from the previous administration, have been completed.

Officials claim that seat allocation is now entirely merit-based. However, several students allege that political influence still affects some cases.

Tisa Khatun, a third-year botany student living in July 36 Hall (Bangamata Fazilatunnesa Hall), has spent more than a year in the hall's overcrowded Gono Room.

“There is no ventilation, no personal space, and I have been sharing a bed with another student for more than a year,” she said.

Others, however, note some improvement. Saida Akhter, a resident of Khaleda Zia Hall, said, “Although the lack of residential facilities creates problems, the process of seat allocation has become fairer since August 5. Seats are now given accordingly and in a transparent way.”

Shariful Islam, a resident of Amir Ali Hall, also praised the “end of seat trading” and the inclusion of poor students in the allocation process.

An RU professor, requesting anonymity, alleged that some teachers run private boarding houses in nearby areas such as Kajla, Binodpur, and Meherchondi. “If the university becomes fully residential, it will hurt their business. That's why genuine initiatives for full residential accommodation are rare,” the professor claimed.

Prof Zamirul Islam,

convener of the provost council, rejected the allegations. He said since August 5, all seats have been allocated through a transparent, score-based system with quotas properly applied.

DINING

If seat allocation shows mixed progress, dining remains the most glaring problem. Students complain that food quality has not improved despite repeated promises.

In some halls, dining services have been outsourced to private caterers in addition to canteen facilities, but residents insist the meals are unhygienic, monotonous, and lack nutrition. Female dormitories are particularly affected as they have no canteen, forcing students to depend entirely on hall dining.

“There were temporary improvements in food standards when the provost directly supervised the dining, but they lasted only a few days. Potatoes are in every dish, three times a day. The food is the same every day, and even hall shops don't stock basic items,” said Ashoka Jaima of Khaleda Zia Hall.

Dining managers point to soaring prices as a major obstacle. “A week ago, daily groceries cost Tk 8,000 to Tk 10,000. Now the same items cost Tk 10,000 to Tk 15,000. But meal rates are fixed at Tk 30 for lunch and Tk 22 for dinner. There are no subsidies, so it is very hard to maintain quality,” said Shoppo Ali, dining manager of Sher-e-Bangla Hall.

Private eateries near RU

also reveal how campus politics once dictated student life. Manik Hossain Babu, who runs a hotel near Ziaur Rahman Hall, said, “During the Awami League period, Chhatra League leaders ate at my hotel without paying. Around Tk 8.5 lakh is still due. I even filed a case. But now, the situation is different. Students pay their bills regularly.”

Prof Zamirul admitted that dining was “not excellent” but claimed it has improved compared to earlier years. He said the university provides indirect support through subsidies on electricity and infrastructure. He also blamed past irregularities on politically backed students who ate for free – a practice he claimed has “almost disappeared”.

People united

FROM PAGE 3

Jubo Dal at BNP's Nayapaltna central office to mark the 81st birthday of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

“I would like to request all democratic forces and political parties to bring the same kind of unity that we showed during the anti-fascist democratic struggle. Let us remain united, engage in discussions and work together so that we can hold the election fairly and peacefully and thus make the path of democratic transition smoother,” he said.

The BNP leader said their party, together with the entire nation, is awaiting a credible election to restore democracy for which many have sacrificed.

Implementation timeline

FROM PAGE 1

Prof Ali Riaz, vice-president of the consensus commission, confirmed to The Daily Star that the commission had sent the integrated final draft to the parties, adding that they had been asked to send their feedback on language and wording by August 20.

“The content will remain unchanged,” he added.

About the charter having no specific deadline for the parties, he said the two-year deadline was mentioned in the preliminary draft to initiate discussions. “It wasn't anything concrete.”

Asked why the draft does not specify the immediately implementable recommendations, he said the interim government will identify those and act accordingly.

A member of the commission, preferring anonymity, also said the timeline was initially mentioned to initiate discussions on implementation. “We are now discussing the legal bindings of the charter. Once that's established, we expect a timeline will naturally emerge.”

The draft outlines 84 issues on which political parties reached consensus during two rounds of discussions between March 20 and July 31. It also includes notes of dissent – most from the BNP and some from other parties.

On whether political parties would be bound to take the notes of dissent into consideration, Prof Ali Riaz said, “Discussions with legal experts are underway.... The parties would be obliged to follow the interpretations given by the experts.”

Giving priority to the July uprising aspirations, the commission sought pledges on eight broad commitments.

The charter pledged full implementation of its provisions as a reflection of the sacrifices and aspirations of the July-August 2024 movement, describing it as the framework of a new political settlement adopted through consensus.

The commission urged political parties to incorporate all provisions of the charter and its decisions into the constitution. If there is any conflict between the charter and existing laws or the constitution, the charter will take precedence.

It vested the authority to interpret any provision or recommendation of the charter in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, while declaring every provision constitutionally and legally binding, beyond judicial challenge to its legitimacy or necessity.

The charter said the people's uninterrupted struggle for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law – particularly the historic significance of the 2024 uprising – would receive constitutional and state recognition.

Parties are urged to pledge justice for the killings during the July uprising, state honours for the martyrs and assistance for their families, and rehabilitation of the injured.

In the preliminary draft, the commission asked parties to pledge to recognise and “enshrine the historical importance of the 2024 anti-discrimination democratic movement and popular uprising in the constitution with due prominence.”

That version, however, made no mention of constitutional and state recognition for the broader democratic struggle or of ensuring justice for the killings.

The final draft, in its pledges for the parties, said that although no constitution was in force between March 26, 1971, and November 4, 1972, all activities during that period were later incorporated into the 1972 constitution – paying tribute to the martyrs of the Liberation War and granting those activities legal and constitutional legitimacy.

It also said that, in the aftermath of the December 6, 1990 mass uprising, the resignation of the chief justice, his assumption

of the vice presidency, temporary presidency, and eventual return to the judiciary had no legal framework.

“Yet those actions were legitimised on the basis of political commitments, and the subsequent parliament endorsed them as the people's will, strengthening both constitutional convention and democracy,” it added.

Ruhin Hossain Prince, general secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, said his party needs to consider whether they will sign the charter or not.

“Looking at the proposal sent by the commission, it seems they have submitted not a proposal of consensus, but a proposal of a particular group. What was written in the introduction was not discussed with us. We, along with some other parties, have notes of dissent on the proposed fundamental principles of the state and some other issues, so it cannot be called a consensus.”

Speaking about the absence of a timeframe, he said it seems the current government wants to implement the proposals within its term, which appears “quite impossible and unrealistic”.

Raved Rasin, senior joint convener of the National Citizen Party, said they are disappointed as the draft does not mention a timeframe; which proposals are immediately implementable; how they will be implemented; the fate of issues over which parties submitted notes of dissent; or those on which no consensus was reached.

“We will write to the commission about this,” he said, expressing hope that it will take their concerns into consideration.

Both BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed and Jamaat-e-Islami Nayebe-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher, who represented their respective parties during the consensus talks with the commission, could not be contacted for comments despite repeated attempts.

Burglaries at Khulna

FROM PAGE 4

group of burglars vandalised and looted a Dutch Bangla Bank Fast Track ATM booth along with two shops on Sadar Road early yesterday.

Around 3:30am, the gang stormed the ATM booth at Adalatpara, tied up and assaulted security guard Mojibur Rahman, and then vandalised the booth, looting a laptop, said Sadar Police Station OC Intiaz Ahmed.

Mojibur, left seriously injured after being struck on the head, was admitted to Patuakhali Medical College Hospital.

About 20 minutes later, the same gang broke into “Fashion Optical” on Sadar Road, stealing products, a

computer monitor, and about Tk 2 lakh in cash.

Around 4:30am, they targeted “Shikdar Store” in the area, looting a CCTV monitor, cash, recharge cards, and other items, the OC added.

Md Rinku, channel officer of Dutch-Bangla Fast Track, confirmed Mojibur had been tied up and attacked.

“We have obtained video footage of the incident. An investigation is underway, and the culprits will be identified and brought to justice soon,” the OC said.

[Our correspondents from Khulna and Patuakhali contributed to this report.]

Army seizes arms

FROM PAGE 3

“Relevant intelligence agencies have already begun detailed investigations, and the operation is still ongoing,” it added.

Meanwhile, the detainees were identified as Montaserul Alam Anindo, locally known as an English teacher and owner of the coaching centre, and two others, Md Robin and Md Faisal.

Anindo is the son of Shafiq Alam, alias Lattu, former vice-president of BNP's Rajshahi city unit, and owner of the building of the coaching centre, according to media reports.

He is also a cousin of former Rajshahi City mayor and Awami League leader AHM Khairuzzaman Liton, said a press release issued by 40 East Bengal, Rajshahi Sena Camp.

Anindo was earlier arrested as a suspect in the 2016 murder case of Rajshahi University English department teacher Rezaul Karim but was later acquitted, said media reports.

Meanwhile, Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Spokesperson Gaziur Rahman told The Daily Star last night that the trio have been shown arrested in a relevant case filed in connection to the raid and recovery of weapons.

PRAYER TIMING		AUGUST 17	
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-25	12-45	4-45	6-38 8-00
JAMAAT 5-00	1-15	5-00	6-41 8-30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION			

Two held over Banani shisha

FROM PAGE 3

had gone there with his friend Nurul Islam Khokon.

Allegedly, around 5:28am, on the second floor of the building, suspects Munna and Hamza confronted Rahat. During an argument, Munna stabbed Rahat multiple times before fleeing.

He was rushed to Kurmitola General Hospital, where doctors

declared him dead.

Following intelligence efforts yesterday, authorities got to know that 26-year-old Hamza was hiding in Barura, Cumilla. Based on his information, Munna was also apprehended from the same area.

The knife used in the murder, a Swiss Gear blade, was recovered from Rajja Sultana Road in Dhaka's

Mohammadpur area.

In preliminary interrogations, the suspects revealed a long-standing dispute with Rahat over dominance in the Banani lounge.

On the night of the incident, Rahat reportedly asked Munna to leave the lounge around 1:00am, which escalated the conflict and led to the stabbing, the press release stated.

EC alone cannot ensure fair polls

FROM PAGE 3

universities, he noted, can influence national elections.

He also discussed the limitations of both the proportional representation system and the constituency-based system in parliamentary elections. He said discussions are ongoing about forming the lower house

through constituency-based elections and the upper house through a proportional representation system.

In his concluding remarks, Debate for Democracy Chairman Hasan Ahmed Chowdhury Kiron said the process of organising the upcoming national election should be expedited.

However, he added,

without the cooperation of the EC, the administration, political parties, candidates, and voters, it will not be possible to hold a free and acceptable election.

The Bangladesh University of Business and Technology (BUBT) debaters emerged as winners, defeating the team from Sir Salimullah Medical College.

A tug of war over ‘plough’ symbol

FROM PAGE 3

provision. The appointment of an acting chairman by anyone else is completely illegal. Moreover, those appointed were already expelled,” he said.

He also noted that the timing and venue of presidium or council meetings must be set with the chairman's consent and chaired by him, making the rival council invalid. He alleged that no EC representative was present at the council, questioning how expelled members could organise or join it without reinstatement.

On August 9, Anisul's faction held JP's 10th

council in Gulshan, electing Anisul as chairman, Mujibul Haque as executive chairman, Kazi Firoz Rashid as senior co-chairman, and Ruhul Amin Hawlader as secretary general. Earlier, GM Quader had expelled them from party positions and membership.

In response, Anisul and 10 leaders filed a case with Dhaka First Joint District Judge's Court against Quader and joint office secretary Mahmud Alam. The court imposed a temporary injunction on the organisational activities of both sides until August 12.

During the injunction, Anisul's faction held the council and formed a committee. On August 11, the court transferred the case to the Sixth Joint District Judge's Court. The next day, the judge allowed the complainants to withdraw it, lifting the injunction on GM Quader.

Asked why they withdrew the case, Mujibul told The Daily Star: “He [GM Quader] is no longer the chairman of Jatiya Party. We formed a new committee through the council – why would the case remain? If the case remains, that means he is accepted as chairman.”

Kenya declared free of sleeping sickness: A major milestone in public health

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has validated Kenya as having eliminated human African trypanosomiasis (HAT), also known as sleeping sickness, as a public health problem—making it the tenth country to achieve this milestone. HAT is the second neglected tropical disease (NTD) to be eliminated in Kenya, after Guinea worm disease in 2018.

HAT is caused by the blood parasite *Trypanosoma brucei* and is transmitted through the bite of infected tsetse flies. The rhodesiense form (r-HAT), the only type present in Kenya, progresses rapidly, invades vital organs including the brain, and is fatal within weeks without treatment. Rural communities relying on agriculture, fishing, and livestock are most at risk.

The first cases in Kenya were detected in the early 20th century. Since then, the country has conducted consistent control efforts, with no indigenous cases reported for over 10 years. The last local case was in 2009, with the final two exported cases in 2012.

To sustain elimination, Kenya strengthened surveillance in 12 health facilities across six historically endemic counties, equipping them with diagnostics and training staff. Surveillance of tsetse flies and animal trypanosomiasis is ongoing, supported by the Kenya Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Council (KENTTEC).

WHO praised Kenya's achievement, with Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus calling it "another step towards making Africa free of neglected tropical diseases." Kenya will now implement post-validation monitoring, supported by WHO and partners, to prevent resurgence.

Kenya joins Benin, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Guinea, Rwanda, Togo, and Uganda in eliminating HAT as a public health problem—a testament to long-term commitment, intersectoral collaboration, and sustained investment in health systems.

SOURCE: WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION



BEYOND THE PLATE

Rethinking the balanced diet for body, budget, and belonging

RAISA MEHZABEEN

In an age where food trends go viral before facts are verified, the concept of a "balanced diet" remains both fundamental and misunderstood. For decades, we have been told to "eat right"—yet our understanding of what that means has become increasingly complicated.

The American Heart Association (AHA) recently offered five refreshing perspectives on what it really means to eat a balanced diet. These insights are not only practical but also rooted in health equity and emotional well-being.

1. Reimagine your plate — visually and nutritionally: Forget the food pyramid. Visualise your plate as a simple circle: half filled with fruits and vegetables, a quarter with whole grains, and the remaining quarter with lean protein sources. This model is not just easier to remember—it is grounded in nutrition science. A colourful plate ensures a diverse nutrient profile, providing fibre, vitamins, antioxidants, and essential amino acids. Use heart-healthy plant-based oils and herbs instead of salt to boost flavour without increasing your risk for hypertension or cardiovascular disease.

2. Avoid the illusion of quick fixes: Many of today's trending diets offer promises they can not keep. Keto, carnivore, juice cleanses — these extremes may yield temporary results but often at the cost of sustainability and health. As the AHA rightly notes, these should be approached with caution. Supplements have their place, especially for individuals with clinical deficiencies, but they should never replace real food. The World Health Organisation (WHO) consistently emphasises a food-first approach to nutrition for long-term wellness.



3. Balanced eating can be budget-friendly: Contrary to popular belief, eating well does not have to break the bank. Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables, if chosen wisely (without added sugars or sodium), can be just as nutritious as their fresh counterparts. Seasonal and locally available produce often offers the best value and nutrient density. Organisations like the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health support community-based food access strategies — such as buying in bulk and using coupons — as key ways to improve nutrition among low-income households.

4. Diversity is your dietary superpower: No single food holds the key to good health. Whether you prefer chickpeas over kidney beans or apples over mangoes, the principle remains: variety ensures balance. Embracing personal preferences makes healthy eating more enjoyable and sustainable. Cultural diversity in food should be celebrated, not sidelined. After all, lentils in South Asia, quinoa in Latin America, and yams in West Africa all reflect nutrient-

rich, traditional diets that have supported communities for centuries.

5. Rediscover the joy of eating together: Health is not just a physical state — it is emotional and social too. Cooking and sharing meals with loved ones fosters not only stronger bonds but also better food habits. Children who eat meals with their families are more likely to have better nutrition, fewer behavioural problems, and a lower risk of obesity, according to the American Academy of Paediatrics. Eating well is not a solo journey — it thrives on support, celebration, and shared commitment.

In essence, a "balanced diet" is less about rules and more about relationships — with our bodies, our food, and each other. It does not demand perfection, just presence. So instead of chasing the next trendy fix, let us focus on what nourishes us—physically, emotionally, and culturally.

The writer is the founder & CEO of Nutrition For Change. E-mail: raisameh20@gmail.com

THE HIDDEN NUTRITION BATTLE

When calcium supplements block your iron

Millions of people—especially elderly women—take calcium supplements daily to protect their bones. But few realise that this well-intentioned habit can quietly trigger another serious problem: iron deficiency anaemia.

It is a hidden paradox. Calcium is essential for bone strength, while iron keeps our blood healthy and oxygen flowing. Yet, when taken together, calcium and iron compete for absorption in the same part of the small intestine. And in this silent contest, calcium often wins—reducing iron absorption from your meal by more than half.

How it happens: Calcium carbonate can unintentionally interfere with the body's natural processing of another vital nutrient—iron. Both calcium and dietary iron (especially non-heme iron from plant foods) are absorbed in the same section of the small intestine. When taken together, calcium wins the battle, cutting iron absorption from around 10.2% to just 4.8% in a single meal.

A real-life scenario: Imagine you have just enjoyed a fresh salad bowl rich in green leafy vegetables or a beetroot smoothie to boost your iron. Immediately after, you take your daily calcium supplement. Inside your body, a silent tug-of-war begins—one that leaves your iron intake defeated. Over time, this can lead to chronic anaemia, fatigue, and weakness.

What can we do? The solution starts with awareness.

- Do not take calcium supplements with iron-rich meals.
 - Keep a 2-3 hour gap between calcium and iron intake.
 - Follow your doctor's or nutritionist's timing instructions closely.
- This small change can make a big difference to your nutrient status—and ultimately, your health.

The writer is a nutritionist and humanitarian aid worker. Email: sabrinasuprita@gmail.com



CONQUERING OBESITY

Simple strategies for a healthier you

STAR HEALTH DESK

Obesity is a growing health concern worldwide, affecting millions of people and contributing to a range of serious health conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, and joint problems. While managing obesity can feel overwhelming, it is important to recognise that small, consistent changes in lifestyle can lead to significant improvements. From healthier eating habits and increased physical activity to better sleep and stress management, taking a holistic approach can help individuals not only lose weight but also enhance overall well-being.

1. Start slow and set realistic goals: Losing weight is a gradual process. Set small, achievable goals like losing 1-2 pounds per week. This can help prevent feelings of frustration and make weight loss more sustainable in the long term. Breaking down larger goals into smaller milestones can help keep you motivated and focused.

2. Focus on healthy, balanced meals: A balanced diet is key. Aim to include plenty of fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains in your meals. Reducing processed foods, sugary drinks, and high-fat snacks can have a significant impact on your weight. Portion control is also important—eating in moderation is just as vital as eating nutritious foods.

3. Stay active: Exercise is crucial for



both weight loss and overall health. You do not need an intense workout routine to start; simple activities like walking, swimming, or cycling can be effective. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week. Over time, try to increase intensity and duration as your fitness level improves.

4. Prioritise sleep: Lack of sleep can contribute to weight gain by affecting your hormones and appetite. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night. Proper rest supports metabolic function and can help curb cravings for unhealthy foods.

5. Manage stress: Stress can lead to emotional eating or overeating. Practising stress management techniques like deep breathing,

meditation, or yoga can help reduce stress and its impact on your eating habits. Finding healthy ways to cope with stress is crucial for weight management.

6. Seek professional support: If needed, consider seeking support from healthcare professionals like a nutritionist, therapist, or doctor. They can provide personalised advice and help you develop a plan that is safe and effective for your specific needs.

7. Build a support system: Having a support system of friends, family, or even online groups can make a big difference. Surround yourself with people who encourage your goals and hold you accountable. Support from others can provide motivation and make the journey easier.

8. Stay hydrated: Drinking enough water throughout the day is often overlooked but plays a key role in weight management. Sometimes, our bodies confuse thirst with hunger, leading to overeating. Drinking water before meals can help you feel full, reducing the chances of overeating. Additionally, staying hydrated supports digestion and boosts metabolism.

Managing obesity is about making consistent, small changes over time. Focus on a balanced approach, and do not be discouraged by setbacks. Every step toward healthier habits is progress.

Partnering for nutrition: Scaling impact through inclusive market systems

The Daily Star (TDS): What measurable outcomes have emerged from SMC's market-based nutrition initiatives, particularly among low-income households and mothers with young children?

Toslim Uddin Khan (TUK): Nutrition is central to SMC's mandate, particularly maternal and child nutrition. We distribute around 50 million sachets of micro nutrient powder (MNP) annually for children under five, developed multiple micronutrient supplements (MMS) for pregnant women to help reduce underweight births, and have recently introduced a fortified biscuit containing the same nutrients. We run activities in 137 upazilas where we mobilise communities, hold group meetings, and conduct adolescent school programmes.

TDS: How does SMC's mission fit within health sector development in Bangladesh, particularly in relation to national family planning, maternal and child health?

TUK: Our mission is to improve the health and well-being of women, children, and families, in line with national goals on family planning, maternal health, and child health. Around half of all contraceptive users in Bangladesh rely on SMC products, including oral pills, injectables, and condoms. Joya, our sanitary napkin brand, holds almost 52 percent of the market, while SMC ORS (oral rehydration solution) has around 90 percent market share.

TDS: How does SMC ensure that nutrition products and campaigns are affordable, locally resonant, and effectively reach last-mile consumers in both urban and rural contexts?

TUK: Our Blue Star network has around 13,000 non-graduate providers. Green Star Programme includes 5,500 medicine and drug sellers. Pink Star Programme has 612 graduate providers, mostly obstetricians and

gynaecologists. Rose Star network has 355 paediatricians offering nutrition counselling and growth monitoring for children under five. SMC's community-level Gold Star Programme involves 4,000 rural and semi-urban women entrepreneurs, including 132 community paramedics, who share health information, provide public health services, and sell SMC products directly to households.



of pregnant women get antenatal check-ups, and exclusive breastfeeding is at 53 percent. Tackling these issues needs strong community engagement, better infrastructure, and focused policy action. Sustainability is another concern. Many local health programmes depend on external funding, which risks disruption if grants stop. We need stronger market-based models and more local production of health and nutrition products to reduce reliance on imports.

TDS: In what ways have development partnerships with

Toslim Uddin Khan
Managing Director
and CEO, SMC

iDE supported SMC's mission — particularly in community education, outreach innovation, and co-creating nutrition demand?

TUK: We see iDE as a respected INGO with strong technical expertise in many countries. With our nationwide network and iDE's technical support, our activities will play a more effective role in strengthening Bangladesh's health system. We are planning to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with iDE soon.

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.

MANAGING COPD

Easy-to-follow inhaler therapy tips for 2025

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a lung condition that requires proper treatment to manage breathing problems and flare-ups. The 2025 GOLD guidelines focus on using the right inhaler therapies based on your symptoms and how often you experience flare-ups.

For people with mild symptoms or fewer flare-ups (Group A), a single inhaler, either a long acting bronchodilator (LAMA or LABA), is usually enough to control symptoms. For those with more severe symptoms or frequent flare-ups (Groups B and E), a

combination inhaler with both LABA and LAMA is recommended.

If someone continues to feel short of breath despite using one inhaler, it is time to move to a combination therapy. Switching inhalers or medications may also be necessary if symptoms do not improve. In addition to medication, treatments like pulmonary rehabilitation can help improve breathing and overall health.

For people who have frequent flare-ups, doctors will look at a blood test result called eosinophil count. Higher levels may require adding inhaled corticosteroids

(ICS) to the treatment. For lower levels, sticking to a combination inhaler might be enough, but if flare-ups continue, additional medications like roflumilast or azithromycin may help.

It is important to adjust treatment as needed. If you are on ICS and have had side effects, your doctor might suggest reducing the dose, but this should be done carefully to avoid flare-ups.

The key to managing COPD effectively is adjusting the treatment to meet your specific needs, helping you breathe easier and feel better.

Afg to host Tigers in UAE after Asia Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

The Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) yesterday confirmed that it will host Bangladesh for a white-ball series, consisting of three ODIs and as many T20Is, from October 2 to 14 in the UAE.

The series will begin with its T20I leg and will see the two teams go head-to-head in the first T20I scheduled for October 2, while the remaining two T20Is will be held on October 4 and 6 respectively.

The T20I series will be followed by three ODIs, which are scheduled to be played on October 9, 11 and 14.

The venues for the series have not been revealed by the ACB.

The two teams will begin the series after the Asia Cup, also scheduled in the UAE from September 9-28, in which both sides will compete in Group B alongside Sri Lanka and Hong Kong.

Last year Bangladesh were hosted by Afghanistan in a three-match ODI series in Sharjah, which Afghanistan won by 2-1 margin.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

A Bangladesh Police Handball Club player goes airborne and aims for goal against Dinajpur District Sports Association during a 43-07 victory on the opening day of Ruchi 36th National Women's Handball Competition at the Shaheed M Mansur Ali National Handball Stadium yesterday. A total 19 teams are participating in the 10-day competition, which will conclude on August 25.

World Cup calls Jessy

SPORTS REPORTER

Shathira Jakir Jessy is set to become Bangladesh's first woman umpire at a senior World Cup, after being named to officiate in the upcoming ICC Women's World Cup in India and Sri Lanka.

The 34-year-old previously officiated in the Women's Asia Cup, while she also officiated in the ICC Women's World Cup Qualifiers held in Pakistan in April, where she worked alongside fellow Bangladesh umpire Masudur Rahman Mukul.

The former Bangladesh international recently stood in Bangladesh emerging team's home series against South Africa.

A Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) source confirmed the news to The Daily Star, adding that the International Cricket Council (ICC) will soon announce the full list of umpires for the eight-team tournament from September 30 to November 2.

Bangladesh, featuring for the second time in a row, will open their campaign against Pakistan on October 2 in Colombo before facing England in Guwahati on October 7. Their seventh and final league match will be against India on October 26 in Bengaluru.

The top four teams from the league format will qualify for the semis, scheduled on October 29 and 30, while the final is slated for November 2.



SAARC signings spark nostalgia, concerns for locals

SPORTS REPORTER

For those who experienced the golden era of Bangladeshi football in the 1980s and '90s, names like Ganesh Thapa and Raju Sakya of Nepal, or Sri Lanka's Pakeer Ali and Prem Lal, evoke a strong sense of nostalgia. These foreign stars were as beloved by local fans as homegrown legends like Ashrafuddin Ahmed Chunnun or Monem Munna. More than just their skills, they brought a spirit of camaraderie among South Asian footballing nations -- a sentiment that faded over the past two decades.

Since the launch of the professional league in 2007, players from the SAARC region have been largely absent in the domestic football scene.

However, the 2025-26 transfer window, which closed on Thursday night, marks a significant shift. A newly introduced rule now allows clubs to register and field up to four SAARC players as locals -- in addition to the three foreign players permitted on the pitch from a pool of five registered foreigners.

As a result, five of the 10 top-tier BPL clubs have signed 11 players from SAARC nations: eight from Nepal, and one each from Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and India. Notably, the traditional powerhouses -- Mohammedan, Abahani, and Bashundhara Kings -- have chosen not to capitalise on this new rule. Instead, it is the mid- and lower-table clubs, many operating under tight budgets, that have embraced the opportunity to bolster their squads affordably.

Brothers Union have made the boldest move, bringing in four players from the Nepal national team, including star forward Anjan Bista. Speaking to The Daily Star, manager Amer Khan admitted to some reservations about the policy but

acknowledged its practical value.

"We can get top Nepalese or Maldivian players for one-third of what we pay top local players. So, obviously, it's very lucrative," Amer said. "We remember how popular players like Pakeer Ali, Prem Lal, Chandra Siri, or Ganesh Thapa were. This rule gives fans a taste of that again. But the decision should've been made with more consensus from the clubs. It will

Mohammedan manager Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib voiced his frustration: "This rule will make it difficult to select players for the national team. We might have to look to the Championship League to find local talent."

Not all SAARC signings have been of high calibre. Arambagh KS, who were relegated two divisions in 2021 due to a match-fixing scandal involving several



We can get top Nepalese or Maldivian players for one-third of what we pay top local players. So, obviously, it's very lucrative.

Brothers Union manager Amer Khan

Total foreign players: 37 from 12 countries (maximum 9 from Ghana)

Total SAARC players: 11 (Nepalese: 8; Sri Lankan: 1; Bhutanese: 1; Indian: 1)

New registration rules:

Maximum 5 foreigners for registration, maximum 3 on the pitch

Maximum 4 SAARC players for registration, all 4 eligible to play

Five age-level local players in the squad, one must feature in playing eleven

undoubtedly hurt our local talents."

Brothers Union have also utilised their full foreign quota -- three African players and two from South America -- meaning they could potentially field seven non-Bangladeshi players in their starting XI.

In total, BPL clubs have registered 37 foreign players from outside the SAARC region, with 11 SAARC recruits bringing the total number of international players to 48 this season. While foreign players add technical quality to teams, coaches and officials are concerned that their growing presence will limit opportunities for emerging Bangladeshi talents.

Indian staff, have raised eyebrows by signing a player from India's fifth tier under the SAARC provision. It's a move that underscores how some clubs -- under severe financial strain -- may exploit the rule simply to fill squad spots on a budget.

In the post-August 5 landscape, with most clubs drastically reducing budgets to survive, the new SAARC rule offers a cost-effective lifeline. But as the new season approaches, it also raises important questions about the long-term development of Bangladeshi football and the future of local players striving to break through.



1936-2025

Australian legend Bob Simpson passes away

AFP, Sydney

Former Australian cricket captain and coach Bob Simpson has died aged 89.

Cricket Australia confirmed his death in Sydney in a statement on Saturday.

Simpson played 62 Test matches, captaining Australia in 39, at an average of 46.81.

He grew up in Sydney and first toured with Australia in 1957, becoming one of the best all-round cricketers to play for the country.

He retired after the 1967 series, but made a comeback a decade later, aged 41, during the World Series Cricket era.

Simpson became Australia's first full-time coach in the 1980s, leading the team's re-emergence and overseeing several top players, including Shane Warne.



CWAB election roadmap finalised

SPORTS REPORTER

The roadmap for the upcoming election of the Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh's (CWAB) was finalised on Friday after an informal get-together at a restaurant in Dhaka, a programme arranged by Tamim Iqbal, and attended by many current and former cricketers.

"It wasn't a CWAB-related programme. Tamim invited us for tea, all who were available attended," CWAB's ad-hoc committee member Neeyamur Rashid Rahul told The Daily Star yesterday.

Neeyamur said over 100 former and current players have completed membership subscription so far and explained the election schedule.

"We will continue membership subscription until August 21. We will sort it out on August 24. Nomination forms can be bought on August 25-26 and have to be submitted by August 28. Nomination withdrawal will have to be done by August 30. Final list of candidates will be issued on September 1. On September 4, we will hold the AGM which will be followed by the election."

Cricketer Rumana Ahmed and umpire Shathira Jakir Jessy attended the event, as Tamim and Co. tried to make amends for ignoring women's cricketers in recent CWAB meetings.

"The invitation came on behalf of Tamim bhai," said Rumana, who along with captain Nigar Sultana Joty had expressed dissatisfaction on social media at being ignored by CWAB.

"They said it happened mistakenly. They told us that CWAB will work for both male and female cricketers... There will be a dedicated position for women in the committee. Current and former women's cricketers can run for any other position as well," Rumana said.

BATTLE OF NO. 9S as Man Utd host Arsenal

STAR SPORTS DESK

It's not just Arsenal versus Manchester United at Old Trafford on Sunday. It's Viktor Gyokeres against Benjamin Sesko -- a clash of two blockbuster summer signings who could define the Premier League's new season for their respective sides.

For Arsenal, Mikel Arteta has finally landed the cutting edge his side desperately lacked.

In comes Gyokeres, the £66 million powerhouse from Sporting Lisbon who plundered 97 goals in just 102 appearances in Portugal, much of which came under United's current manager Ruben Amorim. His pace, power and ruthlessness in front of goal are designed to end Arsenal's 20-year title drought and may finally be the missing key to Arteta's puzzle.

Across the dugout, United manager Amorim is banking



everything on Sesko. Signed from RB Leipzig for £73.7 million, the 22-year-old towering Slovenian, who has scored 39 times in 87 games for the German side, has already drawn comparisons to Erling Haaland with his height, movement and finishing.

"I don't need to tell Ben, 'Ben, this is Manchester United, a lot of pressure. Every game is like do or die,'" Amorim said.

"He is always thinking about football. He's really obsessed about that."

Arsenal, stung by a hat-trick of second-placed finishes in the

past three seasons, have turned to Gyokeres to prevent another collapse.

Injuries to Bukayo Saka, Martin Odegaard and Gabriel Jesus exposed their lack of firepower last season, as they drew 14 matches and finished 10 points off Liverpool. This time, Arteta insists his squad has "versatility" and "different qualities" to finally strike gold.

The Gunners were dead in the air, scoring 17 goals from set-pieces last season -- the most in the league -- and having Gyokeres now only adds to that strength.

Meanwhile, United, desperate to bury the memory of last season's 15th-place disaster, have launched a spending spree. Alongside Sesko, they've splashed out on Bryan Mbeumo and Matheus Cunha in a £200 million attacking overhaul to get a shot at feeling former glory.

There's an extra twist. Gyokeres and Sesko were both on Arsenal's radar before the Gunners chose the Swede, while United swooped in for the one who was not chosen.



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Bangladesh belongs to people of every faith

Says army chief at Janmashtami rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman yesterday reaffirmed that Bangladesh belongs equally to people of all religions and communities, stressing that the armed forces will always stand beside citizens to safeguard peace, security, and harmony.

He made the remarks while addressing devotees at the inauguration of the central Janmashtami rally at Dhakeshwari Temple in Dhaka.

Joining Waker as guests of honour were Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Nazmul Hassan and Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan.

Additionally, Major General Md Moin Khan, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the 9th Infantry Division, was also present at the event in Palashi intersection.

Extending greetings on the occasion, Waker thanked the Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad and the Mohanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee for inviting



FROM LEFT... Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Nazmul Hassan, Mohanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee President Jayanta Kumar Deb, Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman, and Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan light a lamp, inaugurating the Janmashtami celebrations at Palashi intersection in the capital yesterday.

DEATH OF NEWBORN

Cruel toll of ambulance syndicate

Suspected ring leaders include chauffeur of Shariatpur civil surgeon

JAHID HASAN, Shariatpur

A syndicate run by the civil surgeon's chauffeur and a government ambulance driver has long gripped Shariatpur's ambulance services -- and last Thursday, its greed allegedly claimed the life of a newborn.

Acting on a tip-off, the Rapid Action Battalion arrested Sabuj Dewan, 28, son of the civil surgeon's chauffeur Abu Taher, in an operation at Bera Chikundi village under Palong Union Parishad of Sadar Upazila early yesterday morning.

Both Taher and Sabuj are accused in a case filed with Palong Model Police Station yesterday by the newborn's father Nur Hossain Sardar, 32, an electrician from Dhaka.

Sabuj was handed over to Palong Model Police Station and later sent to jail by court order, said Officer-in-Charge Helal Uddin. Police have sought a 10-day remand to interrogate him while efforts continue to apprehend the remaining suspects, the police officer said.

Five arrested over Sada Pathor looting

2.5 lakh cft stones seized in Sylhet Sadar, 2,500cft in Gowainghat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Police yesterday arrested five people over the looting of stones from the Bholaganj Sada Pathor tourist site in Sylhet's Companiganj upazila, following a case filed by the Bureau of Mineral Development (BMD).

The arrestees are Mohammad Kamal, 45, and Md Abu Sayeed, 21, from Kalairag village; Md Abul Kalam, 32, from Nazirgaon village; and Iman Ali, 28, and Jahangir Alam, 35, from Lachu Khal village in Companiganj, police said.

On Friday, Md Anwarul Habib, director general of the BMD, filed the case with Companiganj Police Station, accusing around 1,500 unnamed people of involvement in the looting.

Police then raided several areas and arrested the five suspects, said Uzayer Al-Mahmud Adnan, officer-in-charge of the police station.

According to the case statement, since August 5 last year, miscreants have been illegally extracting stones worth hundreds of crores of taka from the government-gazetted quarry area, as reported by several national media outlets.

The statement also noted that the identities of those directly involved had remained unconfirmed until now.

Meanwhile, a taskforce recovered around 2.5 lakh cubic feet of stones during drives at crusher mills and houses in Dhopagul area of Sylhet Sadar upazila.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Khoshnur Rubaiyat led the drive. Contacted, she said, "Acting on a tip-off, the taskforce carried out raids. We found the stones buried under sand near homesteads in Mohaldhi village and hidden inside crusher mills.

1,760 aid seekers killed in Gaza since late May

Says UN; report says Israel in talks to resettle Gazans in South Sudan

AGENCIES

The UN human rights office said that at least 1,760 Palestinians had been killed while seeking aid in Gaza since late May, a jump of several hundred since its last published figure at the beginning of August.

"Since 27 May, and as of 13 August, we have recorded that at least 1,760 Palestinians have been killed while seeking aid; 994 in the vicinity of GHF (Gaza Humanitarian Foundation) sites and 766 along the routes of supply convoys. Most of these killings were committed by the Israeli military," the agency's office for the Palestinian territories said in a statement.

On August 1, it reported 1,373 deaths of aid seekers.

The update came as Gaza's civil defence agency said at least 25 people were killed by Israeli fire yesterday.

Meanwhile, Gaza's Health Ministry yesterday said at least eleven people, including a child, died in Gaza due to starvation in the past 24 hours.

The latest figures bring the total number of hunger-related deaths in the territory to 251, Director-General of Gaza's Health Ministry Munir al-Bursh told Al Jazeera.

- At least 25 more killed amid intensified offensive
- 11 deaths from starvation reported in last 24 hours
- Qatar, OIC, 31 Arab countries condemn Netanyahu's 'greater Israel vision'

He said that 40,000 infants in the territory were suffering from severe malnutrition amid critical food shortages caused by Israel's war and restrictions on aid into Gaza.

On Wednesday, the chief of staff of

Election will be held as announced

Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday ruled out any possibility of changing the election timeframe announced by the chief adviser.

"The chief adviser has spoken. None of us has anything to add beyond that. The election will be held in the month [February] he announced," Jahangir told reporters after visiting Mohammadpur Krishi Market in Dhaka.

"We don't need to pay attention to what others are saying. Some parties may try to resist," he said, adding that the people will ultimately decide.

"Once people decide to vote, no one will be able to stop them," he added.

Jahangir also urged educated citizens to take the lead in setting examples of discipline in society.

"You are the most

Costs, deadlines of two projects to overrun

Tipped to get nod at today's Ecneec meeting

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The costs of two projects -- one aimed at promoting environmentally sustainable surface water supply in Dhaka and the other for building mini stadiums in upazilas -- are likely to double their original estimates.

The deadlines for the projects, taken up by the previous government, may also be extended by up to eight years in today's meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council.

The devaluation of local currency alone increased the estimated cost of Dhaka Sustainable Water Supply Project by around 42 percent or Tk 1,186 crore. When the government approved the project back in September 2013, the dollar traded for Tk 82. Now, it is more than Tk 120.

Apart from the depreciation of the taka, changes in the pipeline route and design may contribute to a 25 percent rise in the estimated cost. Delay in interest payment is another reason for the cost overrun, documents show.

The original cost of the project, which began in January 2014, was Tk 5,248 crore, of which Tk 3,499 crore was provided by the Asian Development Bank, documents show.

The cost now may rise to Tk 10,973 crore, with Tk 6,739 crore expected to come from development partners.

The project, which was taken up with a view to reducing dependence on the groundwater extraction and utilising surface water sources, was supposed to be completed by December 2019. Dhaka WASA, the implementing agency,

Ctg-Dhaka fuel pipeline inaugurated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

The Chattogram-Dhaka fuel oil pipeline project was officially inaugurated (commissioned) yesterday.

Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry's Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan inaugurated the project at a ceremony held at the main installation (MI) point of the pipeline in Patenga, Chattogram, around 11:00am.

According to officials of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), the 250-kilometre pipeline will save about Tk 200 crore annually in fuel transportation costs once regular supply begins. The pipeline will mainly transport diesel to Dhaka.

Project officials said that with the pipeline in operation, transporting 50 lakh litres of diesel from Patenga to Dhaka's Godnail will now take only 12 hours, compared to 48 hours by river route earlier.



Palestinians amid the debris after an Israeli strike on a school sheltering displaced people in Gaza City yesterday.

Stop pushing unnecessary tests, drugs

Law adviser urges doctors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Adviser Asif Nazrul yesterday urged healthcare providers to refrain from unethical practices, including prescribing unnecessary medical tests and medicines, under the influence of pharmaceutical company representatives.

He also urged the authorities of hospitals, clinics and diagnostic centres to invest more in doctors, nurses and other healthcare staff to improve the quality of services.

Meanwhile, Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser for the health ministry, urged them not to seek undue profit, but rather to aim for a reasonable return on their investment.

They were speaking at the inaugural session of the annual general meeting of the Bangladesh Private Hospital, Clinic and Diagnostic Owners Association at the Shaheed Abu Sayed International Convention Centre.

Nazrul said he had received several general complaints about health services, one of them being that doctors do not listen properly and start writing prescriptions after hearing only a few words from the patient.

Citing patients who sought treatment abroad, he said doctors there listen to patients properly, which instils confidence.

