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## Distressed loans surge to Tk 7.56 lakh cr

Amount close to the budget for FY26

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Distressed loans at banks soared 59 percent to a record Tk 756,526 crore in 2024, laying bare the fragile state of the country's financial sector.

The distressed loans amounted to 45 percent of the total outstanding loans of about Tk 16,82,878 crore as of December last year and close to the national budget for fiscal year 2025-26.

- 45% outstanding loans are distressed assets
- Defaulted loans stand at Tk 345,765cr

Distressed loans are generally high-risk assets where the borrower is unable to make scheduled payments of interest or principal, making them problematic for banks.

It is calculated by adding written-off loans and

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July Charter must not take precedence over constitution  
Says Salahuddin

STAR REPORT



If the July Charter is allowed to override the constitution, it would set a dangerous precedent for the nation, BNP Standing Committee Member Md. Salahuddin Ahmed said yesterday.

He said his party opposes the provision preventing any court from questioning the charter.

"No questions can be raised in any court about the validity, necessity, or promulgation of this charter... Has the constitution granted this authority to anyone?" he asked.

Speaking to the media at his Gulshan residence, Salahuddin also pointed out inconsistencies in the draft July Charter and said his party would give its final opinion only after those are corrected.

He noted that many recommendations could be implemented through ordinances or executive orders, and the current government is already doing this.

He added that several of those issues do not even require an executive order.

The BNP leader affirmed that his party would implement the pledges on which consensus was reached, emphasising that only matters requiring constitutional amendments should be placed before the new parliament after the national election.

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For nearly two months, Madhabkati Bilpaltia Govt Primary School in Dumuria upazila of Khulna has remained submerged, forcing teachers and students to relocate to a nearby chicken farm to continue classes. Every monsoon, over a hundred villages in the region experience prolonged waterlogging and outbreaks of waterborne diseases, as the heavily silted, almost dead Sholmari river fails to drain the accumulated rainwater. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Army ready to assist in free, fair polls  
Says Gen Waker



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief of Army Staff General Waker Uz Zaman has said the country is heading towards the national election, and the army has taken preparations to assist the government in holding free and fair polls.

"All members of the army must be ready to perform their duties neutrally and in accordance with the law," he said at a regular Officers' Address

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## Influenza wave grips the nation

Infection rate highest since 2007, shows IEDCR-icddr,b study; experts urge caution



TUHIN SHUBHIRA ADHIKARY

Influenza is emerging as a main driver behind the recent surge in viral fever cases nationwide, with rising numbers of both children and adults falling ill.

This July saw 2.75 times more influenza cases than the same month last year, according to a joint surveillance study by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) and icddr,b.

About 59.2 percent of 2,455 patients who visited 19 selected hospitals in July with fever

were diagnosed with the flu. This is the highest rate recorded since influenza surveillance began in 2007, the IEDCR said, urging public awareness.

In addition to influenza, dengue, chikungunya, and Covid-19 are also circulating, complicating diagnosis and treatment.

Health experts advised wearing masks, avoiding gatherings, and maintaining hygiene to curb the spread.

Medication is generally unnecessary for typical flu cases, they added, except for

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## Star ROUNDTABLE

2

Logistics not yet ready for post-LDC graduation needs  
Businesses, experts urge remedial steps

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Poor logistical efficiency, compared to Bangladesh's regional peers, is a serious concern for maintaining export competitiveness ahead of the country's graduation from LDC group in November 2026, speakers said at a roundtable yesterday.

The 20 percent fresh tariffs slapped on Bangladesh's exports to the US has complicated things even further, they said.

High transport costs, weak policies, and inefficiencies were flagged as key barriers.

While India moves nearly 20 percent of its freight by rail, Bangladesh transports just 4 percent. Over 80 percent of the freight is carried by road -- the most expensive and least efficient option, said industry stakeholders at the online roundtable titled "Smart Logistics for a Competitive Private Sector" organised by The Daily Star.

This was the second roundtable organised by this newspaper to identify challenges for the private sector related to the LDC graduation, with the aim of devising a roadmap for the economy's future. The first roundtable was on August 12, focusing on energising the private sector.

With LDC benefits set to expire, exporters will face additional tariffs in key markets. In the European Union, duty rates could rise to 9-12 percent.

Without gaining efficiency, participants warned, exporters will struggle to remain competitive in a rules-based global trade environment.

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'We'll leave in February'  
Says Asif Nazrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

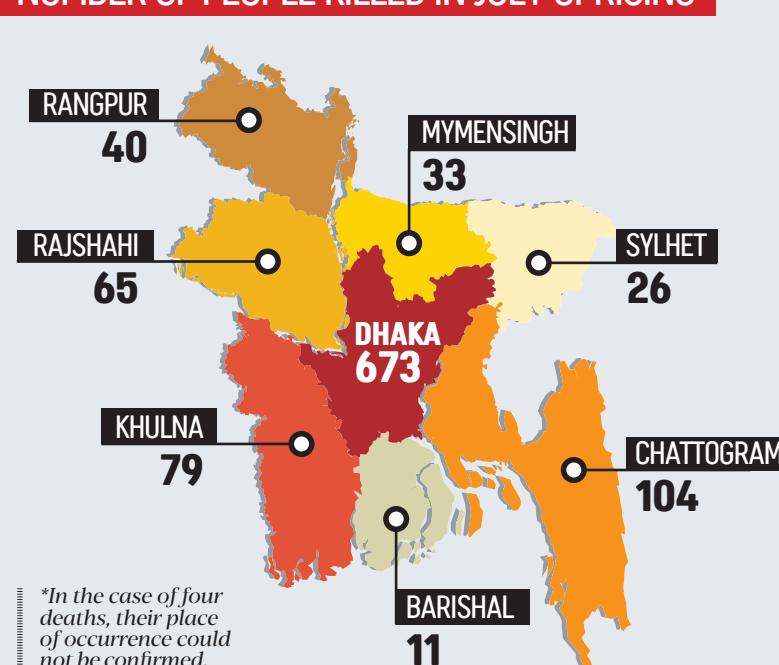
Law Adviser Asif Nazrul yesterday reaffirmed that the current administration will leave office in February, following the 13th national election.

"Election will be held in February, and we will leave in February," he told reporters at the Secretariat.

He added that the responsibility for holding the election rests with the government, not with any political party, and the administration is committed to the time-frame announced by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

"According to the chief adviser's announcement, we are determined to hold

### NUMBER OF PEOPLE KILLED IN JULY UPRISING



CHILDREN

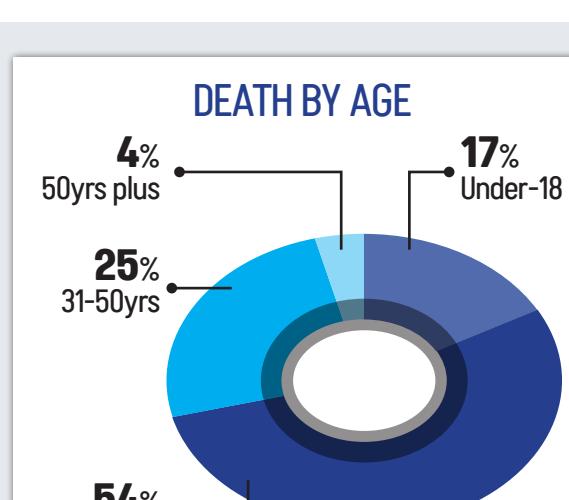
143

WOMEN

14

● Total injured about 30,000

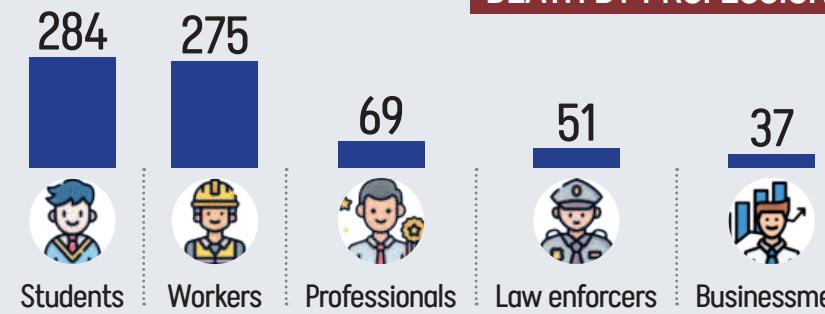
● 600 people lost vision totally or partially



75% deaths were caused by police

84% caused by police, other forces

### DEATH BY PROFESSION



### VIOLENCE AND ABUSES

2024 one of the deadliest years since '71  
Reports rights group HRSS

NILIMA JAHAN

Twenty twenty-four, "one of the deadliest and most violent years since the independence war of Bangladesh", was marked by killings, enforced disappearances, and brutal attacks on civilians, according to the Human Rights Support Society.

In its annual report released yesterday, the group said it recorded at least 1,180 political killings and 37,051 people being injured nationwide last year.

The July-August uprising alone claimed 1,035 lives, said the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS).

The HRSS compiled the data of deaths based on their places of occurrence. The toll it confirmed includes four killings, of which the HRSS could not determine the scene.

At least 673 of these killings were in Dhaka division.

The rights group added it is still working on the death toll of the July uprising and its estimate exceeds 1,300.

Compiled from 12 national media outlets as well as testimonies of victims' families, eyewitnesses, and hospitals, the report painted a grim picture of the year in two phases: the final months of Sheikh Hasina's regime and the turbulent aftermath of her departure.

It found that in just seven days, July 18-20 and

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## 5 MoUs to be signed during Pak ministers' visits

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh and Pakistan will sign five memorandums of understanding (MoUs) during the visits of Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan this week.

Khan will arrive in Dhaka tomorrow on a four-day visit, while Dar will arrive on August 23, marking the third ministerial visit from Pakistan to Bangladesh since the political changeover in August last year.

Earlier in July, Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited Dhaka following the foreign secretary level consultation on April 17 by Bangladesh and Pakistan in Dhaka that took place after 15 years.

The last foreign ministerial-level visit to Bangladesh was in November 2012, when Hina Rabbani visited Dhaka to invite then-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to the D-8 summit in Islamabad.

The highlights of the visits will be the signing of five MoUs to boost bilateral relationship in the areas of

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Family members of the three teachers killed in the Milestone School and College jet crash meet Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna yesterday.

PHOTO: CA PRESS WING

## Distressed loans surge

FROM PAGE 1

rescheduled loans to the defaulted loans. Among the distressed assets, defaulted loans stood at Tk 345,765 crore, rescheduled loans at Tk 348,461 crore, and written-off loans Tk 62,300 crore.

The breakdown of distressed assets was unearthed in the Financial Stability Report 2024 by the Bangladesh Bank.

The central bank has revealed the distressed assets as part of the conditions agreed with the International Monetary Fund for the \$4.7 billion loan programme.

"This is a reflection of the massive irregularities and a lack of strict action against loan defaulters," said Moinul Islam, economist and a former professor at the Chittagong University.

Distressed loans will increase in future.

"The figure that is now being said has already crossed Tk 7 lakh crore, but it will increase further as around Tk 2.5 lakh crore is stuck in various cases in money loan courts, the High Court and the Supreme Court," he said.

Unless the top defaulters of the banking sector are tried in tribunals and the judicial process is expedited, there will be no way out.

"That is the reality," he added.

The sharp increase in bad loans in the banking sector indicates a decline in asset quality, likely caused by imprudent lending and weak oversight of loans and advances, said the Financial Stability Report 2024.

The sluggish pace of defaulted loan recovery has contributed to the piling up of distressed loans, it said.

The top 10 banks accounted for 74.87 percent of the defaulted loans.

## Influenza wave grips

FROM PAGE 1

vulnerable groups such as the elderly and those with comorbidities, who should seek medical attention.

According to the World Health Organisation, seasonal influenza is an acute respiratory infection caused by influenza viruses. It spreads easily through droplets when people cough or sneeze, and most patients recover without specific treatment.

However, the illness can still significantly weaken and pose risks to patients belonging to high-risk groups.

Md Habib, a private job holder, has been tending to his wife and two children suffering from high fever and severe cough for almost 10 days.

"It started with my son," Habib said. Arhaan, a sixth-grader, returned home with a fever after attending school on August 10. "Many of his classmates were also down with fever."

As Arhaan's temperature spiked to 104 degrees on multiple occasions, the family tested him for dengue and chikungunya three days after he fell ill, but the results came back negative.

Three days after that, Habib's wife developed fever and body aches. The following day, their daughter, a first-grader, also came home from school with a high fever.

"I feared it might be dengue," Habib said. "Thankfully, none of them tested positive. But I still don't know what kind of fever this is -- it has left my wife and kids extremely weak. Now I'm worried I might catch it too."

Like them, thousands across Dhaka and beyond are experiencing similar symptoms as the country enters peak flu season. Dengue has compounded the crisis, with infections and deaths already surpassing last year's figures by a wide margin.

From January until August 18, 105 people have died and 26,758 have been hospitalised with dengue. In the same period last year, there were 74 deaths and 9,551 cases, DGHS data shows.

**INFLUENZA SPIKE**

The 19 hospitals where IEDCR and icddr,b conducted the surveillance study are: Medical college hospitals in Dhaka, Rajshahi, Cumilla, Khulna, Chattogram and Dinajpur; Jahurul Islam Medical College Hospital in Kishoreganj; Jalalabad Rabib Rabea Medical College Hospital in Sylhet; Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal; and district hospitals in Naogaon, Thakurgaon, Patuakhali, Satkhira, Narshingdi, Habiganj, Cox's Bazar, Joypurhat, Jashore and Gazipur.

Among 2,455 patients, who visited these hospitals with fever, cold and body aches in July, 1,453 tested positive for the flu.

## Logistics not yet ready for post-LDC graduation needs

FROM PAGE 1

Distressed assets have increased sharply after the fall of the Awami League-led government in August last year as the party's affiliated businesspeople enjoyed different kinds of policy support, all of which are now suspended, said Bangladesh Bank officials.

Some Sharib-based banks controlled by the controversial business conglomerate S Alam Group and Bashundhara Group, defaulted heavily after the AL's fall, pushing the total distressed assets to an unprecedented level, they added.

Reputed companies are now facing trouble and are unable to repay bank loans due to the country's economic situation, said Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank.

"These companies are now rescheduling their loans due to domestic and external economic pressures, which have pushed up distressed loans," said Mahbubur, also the former chairman of the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh.

The situation has arisen due to the overall slowdown of the economy.

The total distressed loans in the banking sector are hitting the capital adequacy ratio, he said.

The Financial Stability Report 2024 showed that the banking industry's Capital to Risk-weighted Asset Ratio (CRAR) declined by 8.56 percentage points and stood at 3.08 percent at the end of 2024.

He said efficiency today depends as much on information and digital tools as on physical infrastructure.

The private sector is already investing in warehouse automation and digital processes. But competitiveness also depends on national infrastructure -- ports, airports, waterways -- that require reform, selective privatisation, and better multimodal integration."

Rahman argued that LDC graduation should be seen not with fear, but as a reality check. "Whether Bangladesh graduates in 14 months or later, it will have to compete in a more open, rules-based system. What truly matters is having an integrated roadmap, tracking progress periodically, and ensuring accountability through continuous communication with stakeholders."

He called for stronger contingency planning. "If Chattogram Port is closed for two or three days, what is our way out? Global buyers are already asking this."

Rahman also underscored the importance of free trade agreements. "Several competing countries already benefit from FTAs with key markets, giving them a head start. Once GSP ends, Bangladesh will risk falling behind unless it strengthens logistics and actively pursues new trade deals."

He said the logistics reforms should be done smartly. "It is about sharpening our competitive edge. And logistics lies at the very heart of that transformation."

In his welcome remarks, Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said logistics will play a decisive role in determining Bangladesh's export competitiveness post-LDC graduation.

"Actually, we are going through a major viral outbreak, which is why so many people are coming down with fever. Influenza is now the most common cause. Both type A and type B are being detected in significant numbers."

Fazle Rabbi Chowdhury, associate professor at Bangladesh Medical University, said the country generally sees two major flu seasons -- March-April and August-September. "This year, after a brief lull following March-April, cases rose again and have yet to subside."

He said multiple viruses are spreading simultaneously, including dengue, chikungunya, Covid-19 and other respiratory viruses.

"Actually, we are going through a major viral outbreak, which is why so many people are coming down with fever. Influenza is now the most common cause. Both type A and type B are being detected in significant numbers."

Fazle Rabbi added that viral diseases are highly contagious and spread rapidly through coughing and sneezing, particularly in densely populated cities like Dhaka.

In public transport, on streets and in schools and colleges, the flu virus has spread swiftly among large groups.

About prevention, he said the guidance mirrors Covid-19: people, especially those with cold and cough, should wear masks, avoid crowded places, and follow hygiene rules to avoid spreading the virus.

He urged school authorities to tell guardians to keep children with fever, cold or cough at home for five days to reduce transmission. "But interpreting a

exports -- central to this conversation."

Syed M Tanvir, managing director of Pacific Jeans, flagged twin hurdles: bottlenecks in domestic logistics and strains in global supply chains.

He said lead time and transit time are now as critical as product cost in the RMG sector, but airport delays, customs hurdles, and poor coordination continue to erode competitiveness.

Tanvir called for a joint public-private study to identify inefficiencies and recommended automation and process improvements. Without action, Bangladesh risks falling further behind Vietnam and China, he warned.

"Logistics reform is about systems and execution -- not just infrastructure. The private sector is ready, but government support is essential," he said.

Ziaur Rahman, regional country manager at H&M, said the Dhaka-Chittogram highway currently allows an average speed of around 20 km/h.

weak public private coordination.

"Logistics is no longer a secondary issue -- it's central to Bangladesh's economic transformation," said M Asrur Reaz, chairman and CEO of Policy Exchange Bangladesh.

Reaz emphasised the urgent need for logistics reform to secure long term competitiveness. "The Trump-era tariffs and EU compliance requirements like the Green Deal are reshaping global value chains. Without logistics reform, we won't cope with these structural shifts."

He pointed to Bangladesh's poor global rankings: 88th on the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index, 334th for Chattogram Port in the Container Port Performance Index, and 176th in the former Trading Across Borders index. "We're falling behind competitors like India and Vietnam. These impact foreign direct investment, exports, and trade capacity."

Reaz noted that logistics, which spans over 22 subsectors, has been neglected for decades. Although the National Logistics Policy (2024) was a major step, implementation has stalled. "This private-sector-led policy must be revived immediately."

He called for the simultaneous development of hinterland connectivity alongside the development of rail and land ports.

According to him, two areas that often get overlooked are rail logistics and land ports, which are vital for regional cooperation.

The current railway law, which dates back to the British era, doesn't allow for private investment in railway infrastructure or services, an obstacle that needs immediate reform, he said.

Reaz recommended designating the Ministry of Commerce as the lead coordinator in reforming the logistics sector, and opening port terminal development to global operators such as PSA and DP World. "Bangladesh needs a long-term logistics master plan. Bay Terminal must be prioritised. With reform, logistics can be our top growth enabler," he concluded.

Mohammad Iqbal Chowdhury, CEO of LafargeHolcim Bangladesh, said efficient logistics can be a "game changer" for industrial cost management.

He noted that logistics accounts for 16-17 percent of the cement sector's \$3 billion value -- around half a billion dollars.

With heavy raw materials and finished goods, the sector depends heavily on transport. Currently, 80 percent of cement moves by road, while waterways account for just 16-17 percent.

Road transport costs up to Tk 8 per ton per km, compared to Tk 2 by water, meaning logistics costs could be reduced by 75 percent if waterways were scaled up.

Rail remains underutilised at just 4 percent, far behind India's 20 percent. Freight costs Tk 9 per ton per km in Bangladesh, compared to Tk 2 in India. "Strengthening rail could yield immediate and sustainable savings," Chowdhury said.

He also pointed out the road

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Draft 30-year logistics master plan, then implement it
- 2 Prepare roadmap and track progress
- 3 Form interministerial panel to address logistics issues
- 4 Prioritise implementation of port related projects
- 5 Ensure, strengthen multimodal transport
- 6 Involve global terminal operators
- 7 Build bonded transit warehouses
- 8 Digitalise, modernise customs

"Regarding smart logistics, if we reduce inefficiencies, costs will naturally fall. But beyond automation and paperless systems, we first need to address basic issues."

For example, if it takes 18 hours to move product from Dhaka to Chattogram, it would be more valuable to reduce that time to 6-8 hours than to introduce paperless systems, he said.

"Time is money."

He said waterways are also underused. Chattogram port remains congested while Mongla is underutilised, not just due to infrastructure, but also because of

that transformation."

In his welcome remarks, Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said logistics will play a decisive role in determining Bangladesh's export competitiveness post-LDC graduation.

He said the problem isn't technology, but people and processes, with poorly aligned systems. Unlike Singapore, India, and Sri Lanka, Bangladesh's logistics suffer from

jurisdiction."

He added that tasking the Appellate Division with interpreting the July Charter would "create many complications".

Also yesterday, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said his party will not accept a proportional representation (PR) system of election, as "people of Bangladesh are not familiar with it."

"The people do not know or understand it," he told reporters at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport after returning home from Thailand.

The PR is an electoral system in which seats in a legislative body are allocated in close proportion to the share of votes

each party receives. In other words, if a party wins, say 30 percent of votes, it should receive approximately 30 percent of the seats in parliament.

He said the system prevents voters from electing their representatives through direct voting.

"The people of Bangladesh want an election because it's the only way to overcome the political and economic crises the country is facing."

Fakhrul said his party is in favour of a free and fair election as per the traditional system.

In the PR system, he said, voters do not know for whom they are casting their votes. "That cannot be acceptable."

**The three teachers are our pride, role models**  
**Says Yunus about educators who died in the Milestone tragedy**

BSS, Dhaka

Three teachers -- Maherin Chowdhury, Masuka Begum, and Mahfuz Khanam -- who died after the air force jet crash at Milestone School and College in Uttara's Diabari, will be remembered forever by the nation as a unique example of humanity and bravery, said Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

Family members of the three teachers met the chief adviser at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka yesterday afternoon.

Teacher Maherin Chowdhury's husband Mansur Halal, two sons Adil Rashid and Ayan Rashid, sister Mehtaz Chowdhury, and brother Munaf Mujib Chowdhury; teacher Masuka Begum's sister Papri Rahman and brother-in-law Khalilur Rahman; and teacher Mahfuz Khanam's daughter Ayesha Siddiqua, sister Mursida Khanam, and nephew Maidul Islam were present during the visit.

Yunus said, "We can express our condolences to you, but we do not have the power to erase this unbearable memory. However, I can say this grief is not yours alone. As a nation, we bear this grief."

Maherin's husband, Mansur, said, "The scene I saw at the burn institute that day is beyond my words. I wish no one would experience that in their lives."

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

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AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK

SC continues hearing appeal against acquittal of Tarique, Babar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday continued for third day hearing on the appeals against a High Court verdict that acquitted BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman, former state minister Lutfozzaman Babar, and others in two cases filed over the August 21 grenade attack.

A six-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed also fixed today for further hearing.

Earlier in the day, Deputy Attorney General Abdullah Al Mahmud Masud placed arguments on behalf of the state, praying to the apex court to scrap the HC judgement and to affirm the trial court verdict in the cases.

Defence lawyers SM Shahjahan, Zainul Abedin, Kayser Kamal, Mohammad Shishir Manir, Jaiad Bin Amjad and Md Maksud Ullah were present in the courtroom during the proceedings.

On June 2, the Appellate Division allowed the state to move two appeals against the HC verdict in the cases.

On December 1 last year, the HC

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

A child reaches out from under an umbrella to catch raindrops in his hand. While he seems to be enjoying the moment, the constant shift between rain and heatwaves continues to trouble city dwellers. The photo was taken in the Palashi area of the capital yesterday.

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## Lost without a trace

Hathazari madrasa student's disappearance remains unsolved after a year of dead ends

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and DIPAN NANDY



With fear, grief, and uncertainty, a family from Barguna's Bamna spends every single day of their lives in an agonising wait.

For more than a year, they have been desperately searching for Omar, also known as Belal Hossain, a 29-year-old Dawra-e-Hadith student of Darul Ulum Moinul Islam Madrasa in Hathazari, who went missing.

Despite countless visits to government offices, their son has not returned.

"We don't know if my brother is alive or dead. We don't know if we'll ever get him back," said Belal's elder brother Md Sumon, in a choked voice, while talking to The Daily Star.

Until mid-July 2024, Belal stayed in touch with his family. But after that, there was no trace of him.

At first, the family asked his madrasa teachers and classmates for information. But everyone only said Belal had been missing for quite some time.

Then came mysterious messages and threats. On August 26 last year, Sumon received a message from an unknown number -- "I am Belal. My health is not good. Come save me quickly; otherwise, they will kill me."

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## 418 people died on roads last month

Reports Road Safety Foundation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 418 people were killed and 856 were injured in 443 road accidents across the country last month, said the Road Safety Foundation yesterday.

Among the deceased, 72 were women, 53 were children, and 47 were students, according to a report from the organisation.

Motorcycles were involved in 131 of the crashes, leaving 109 people dead, which accounts for 26.08 percent of the total deaths recorded in July.

During the same period, 92 pedestrians were killed in accidents, accounting for 22 percent of all fatalities.

The report also recorded four waterway accidents that claimed six lives. In addition, 18 people died and seven were injured in 21 rail related accidents.

The foundation prepared the report based on information from nine national dailies, seven online news portals, various electronic media, and its own monitoring.

Of the road crashes, 81 (18.28 percent) were head-on collisions, 216 (48.75 percent) occurred when vehicles lost control and fell into ditches, 94 (21.21 percent) involved pedestrians being hit or run over, 44 (9.93 percent) were rear-end collisions, and the rest were caused by other reasons.

### AT A GLANCE

- >Total accidents: 443
- Total injured: 856
- Vehicles involved: 609
- 72 women, 53 children, 47 students among the dead
- Motorcycle crashes: 131 (109 deaths, 26%)
- Pedestrian deaths: 92 (22%)
- Rail accidents: 21 (18 deaths, 7 injured)

A total of 609 vehicles were involved in the crashes, which included 114 buses, 108 trucks, 17 private cars, 131 motorcycles, 84 three-wheelers, and 25 locally made vehicles, such as Nasimon, Vatvoti, and Mahindra.

The foundation identified 11 causes behind the road crashes, including faulty vehicles, defective roads, reckless driving, drivers' negligence,

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CORRUPTION CHARGES

## ACC sues ex-GCC mayor, Sikder family

STAR REPORT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has sued former Gazipur City Corporation mayor Zahangir Alam and six others on charges of embezzling around Tk 2.6 crore.

ACC Assistant Director Md Ashiqur Rahman filed the case yesterday at its Integrated District Office in Gazipur, said ACC Director General Md Akhter Hossain at a press briefing at the ACC headquarters.

According to the case, Zahangir, during his tenure as mayor, opened a fake account under the name of GCC at Premier Bank's Konabari branch on October 7, 2019, without any resolution or approval from the corporation. He used his personal mobile number to open the account with the help of then branch manager Md Motaleb Hossain.

Meanwhile, the ACC filed a case against 26 individuals, including members of the Sikder family, for allegedly embezzling Tk 110.27 crore from First Security Islami Bank PLC, said Akhter Hossain.

The accused include Ron Haque Sikder, Rick Haque Sikder, and John Haque Sikder.

NBR OFFICIALS' WEALTH STATEMENTS SOUGHT

The anti-graft watchdog has asked 17 senior officials of the National Board of Revenue to submit their wealth statements as part of an investigation into allegations of accumulating assets beyond known sources of income, said the ACC DG.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

DHAKA WEDNESDAY AUGUST 20, 2025

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The Daily Star

3

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UPCOMING ELECTION  
EU to provide  
€4m to ensure  
global standards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The European Union yesterday said that it will provide 4 million euros to support Bangladesh in conducting the upcoming 13th national elections in accordance with international standards.

EU will also send a team of technical experts to Bangladesh next month to assess the situation ahead of deploying an election observation mission.

Michael Miller, EU ambassador to Bangladesh, shared the developments at a press briefing in the afternoon, after a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin at the EC headquarters in Dhaka.

The meeting between the CEC and a six-member EU delegation under the leadership of Miller began around 11:00am and continued till 12:30pm.

Miller said, "Next month, a team of technical experts will visit. This is not the observation mission; their role is to assess whether the conditions are suitable for deploying an election observation mission in Bangladesh."

"The European Union is working in partnership with Bangladesh to support a transition leading to democratic elections. We are moving toward a

SEE PAGE 9 COL 8

KILLINGS OF TWO WOMEN  
BY THEIR HUSBANDS

MJF expresses  
outrage, seeks  
justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) yesterday expressed deep shock and outrage over the recent deaths of two young women -- Syeda Fahmida Tahsin Keya, 25, from Dhaka and Jamey Akter, 19, from Gazipur -- both allegedly killed by their husbands within a single week.

In a press statement, MJF said these murders highlight the ongoing and pervasive crisis of domestic violence against women in Bangladesh.

MJF also called on the government, law enforcement agencies, and society at large to ensure strict enforcement of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act; expand shelters, counselling, and livelihood support services for survivors; address the stigma and social barriers that silence victims; launch nationwide awareness campaigns to challenge the normalisation of domestic violence; and promote simple versions of the related laws.

The MJF statement came following a report of Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) which said 363 incidents of domestic violence occurred in the country between January and July this year, resulting in 322 deaths, including 114 suicides.



SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

Promote  
sustainability,  
reduce aid  
dependency

Speakers urge dev agencies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid the rising cuts in aid, development agencies have called for effective use of funds and greater transparency to ensure grassroots communities benefit the most during humanitarian crises.

They suggested building the capacity of local non-profits in line with the Grand Bargain commitment and promoting sustainable practices that can reduce dependence on aid.

The observations were made at an international seminar, titled "Accelerating Grand Bargain 3.0 for Advancing Humanitarian Action in Bangladesh", organised by COAST Foundation, BDCSO Process, and Cox's Bazar CSO-NGO Forum at a city hotel yesterday.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

## Mazibur Rahman BAEC chairman (current charge)

CITY DESK

The government has appointed nuclear scientist Dr Md Mazibur Rahman as the chairman (current charge) of the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC) through a notification issued on August 18, said a press release.

Prior to this appointment, he was serving as the member (biology) of the commission. He also worked as the director of the International Relations Department and the national liaison officer of the International Atomic Energy Agency for a long time.



Dr Mazibur received his PhD from the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, in 2003 and completed his post doctoral research as a fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH) at Friedrich-Schiller-University of Jena, Germany, in 2008.

More than 50 of his research articles have so far been published in national and international journals. Dr Mazibur was born in 1966 at Panipara village in Chandina upazila of Cumilla.

# Once abundant, Teesta now yields empty nets

Thousands of fisher families pushed to edge of survival

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Once brimming with life, the Teesta is now a shadow of its past. Once home to dozens of native fish species in abundance, it today yields little more than a few scattered catches, pushing thousands of fisher families along its banks to the edge of survival.

The 115-kilometre stretch of the Teesta flowing through 13 upazilas of five northern districts -- Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Rangpur, Kurigram and Gaibandha -- nurtures 32 fisher villages.

Each village houses 100 to 250 families who for generations have lived by the river's bounty. But today, many are abandoning their ancestral trade.

Fishermen said two decades ago the Teesta was teeming with native carp -- rui, katla, mrigel -- alongside large boal, tengra, shol, pabda, prawns and even the prized bairali, locally known as the "silver hilsa".

"In the '90s, just a few hours of casting nets would fill our boats," said Sudhacharan Das, 65, of Jelepara village in Gangachara, Rangpur. "I would never



return home with less than 20 to 30 kilogrammes. Now, I struggle to catch even one kilogramme in a whole day."

According to the Department of Fisheries, nearly 17,000 professional fishers worked in the Teesta in 2010. Now, barely 2,000 remain, and their incomes have dropped by 50 to 80 percent.

Fishery experts and locals cited multiple causes: withdrawal at India's Gajoldoba Barrage and regulation at

Bangladesh's Teesta Barrage drying the river in the lean season; flash floods in monsoon destroying spawning grounds; siltation disconnecting canals and wetlands; indiscriminate use of current and fry nets blocking regeneration; agricultural chemicals, brick kiln smoke, and sand and stone extraction ruining aquatic habitats; and climate change bringing erratic rainfall and sudden floods that repeatedly disrupt breeding.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

## VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT



International Labour Organization (ILO) Dhaka invites applications from interested candidates for the following position:

**Position:** National Programme Officer, **Vacancy No.:** DC/DHAKA/No/2025/06, **Department:** RO-Asia and the Pacific, **Organization Unit:** CO-Dhaka, **Location:** Dhaka, **Contract Type:** Fixed Term, **Contract Duration:** 12 months (with the possibility of extension)

For detailed vacancy announcement, please visit:

[https://jobs.ilo.org/job/National-Programme-Officer/13215-en\\_GB/](https://jobs.ilo.org/job/National-Programme-Officer/13215-en_GB/)

**Deadline for submission of application:** Tuesday, 2 September 2025 (midnight local time)

## IFIC Bank PLC

IFIC Tower, 61 Purana Paltan, GPO Box: 2229, Dhaka 1000. [www.ificbank.com.bd](http://www.ificbank.com.bd)



## INVITATION OF TENDER

IFIC Bank PLC is hereby inviting tender for following:

Name of Procuring Entity	IFIC Bank PLC			
Invitation For	Renewal of AMC, CON, software license, and SLA of Tower Core Stack (STK) Switch for 5th and 6th years.			
Invitation Ref. No.	IFIC/HO/SS6/ED/CP/Retender/OTM/TOWER_CORE_SWITCH/061			
Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method			
Details of Tender Schedule:				
Date of Invitation & Publication	Last Selling Date	Pre-Tender Meeting (If required)	Submission Date and Time	Opening Date and Time
20.08.25	26.08.25	(Time & Place will be notified later)	03.09.25 within 2.00 PM	03.09.25 after 3.00 PM
Name & Address for Tender Document:				
Tender shall submit a request to get Tender Document in official letter head and collect the Tender Document from Level-01, IFIC Tower, 61, Purana Paltan, Dhaka.				
Eligibility of Tenderer:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum 05 years continuous experience in similar line of business.</li> <li>At least 05 experience of work on Cisco in Bangladesh.</li> <li>Minimum 02 resources for ensuring after sales service with CCNP or equivalent Certification</li> <li>Tenderer Should be Certified by OEM.</li> <li>Tenderers must have the legal capacity to enter the contract under the applicable law of Bangladesh.</li> <li>Tenderers shall not be barred as per law of the land that may subject to legal proceedings of any kind.</li> </ul>				
Price of Tender Document				
BDT. 5,000.00 (Five Thousand Taka) only (Non-Refundable) to be made in the form of payment order of any scheduled Bank favoring IFIC Bank PLC.				
Contact Detail of Official	Name: Md. Rakibul Islam Inviting Tender Email: <a href="mailto:rakibulmd@ificbankbd.com">rakibulmd@ificbankbd.com</a> , Phone: +880 9666 716 250, Ext-685			
IFIC Bank PLC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever at any stage of the procurement process.				

The Head of Service & Estate Division  
IFIC Bank PLC

16255



## পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলজি

(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Grid Bhaban, Avenue-3, Jahurul Islam City, Aftabnagar, Badda, Dhaka-1212

[www.powergrid.gov.bd](http://www.powergrid.gov.bd)

স্মারক নং - ২৭.২১.০০০০.৮৮.৮৮.১৩২.২৮.১৩৬

তারিখ ১৭/০৮/২০২৫ খ্রিঃ

## e-Auction বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাওয়ার গ্রিডের "বৃপ্তপুর পারমাণবিক বিদ্যুৎ কেন্দ্রের উৎপাদিত বিদ্যুৎ ইভাকুয়েশনের জন্য সঞ্চালন অবকাঠামো উন্নয়ন" শীর্ষক প্রকল্পের পাকেজ-২ চুক্তির আওতায় নিয়ন্ত্রিত নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি ওয়েব লিংক <https://auction.powergrid.gov.bd>-এ পাওয়া যাবে।

আইডি	কাজের নাম	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়
28.2	"বৃপ্তপুর পারমাণবিক বিদ্যুৎ কেন্দ্রের উৎপাদিত বিদ্যুৎ ইভাকুয়েশনের জন্য সঞ্চালন অবকাঠামো উন্নয়ন" শীর্ষক প্রকল্পের আওতায় নিয়ন্ত্রণীয় ৮০০ কেভি বৃপ্তপুর-ঢাকা (আবিন্দিবাজার- কালিগাঁওয়ে) ভাবল সার্কিট সঞ্চালন লাইন নির্মাণ (পাকেজ-২) কাজে আমদানিকৃত মালামাল হতে টাঙ্গাইল স্টোরে সংরক্ষিত ব্যবহার অব্যোগ Scrap/ প্যাকিং মালামাল (Conductor & OPGW এর খালি steel ডাম, বাইডি স্লিপ, প্যাকিং কাট, প্লাস্টিক PVC সিট ইত্যাদি) যথামে যে অবস্থায় আছে ই-অকশনের মাধ্যমে বিক্রয়।	১৯/০৮/২০২৫ খ্রিঃ	০৮/০৯/২০২৫ খ্রিঃ

অগ্রহী টিকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে <https://auction.powergrid.gov.bd> সাইটের মাধ্যমে নিলাম অংশগ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাবে।

## মোঃ মাসুদুল ইসলাম

প্রকল্প পরিচালক ও প্রধান প্রকৌশলী (আধার)

বৃপ্তপুর পারমাণবিক বিদ্যুৎ কেন্দ্রের উৎপাদিত বিদ্যুৎ

ইভাকুয়েশনের জন্য সঞ্চালন অবকাঠামো উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প

## Notice

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH  
HIGH COURT DIVISION  
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)

COMPANY MATTER NO. 1333 OF 2025

Mrs. Rehana Rustum

.....Petitioner

.....Versus

Register of Joint Stock Companies and Firms

.....Respondent

This is to inform all concerned that on behalf of Mrs. Rehana Rustum, an application under Sections 81(2), 85(3), and 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 was filed before the Company Bench of the Hon'ble High Court Division on 29th July 2025, seeking condonation of delay in holding the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Upon hearing, the Hon'ble Court was pleased to admit the application and issue notices upon the Respondent.

Any person interested in participating in the matter may do so either in person or through an Advocate. A copy of the application is available at our office upon request.

Mr. Bibhuti Bhushan Sarker  
Advocate  
Supreme Court of Bangladesh  
Mayakunjo, 274, Free School Street  
Kathal Bagan, Dhaka-1205  
Mobile: 01712 642362

D-72

## LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH  
HIGH COURT DIVISION  
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)

COMPANY MATTER NO. 1359 of 2025

IN THE MATTER OF:

An application under Section 12 read with Section 13 of the Companies Act, 1994.

AND

IN THE MATTER OF:

Lankabangla Finance PLC, Represented by its Managing Director, Mrs. Humaira Azam, Head Office - Safura Tower (Level-11), 20, Kemel Ataturk Avenue, Banani, Dhaka-1213.

Petitioner

Versus

The Registrar, Joint Stock Companies and Firms

TCB Bhaban, 6th Floor, 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.

Respondent

Notice is hereby given that aforesaid application before the High Court Division praying for Amendment of the Memorandum of Association of the Petitioner company by way of inclusion of clause was moved upon hearing the application Hon'ble Court is pleased to admit the application on 30th July, 2025 and fixed for hearing on 31st July, 2025.

If anyone is interested to oppose the said application, he may appear before the Hon'ble Court by himself or through an Advocate on the date fixed for hearing.

Copy of the Application will be available from the undersigned on payment of Necessary Cost.

Mr. Mohammad Arshadur Rouf  
Senior Advocate  
Supreme Court of Bangladesh  
Chamber Address: Room No. 9045  
Sarwardi Bhaban (9th Floor)  
Supreme Court Bar Association

D-73

## July victims demand law adviser's resignation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The injured of July uprising and families of the martyrs staged a sit in outside the Secretariat yesterday, demanding the resignation of Law Adviser Asif Nazrul.

The protest began around 11:15am outside the Jatiya Press Club, where demonstrators held a brief demonstration before marching to the Secretariat at approximately 12:30pm, blocking traffic in the area.

During the sit in, protesters chanted several slogans, voicing their demands.

The protesters alleged that individuals accused in the cases over the July atrocities were securing bail in exchange for money.

They demanded the immediate resignation of the adviser and the removal of judges who, they alleged, are allowing impunity for the accused.

The demonstration temporarily disrupted vehicular movement outside the Secretariat.

The protesters left the street around 3:00pm, giving an "ultimatum" for their demands to be addressed by next Sunday.

Meanwhile, in a Facebook post yesterday, Asif Nazrul said, "In a case filed by the family of a July martyr, the High Court has granted bail to a member of the police force. Naturally, this has

## Modi to attend SCO summit in China Beijing's top diplomat hails 'positive trend' in ties with India

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit China later in August, his security chief said yesterday during talks with Beijing's foreign minister in New Delhi.

Modi will attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit opening on August 31 in Tianjin, his first visit to China since 2018, Ajit Doval said, in public comments at the start of a meeting with Beijing's Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

"Our prime minister will be visiting for the SCO summit," Doval said, speaking of "new energy" in diplomatic ties.

China "attaches great importance" to Modi's visit to the SCO summit, Wang said, according to an official translator.

"History and reality proves once again that a healthy and stable China-India relationship serves the fundamental and long term interests of both of our



Palestinians salvage items from the rubble of homes destroyed in Israeli strikes on the southern al-Zeitoun neighbourhood in Gaza City yesterday. Gaza's civil defence agency said 31 people were killed by Israeli strikes and fire across the territory yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



countries," Wang added.

During talks on Monday with Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, India's foreign minister, Wang said the two countries should "view each other as partners and opportunities, rather than adversaries or threats".

He pointed to the resumption of "dialogue at all levels" and "maintenance of peace and tranquility in border areas" as evidence bilateral ties were on a "positive trend of returning to the main path of cooperation".

The world's two most populous nations are intense rivals competing for influence across South Asia, and fought a deadly border clash in 2020.

## 5 MoUs to be signed during Pak ministers' visits

FROM PAGE 2  
trade, culture, media, training and travel, said a diplomatic source in Islamabad.

The sources confirmed that the MoUs will be on visa free entry for holders of diplomatic and official passports, establishing a joint working group on trade and commerce, cooperation between Bangladesh Sangbad Sangshtha and Associated Press of Pakistan, and cooperation between Bangladesh's Foreign Service Academy and the Foreign Service Academy of Pakistan.

The MoUs will be signed at a delegation level meeting on August 24 at the state guesthouse Padma. Khan will also be present. Besides, he will hold a separate meeting with Commerce Adviser Sheikh Bashiruddin.

They are also likely to call on Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, foreign ministry officials said.

Khan will meet with Bangladesh's trade bodies and Trading Corporation of Bangladesh officials in Dhaka and Chattogram. He will also visit the Chattogram Port and a steel re-rolling factory in Chattogram.

In Dhaka, Dar and Khan will attend a reception to be hosted by the Pakistan High Commission on August 23.

The Dhaka Islamabad relationship soured after Pakistan condemned the

execution of Bangladesh Jamaat e Islami leader Abdul Quader Mollah in 2013 for crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 Liberation War.

The renewed efforts to improve the relationship were taken after last year's political changeover.

Bilateral trade increased from both ends, reaching \$865 million in fiscal 2024-25. Bangladeshi exports to Pakistan stood at \$78 million, a 20 percent increase from the previous year. Pakistan's exports increased by 28 percent.

Since August last year, Bangladesh and Pakistan began direct shipping, eased visa and trade regimes and are set to start direct flights.

For direct flights between Dhaka and Karachi, foreign ministry officials said.

Pakistani airline Fly Jinnah has already secured approval from Bangladesh and Air Sial has applied for the approval. Biman Bangladesh is also planning to seek approval from Pakistan authorities, officials said.

A Pakistani business delegation, led by President of the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikrar Sheikh, visited Dhaka in January this year after 12 years.

The two countries are likely to hold the Joint Economic Commission meeting in September or October, 20 years after it was last held. Pakistan Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb may visit Bangladesh then, foreign ministry officials said.

Besides those killed, 308 aid workers were wounded, 125 kidnapped and 45 detained last year.

"Humanitarians must be respected and protected. They can never be targeted," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a statement.

"This rule is non-negotiable and is binding on all parties to conflict, always and everywhere. Yet red lines are crossed with impunity."

He called for perpetrators to be brought to justice.

Provisional figures from the Aid Worker Security Database show that 265 aid workers have been killed this year, up to August 14.

"Attacks on this scale, with zero accountability, are a shameful indictment of international inaction and

apathy," said UN aid chief Tom Fletcher, head of its humanitarian agency OCHA. "Violence against aid workers must end."

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement said 18 of their staff and volunteers had been killed so far this year "while carrying out their life-saving work".

Meanwhile the WHO said 1,121 health workers and patients had been killed and hundreds injured in attacks across 16 territories -- though most deaths were in Sudan.

OCHA spokesman Jens Laerke said "very, very few" people had "ever been brought to justice for any of these attacks", with the UN human rights office urging countries to bring perpetrators to account using the principle of universal jurisdiction.

## Macron calls Putin 'ogre at our gates'

AFP, Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday warned European allies not to trust Russian President Vladimir Putin, whom he called "an ogre at our gates".

Macron's remarks came as Russian and Ukrainian presidents Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelensky looked set for a peace summit after fast-moving talks Monday between Donald Trump and European leaders that focused on the key issue of long-term security guarantees for Kyiv.

"Putin has rarely honoured his commitments," Macron told the LCI broadcaster. "He has constantly been a force for destabilisation. He has sought to redraw borders to increase his power."

Macron said he did not believe that Russia would "return to peace".

Putin, "including for his own survival, needs to keep eating", Macron said. "That means he is a predator, an ogre at our gates."

This did not mean that France would "come under attack tomorrow", Macron said, "but of course this is a threat to Europe. Let's not be naive."

## Pakistan floods toll nears 400

AFP, Bar Daror

Rescuers and residents resumed searching yesterday for survivors as the death toll from five days of torrential rain rose to almost 400, with authorities warning monsoon downpours would continue until the weekend.

Torrential rains across Pakistan's north have caused flooding and landslides that have swept away entire villages, leaving many residents trapped in the rubble and scores missing.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said 356 people were killed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a mountainous province in Pakistan's northwest bordering Afghanistan, since Thursday evening.

Dozens more were killed in surrounding regions, taking the toll in the past five days to almost 400. Rescuers dug through mud and stone in hard hit Dalori village in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the hope of finding survivors and the bodies of people missing.



Government of the people's Republic of Bangladesh  
Bangladesh Police  
Rapid Action Battalion Forces Headquarters  
Kurmitola, Dhaka-1229  
[www.rab.gov.bd](http://www.rab.gov.bd)

### Invitation For e-Tender

For financial year 2025-2026, e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) for the procurement of :

SL	Tender ID No & Reference No	Description of goods	Last selling Date & Time	Closing/ Opening Date & Time
1.	1141544, RABHQ/CPS/2025-2026/3258105/1094 Date: 19/08/2025	Repair & Maintenance of Vehicle Tracking System and Other Related Software Services	04-Sep-2025 11:30	04-Sep-2025 12:00
2.	1141669, RABHQ/CPS/2025-2026/3258105/1095 Date: 19/08/2025	Repair & Maintenance of Photocopy Machine, Mobile Phone Sets, Other Equipment and Accessories	04-Sep-2025 11:30	04-Sep-2025 12:00

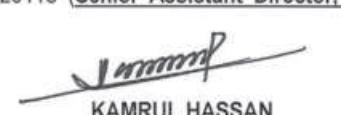
This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP system portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the national e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP helpdesk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd))

Tenderer having clarity requirements are requested to contact at 01777-720118 ([Senior Assistant Director, Central Procurement Section](mailto:Senior Assistant Director, Central Procurement Section)).

  
KAMRUL HASSAN  
Commander BN  
Director (Admin & Finance)  
RAB Forces Headquarters, Dhaka.  
Mobile: 01777-720110

### চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

### চট্টগ্রাম

স্মারক নং-এ-১(৮)/১২১৮(১৫০)/সাঃ

তারিখঃ ১৯-০৮-২০২৫

এ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের বিভিন্ন বিভাগ/ইনসিটিউট/অন্যদল/মসজিদ/হল/সংস্থার নিম্নোক্ত শনায়েসমূহ হায়ারী ভিত্তিতে প্রদর্শন করা যাচ্ছেঃ

ক্রমিক	হল/বিভাগ/সংস্থা/ইনসিটিউট	প্রদর্শন নাম ও সংখ্যা	শিক্ষাপ্রতি যোগাযোগ	বেতন ক্ষেত্র-২০১৫
১	শাহমুন নাহার হল	ভোজনালয় সহকারী-১টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮২৫০-২০০১০/-
২	শাহ আমানত হল	প্রহরী- ১টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮২৫০-২০০১০/-
		বাস্তুলোর ১টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮২৫০-২০০১০/-
৩	এ.এফ. বহুমান হল	ভোজনালয় সহকারী-১টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮২৫০-২০০১০/-
৪	শাহজালাল হল	প্রহরী- ১টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮২৫০-২০০১০/-
৫	মেধেনেজি বেগম খালেদা জিয়া হল	বার্তাবাহক- ১টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮৮০০-২১৫১০/-
৬	সোহেলে গোয়ালি হল	প্রহরী- ১টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮২৫০-২০০১০/-
৭	মাস্টারস সুর্যসেন হল	বাস্তুলোর - ১টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮২৫০-২০০১০/-
৮	সমাজ বিজ্ঞান অনুষদ	আফিস পিয়ান ১টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮২৫০-২০০১০/-
৯	শিরাপতা দলতর	প্রাইভেট ইনসিটিউট মেশিন অপারেটর ১টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮৮০০-২১৫১০/-
১০	পরামর্শ নিয়ন্ত্রণ দলতর	বাস্তুলোর ১টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮৮০০-২১৫১০/-
		সুইপার ১টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮২৫০-২০০১০/-
		স্টার্টার ১টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮৮০০-২১৫১০/-
		অফিস পিয়ান ২টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮২৫০-২০০১০/-
১১	চ.বি. প্রেস	হেলার্স - ১টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮২৫০-২০০১০/-
		বুক বাইর্টার ২টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮৮০০-২১৫১০/-
১২	রেজিস্ট্রার অফিস, (কেন্দ্রীয় প্রেরণ শাখা)	বার্তাবাহক- ১টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮৮০০-২১৫১০/-
১৩	রেজিস্ট্রার অফিস (তথ্য ও ফটোমারিক পাখা)	অফিস পিয়ান - ১টি	৮ম শ্রেণি	৮ ৮২৫০-২০০১০/-
১৪	রেজিস্ট্রার অফিস, এক্সটেন্ড শাখা (ক			

## Big budget, small impact

Crores spent on dengue control in Dhaka but without satisfactory results

It is unfortunate that despite spending hundreds of crores of taka on dengue control, Dhaka continues to suffer from repeated outbreaks of the disease. Reportedly, in the past nine months, the two city corporations have spent Tk 707 crore—on pesticides, cleaning weeds and water bodies, and equipment purchases—to protect residents from dengue and other mosquito-borne diseases, but have had insufficient results. We have frequently pointed to poor planning and coordination and the absence of a comprehensive policy for the deteriorating dengue situation, but those calls have often fallen on deaf ears. Instead, the two city corporations have continued to carry out their same old mosquito control activities. Experts say that such outdated methods won't work anymore, especially with the changing climate.

When dengue was first detected in Bangladesh in 2000, it was a seasonal disease. Now, it has become endemic, with infections occurring year-round. Therefore, our strategy to fight dengue must also evolve. In this connection, experts claim that targeting Culex mosquitoes is the wrong way to go about it. While Culex breed in dirty water like drains and sewers, Aedes mosquitoes, which cause dengue, breed in clean water around homes, offices, and construction sites. However, these places are difficult for control teams to access, leaving many breeding spots untouched. These areas require targeted interventions. Moreover, experts recommend using larvicides and eliminating breeding sources instead of widespread fogging. They also warn that repeated use of the same insecticides may be ineffective, as mosquitoes have likely developed resistance to them.

Amid such a situation, the two city corporations have proposed their budgets for mosquito control activities for FY2025-26. The DNCC has proposed allocating Tk 135.5 crore for the purpose, with Tk 80 crore set aside for insecticide purchase, while the DSCC has proposed Tk 46.50 crore, with Tk 45 crore allocated for buying insecticides. Since the lion's share of the budgets is spent for insecticide purchases, it is crucial to ensure they procure the right ones, effective against Aedes mosquitoes. Moreover, for better dengue management, we must know the true scale of the outbreak. Currently, the DGHS reportedly collects data from 59 public and private hospitals in Dhaka and 80 district- and divisional-level hospitals, while around 16,000 hospitals, clinics, and diagnostic centres across the country provide dengue care. This limited surveillance is inadequate and must be expanded.

We urge the authorities to heed expert advice and adopt a holistic, science-based strategy. Establishing a specialised vector management department with a specialised team of scientists to lead research, monitor mosquito resistance, and guide insecticide use is essential. Without coordinated action, our dengue control initiatives will remain ineffective and fragmented.

## Stop crimes by suspects out on bail

1,108 mugging suspects secured bail in just three months in Dhaka

We are deeply concerned about the trend of suspected criminals being released on bail, raising questions about the effectiveness of police investigations, prosecution, and the overall justice system. According to sources cited by *Prothom Alo*, 1,108 mugging suspects secured bail in just three months in Dhaka. Among them were accused caught red-handed, those arrested after their names surfaced during investigations, those apprehended while preparing for mugging, and even some whose names appeared in the final charge sheets. At a time when mugging has become a constant source of insecurity for many residents, the releases of so many suspected criminals come as a double blow, as freed suspects often return to crime.

This forces the police to chase the same criminals repeatedly, thus not only draining public resources but also emboldening criminals. In the months following the uprising, there has been a surge in crimes amid the security vacuum left in its wake. In particular, mugging, robberies, and violent attacks were frequently reported, with viral videos of such incidents often causing widespread alarm. While subsequent months have seen greater efforts by law enforcement agencies, crimes, especially violent crimes, still persist. In Dhaka, according to court sources, seven people were killed in mugging related incidents alone between last August and March. Mugging suspects being granted bail only exacerbates the situation.

The question is, why is this happening? Part of the problem lies in weak case-building. Cases are sometimes filed under less severe sections of law, making bail easier. In some cases, suspects are arrested under old cases, giving defence lawyers room to argue for release. Case investigations are also often either weak or slow, with charge sheets in mugging cases taking as much as a year to be filed on average. Moreover, prosecutors often fail to present strong arguments against bail. Even magistrates have pointed out that mugging case files often lack detailed accounts, paving the way for bail. In other words, negligence and procedural lapses on the part of both police and prosecutors are responsible for this situation.

While bail is a right and cannot be denied if a case for it exists, the challenge is to ensure that anyone who is a threat to society does not come out by exploiting loopholes or without supervision. Experts say that correct drafting of charges under the appropriate legal sections, timely filing of charge sheets, and greater efforts from prosecutors can make a difference. We, therefore, urge the authorities to undertake necessary measures in this regard. They must prevent accused offenders from securing undeserved bail or re-engaging in crimes.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Viking 1 launched to Mars

On this day in 1975, NASA launched Viking 1, the robotic spacecraft that would make history nearly a year later as the first successful lander on Mars, touching down on Chryse Planitia.



# EDITORIAL

## How NGOs can help build a democratic welfare state



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is professor in the Department  
of Development Studies at the  
University of Dhaka.

### RASHED AL MAHMUD TITUMIR

The political moment following the July uprising has opened a crucial conversation about the constructing a democratic welfare state in Bangladesh. It is the culmination of years of deepening inequality, stagnating wages, and a growing sense that the economy serves a privileged few while leaving many behind. The democratic welfare state is not charity-led, but rights-based, ensuring secure access to basic needs.

The role of NGOs is largely absent in post-July discussions on reimagining institutions. The vast network of economically active NGOs and microfinance institutions (MFIs) holds untapped potential. With 724 MFIs managing a credit portfolio of Tk 1,594 billion and serving 32 million borrowers, these organisations have the reach and resources to reshape markets. This is also true for the food and housing markets.

Oligarchic structures have long dominated food supply chains and property markets. If the state's welfare ambitions are to be substantive rather than rhetorical, economic NGOs and MFIs could be repositioned from primarily providing credit, services and charitable relief to becoming organised and accountable market actors delivering public good functions, such as stabilised food prices, guaranteed farm incomes, and genuinely affordable housing. However, this should not encroach upon the vital space of civil society organisations engaged in voice, advocacy, mobilisation, and accountability.

#### Breaking the oligarchy through cooperative markets

A major driver of persistent inflation is soaring food prices. In June 2024, food inflation reached 14 percent, the highest in a decade, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) data. The Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) reveals that food accounts for 45.76 percent of family budgets, down from 54.81

percent in 2010, but still the single largest share. Farmers, however, receive only a fraction of what consumers pay. The missing value is captured by intermediaries who dominate storage, transport, and wholesale trade.

NGOs could disrupt this system by establishing farmer-owned cooperatives and retail chains. For example, Spain's Mondragon Corporation demonstrates how

bargaining. Second, investments in shared cold storage and transport networks could reduce post-harvest losses, currently estimated at 20 percent.

Third, a national digital marketplace could connect growers directly with buyers through MFI-managed escrow accounts. Together, these measures could raise farm gate prices by 15-30 percent while reducing retail costs by 10-15 percent, striking directly at oligarchic control of supply chains.

#### Housing for the many, not the few

Urban land and housing prices in Bangladesh are among the most inflated relative to income in South Asia. In Dhaka, a square metre of city-centre apartment space costs around \$717. For a worker whose real wages have barely moved, this is a mountain



VISUAL: MONOROM POLOK

eliminating intermediaries can reduce consumer prices while boosting producer incomes. Its Eroski supermarket chain operates on cooperative principles, ensuring affordability through collective ownership. Similarly, India's Amul dairy cooperative empowered small milk producers to become a unified force by creating village-level collection systems, processing infrastructure, and direct retail channels. Bangladesh's MFIs could work on the triad—producer organisation, shared logistics, and branded retail—for staples like rice, vegetables, and pulses.

Three steps could anchor this transformation. First, NGOs could

organise smallholders into legally recognised farmer-producer organisations, enabling collective

affordability through collective ownership. Similarly, India's Amul dairy cooperative empowered small milk producers to become a unified force by creating village-level collection systems, processing infrastructure, and direct retail channels. Bangladesh's MFIs could work on the triad—producer organisation, shared logistics, and branded retail—for staples like rice, vegetables, and pulses.

These shifts could not only reduce inflation and housing costs but also democratise economic access, advancing the welfare state agenda alongside ensuring price stability. The social contract and actors must be reimaged by turning NGO enterprises into vehicles for collective bargaining, fair pricing, and inclusive development. The road to a democratic welfare state will be neither automatic nor costless without bold collaborations woven through a whole-of-society approach.

## We need to integrate anticipatory action into disaster management



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### FAZLEY ELAHI MAHMUD

Technological advancement, as in many other fields, has created new opportunities for managing disasters caused by natural hazards. Bangladesh's Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) can now issue deterministic forecasts, highly accurate predictions of flooding, with a lead time of five days for monsoon floods and three days for flash floods. These forecasts are generated by analysing weather patterns, rainfall, and water flows in major river systems. Localised forecasts are also possible for unions or wards, including analysis of likely hazard impacts.

Such improvements in forecasting capacity create both a moral and practical imperative to act early, rather than waiting for hazards to strike and inflict losses on poor and vulnerable people. Once a deterministic forecast indicates inundation within three to five days in specific areas, actions such as evacuation or the pre-positioning of relief can save lives and protect livelihoods. However, delivering physical relief to remote areas within such a short timeframe remains a major challenge. A parallel technological advancement—mobile money transfer systems—offers a solution by enabling rapid cash support to vulnerable families.

Emergency cash transfers enable families to meet their own needs, such as hiring boats for evacuation, relocating livestock, and storing food and medicine. This form of assistance

is known as anticipatory action. It is increasingly being adopted worldwide to help at-risk families take proactive measures to reduce disaster impacts.

Conventional humanitarian response usually begins only after a hazard strikes. Anticipatory action, by contrast, reaches families before a disaster unfolds, offering key advantages. Most importantly, it avoids delays caused by bureaucratic procedures—financial approvals, damage assessments, beneficiary identification, procurement, and transportation—by securing pre-approved financing and identifying vulnerable households in advance.

Using mobile money transfers instead of in-kind relief further ensures families receive assistance quickly and directly. Secondly, small interventions before a shock can prevent major losses. For example, modest financial support may enable a household to move livestock, their main productive asset, to safety. Post-disaster relief may attempt to compensate for losses, but many are irreversible. No amount of aid can undo the suffering of marginalised people, forced to remain in an inundated home, watching their meagre possessions float away as they await rescue.

Thirdly, anticipatory action upholds dignity by enabling households to take protective measures on their own terms, according to their priorities.

In 2024, CARE Bangladesh, in collaboration with the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) and with funding from the European Union, successfully piloted anticipatory action through the project "Scaling Up Forecast-based Action and Learning (SUFAL)." Under this initiative, emergency cash transfers of Tk 7,000 were provided to 1,307

households 12 to 24 hours before monsoon and flash floods inundated homes across 25 unions in Bogura, Gaibandha, Jamalpur, Kurigram, Sylhet, Netrokona, and Sunamganj. An evaluation showed that families used the cash to purchase and store food, buy medicines, protect livestock, hire boats, and take other measures. On average, assets worth over Tk 55,000 were saved per household. For every taka transferred, the estimated return was 12-fold, demonstrating the cost-effectiveness of anticipatory action.

The pilot aligned with the government's Gratuitous Relief (GR) programme in terms of transfer amounts, beneficiary selection, and local government engagement. This alignment provided strong evidence that anticipatory action is both feasible and compatible with existing disaster response mechanisms.

Anticipatory action is recognised in Bangladesh's Standing Orders on Disasters (SOD) 2019. In 2024, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief also approved the National Early Action Protocol (NEAP), a guiding document for anticipatory action in response to monsoon floods. However, to scale up implementation, the government must amend the Humanitarian Assistance Programme Implementation Guidelines (2012-13), which currently allow the use of funds only during and after disasters. These guidelines should be revised to permit spending before, during, and after disasters, and to expand anticipatory action through programmes, such as the Employment Generation Programme for the Poorest (EGPP).

Policy reform must be accompanied by dedicated funding. This includes additional budget allocations for the GR programme and EGPP, as well as financing from the National and District Disaster Management Funds, with necessary adjustments.

Importantly, anticipatory action should not divert resources from post-disaster response, which remains essential for large-scale or prolonged crises.

In the longer term, anticipatory action can be integrated into a comprehensive shock-responsive or adaptive social protection framework. This could involve linking it with social protection schemes—such as the old age allowance, disability allowance, and widow allowance—by providing top-up cash transfers to existing beneficiaries, who are among the most vulnerable groups.

Anticipatory action is no longer just an innovation; it is a necessity. With modest policy reforms and dedicated funding, Bangladesh can reduce disaster losses, protect livelihoods, and preserve the dignity of its most vulnerable citizens.

# The promise and peril of our demographic dividend

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**M.G. QUIBRIA and BARKAT-E-KHUDA**

A quiet demographic revolution is sweeping the globe: people everywhere are having fewer children. According to the UN's 2024 World Population Prospects, fertility rates have fallen below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman in every region except Africa. In Asia, most countries have already crossed this threshold; some—like China, Japan, South Korea, and Thailand—are now losing population as deaths outnumber births. What was once a looming crisis for wealthy Western nations has become a global reckoning. Even Elon Musk has warned that falling birth rates could imperil civilisation's future.

For now, Bangladesh stands on the more fortunate side of the fertility divide. Over the past five decades, its fertility rate has declined from more than six children per woman to just above replacement level, where it has remained stable since 2011. This sharp decline—driven by family planning, reduced child mortality, rising female education, and shifting social norms—has placed our country in a demographic transition. With a youthful population and an expanding labour force, the country is poised to reap the so-called demographic dividend: a period when the share of working age citizens is high, creating a one-time opportunity for rapid economic growth. So far, that promise remains unfulfilled.

The dividend is not automatic—it requires a healthy, educated, and productively employed workforce. Yet youth unemployment and underemployment are rising. Protests over



Bangladesh's working-age population is expected to peak in the mid-2030s. Without urgent reform, the demographic advantage could become a liability.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

civil service job quotas and the lack of opportunities for university graduates reflect a deeper structural mismatch between the skills and aspirations of the young and the economy's capacity to absorb them. Too many young people work in low-productivity, low-wage jobs, while large numbers in urban areas live in slums or on pavements in substandard conditions.

The experience of other countries offers inspiration and warning. East Asian economies such as South Korea and Taiwan successfully transformed their demographic windows into broad-based prosperity through investment in human capital and export-oriented industrial policy. By contrast, Egypt reduced fertility in the 1980s but failed to reform labour markets or reduce bureaucratic dominance, leaving youth unemployment high. Iran's fertility decline was undercut by sanctions and the underperforming private sector. Tunisia entered below-replacement fertility by the early 2000s but was hampered by structural rigidities and weak governance.

The Arab Spring, sparked by street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation, was in part a demographic revolt—an explosion of frustration by a generation of educated but excluded youth.

Bangladesh risks a similar fate unless it acts decisively. Its working-age population is expected to peak in the mid-2030s. Without urgent reform, its demographic advantage could become a liability, manifested in a large cohort of disillusioned, underemployed youth, rising urban poverty, and an ageing population without adequate safety nets.

Yet, demography is largely absent from the nation's policy debates. Bangladesh's population and health policies have not been updated in over a decade. Although a new population policy is reportedly in draft form, it has yet to be released. Public investment in human capital remains stuck at around two percent of GDP for both education and healthcare, the lowest in South Asia.

Healthcare is grossly underfunded and deeply unequal. Rural areas face chronic

shortages of trained personnel, supplies, and facilities. The rapid growth of private hospitals in cities offers neither universal access nor affordable care; their high costs often push families into debt. Out-of-pocket healthcare spending in Bangladesh is among the highest in the world. Medical education has not kept pace with demand: the country is not producing enough doctors, nurses, or specialists to serve its growing and ageing population.

The education system is similarly strained. Vocational and technical training is fragmented, underfunded, and poorly aligned with labour market needs. Universities still rely on rote memorisation over creativity, problem-solving, and practical skills. Despite gains in girls' education, female labour force participation remains low, constrained by social norms, lack of childcare, and workplace barriers.

Bangladesh's long-standing reliance on labour migration is also under pressure.

**What is needed now is a coherent, forward-looking demographic strategy. This includes scaling up public investment in both general and medical education, overhauling technical and vocational training systems, expanding access to quality healthcare, and removing structural barriers to female workforce participation. Equally essential is fostering an ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship, where young people are not merely job seekers but job creators.**

Remittances from overseas workers have buoyed the economy for decades, but host countries are tightening immigration rules, adopting labour-saving technologies, and favouring skilled workers. The demand for low-skilled migrant labour is falling, and Bangladesh has done little to upgrade skills to meet changing global needs.

Vietnam shows what a proactive demographic strategy can achieve. By aligning its education system with industrial needs, expanding healthcare access, investing in technology, and integrating into global value chains, Vietnam has built a workforce capable of adapting to shifting demographic and economic realities.

Bangladesh can still follow a similar path, but the clock is ticking. Falling fertility can bring benefits—more resources per child, better maternal health, higher female labour participation, and greater capacity to prepare for an ageing society. Population ageing, often viewed as a looming crisis, can spur innovation in healthcare, caregiving, and labour-saving technologies. But these benefits are only realised with foresight and sustained investment.

What is needed now is a coherent, forward-looking demographic strategy. This includes scaling up public investment in both general and medical education, overhauling technical and vocational training systems, expanding access to quality healthcare, and removing structural barriers to female workforce participation. Equally essential is fostering an ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship, where young people are not merely job seekers but job creators.

Demographics are not destiny—but they define the playing field. The unrest over youth unemployment is more than an economic issue; it is a demographic alarm bell. Bangladesh's fertility transition is unfolding now (although stalled over the past decade), and its demographic window is already narrowing. Whether the country seizes this moment or squanders it will shape its economic and political trajectory for decades.

## Smart money is quietly heading to Dhaka



**Mamun Rashid**,  
an economic analyst, is chairman at Financial Excellence Ltd and  
founding managing partner of PwC Bangladesh.

**MAMUN RASHID**

Last month, I had coffee with a venture capitalist who had just returned from Dhaka. "You won't believe what's happening there," he said, pulling up numbers on his phone. Startup funding in Bangladesh jumped from less than \$1 crore to \$12 crore in 12 months. Not doubled or tripled—it surged 12-fold. While everyone is busy watching the usual suspects in tech, Bangladesh is quietly building something extraordinary, and honestly, most investors have no idea what they are missing.

The interim government knows the game. Earlier in July, they didn't just tweak some policies, they basically tore up the old playbook. Banks used to only lend to startups. Now they can buy ownership stakes. Think about that for a second. Your local bank branch manager could be evaluating equity deals. The loan ceiling has also been increased to Tk 2.8 crore, a significant raise from the previous ceiling of Tk 1 crore. Interest rates? Down to four percent. And they backed it all up with serious money—almost Tk 100 crore sitting there, ready to invest. When was the last time you saw a government move that fast on anything? Usually, policy changes take years of committees and white papers. Not here. Someone high up said, "Let's make this happen," and boom—new rules, new money, new game.

Around 10 years ago, most Bangladeshis had never touched a bank account. As of

January 2025, the total number of Mobile Financial Services (MFS) accounts stood at 23.93 crore, according to Bangladesh Bank data. Local entrepreneurs saw banks ignoring rural areas and thought, "Fine, we'll build something better." And they did. No fancy offices, no loan officers in suits, just a simple app on a basic phone that lets you send money to your family in seconds. This same pattern keeps popping up everywhere. Big problems nobody else wants to tackle, local founders stepping up, and suddenly you've got solutions that work for millions of people. It's like watching someone build a highway while others are still arguing about dirt roads.

Let me paint you a picture of what's actually happening on the ground. Climate

**Climate change hammers Bangladesh harder than almost anywhere—floods, cyclones, rising seas. You can't ignore it when your factory gets flooded twice a year. So, startups are building flood-resistant farming systems and renewable energy networks because they have to. It's not about being green for marketing points. It's survival.**

change hammers Bangladesh harder than almost anywhere—floods, cyclones, rising seas. You can't ignore it when your factory gets flooded twice a year. So, startups are building flood-resistant farming systems and renewable energy networks because they have to. It's not about being green for marketing points. It's survival.

which accelerator programmes are worth your time, and most importantly, which problems are real versus which ones just sound good in a pitch deck. The government programmes aren't just about money; they open doors and give you credibility. Those hi-tech parks everyone mentions? They're basically startup communities where founders help each other out. I heard about one founder who got his entire supply chain sorted because he met the right person at a Friday prayer gathering in the tech park mosque. For entrepreneurs, here's my advice: pick a real problem that affects millions of people, then build something that makes money while solving it. Forget the Silicon Valley playbook about burning cash for growth. Profitable from day one, that's what works here. Your customers can't afford to experiment with your business model.

Bangladesh reminds me of China in the early 2000s or India in 2010, right before everything exploded. You've got all the ingredients: a young population that loves technology, a government trying to clear obstacles, massive problems begging for solutions, and early success stories proving it's possible. Economists project that the size of Bangladesh's economy will be \$1 trillion by 2040. Maybe they're right, maybe they're optimistic. But here's what I know for sure: the startups building in Bangladesh today aren't just local success stories. They're creating solutions for problems that billions of people face. The same flooding that hits Dhaka hits Jakarta. The same small farmer credit problems exist across Africa. The retail fragmentation you see in Bangladesh mirrors what's happening in dozens of emerging markets. Build a solution that works here, and you've built something the world needs.

The opportunities practically jump out at you once you start looking. Take climate tech: companies here aren't building green solutions because it's trendy or because they want to impress investors at conferences. They're doing it because their customers' survival depends on it. That creates a different kind of innovation, the kind that actually works in tough conditions. When your solar panel has to survive a cyclone, you build it differently. Or look at agriculture. Around 1.6 crore small farmers need credit, better prices for crops, and ways to reduce waste. One startup I came across lets farmers get



FILE VISUAL: REHNUMA PROSHOON

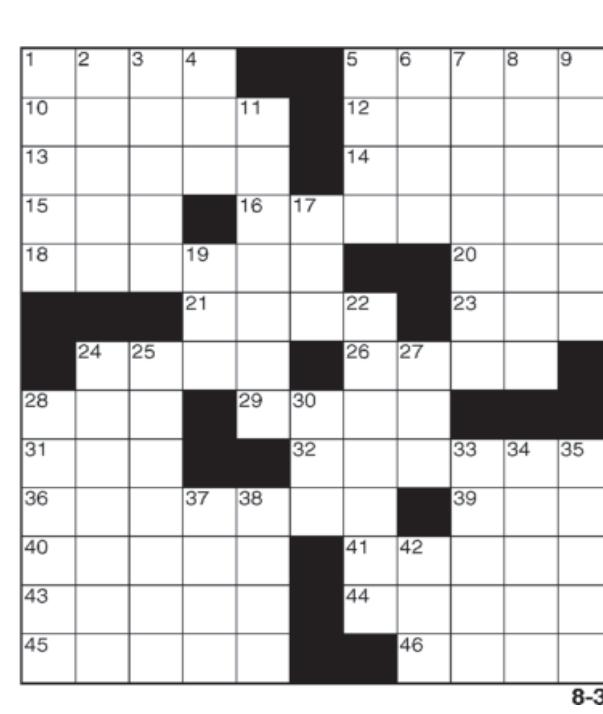
app connects farmers directly to wholesale buyers, cutting out five middlemen each of whom would take their cut. Around 40 lakh tiny shops still run analog and on cash. Picture a small store owner staying up late, doing inventory with a pencil and notebook. B2B platforms are digitising the whole thing. These aren't nice-to-have products. They're solving problems people face every single day.

The opportunities practically jump out at you once you start looking. Take climate tech: companies here aren't building green solutions because it's trendy or because they

loans using their future harvest as collateral. Simple idea, huge impact. Any startup that cracks even part of that equation has a massive market. It is the same story with small business tools. Those 40 lakh shops? They're all potential customers for inventory systems, payment processing, and supply chain solutions.

So how do you actually get involved? If you're an investor from outside Bangladesh, find a local partner to save years of "learning things the hard way." They know which government office actually gets things done,

## MONDAY'S ANSWERS



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**ACROSS**

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- 53 Was aware
- 54 High hit

## JU gears up for first Jucsu polls in 33yrs

FROM PAGE 12

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal's JU unit convener Jahir Uddin Mohammad Babor said his organisation would announce a full panel for both Jucsu and hall elections on August 21.

He said their candidates were collecting forms and that they had been working towards Jucsu for the past three months.

He added that candidates from cultural and sports backgrounds may also be included.

Sources said Sheikh Sadi, Tanjila Hossain Boishakhi, Rubel Hossain, and Mehadi Emon might contest top positions from the Chhatra Dal panel.

Outgoing JU Chhatra Union president Amartya Ray said his faction would form an alliance with Jahangirnagar Sanskrit Jote, a socio political coalition of nine organisations that includes cultural bodies, artists, writers, and activists from the university.

He added that discussions were also ongoing with Biplobi Chhatra Moitree and Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (Marxist).

From their panel, Prapti Taposi, Sharan Ehsan, Irfanul Islam Iftu, and Faiza Mehzabin Priontee are expected to contest top posts.

Amartya noted that although they might not field a full panel for hall elections, they would extend support to like-minded candidates.

Another faction of Chhatra Union, led by Jahidul Islam Emon, plans to ally with theatre activist and former Students Against Discrimination coordinator Mahfuz Islam Megh as well as general students involved in

the July movement.

Emon said, "I may contest for general secretary while Megh may contest for vice president."

Megh said even if they cannot form a full panel, they will contest vital posts.

Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad Convener Arifuzzaman Uzzuwal said they would field a full panel.

He said he might contest for vice president while Touhid Mohammad Siam might run for general secretary.

He also mentioned that among women candidates, Maliha Namla, Fatematu Zohra, and Farhana Binte Jigar Farina may contest key positions.

Islami Chhatra Shibir has already finalised its student and hall-level panels, said office secretary Mazharul Islam.

He said they were also in talks with like-minded student groups who were active in the July uprising.

From their panel, Mazharul Islam, Shafayet Mir, Ferdous Al Hasan, and Ayesha Siddiqa Meghla might contest top posts.

Abdur Rashid Zitu, convener of Gono Obhuthan Rokkha Andolon and former central coordinator of the Students Against Discrimination, is likely to contest for the vice president post independently. "I will definitely vie for the VP post. Whether I will join a panel is still undecided," he said.

Despite the momentum, almost all student bodies expressed concern that Awami League-leaning teachers and those accused of aiding the attacks on protesting students

during the July uprising still hold key administrative roles. They fear this could affect the fairness of the election. Some candidates have also raised questions about the Election Commission's capacity.

Earlier, the university administration pledged to ensure justice by August 31 against teachers, officials, and staff accused of involvement in the attacks on protesting students during the July uprising.

Student bodies also expressed concern that non-students who have already graduated but continue to occupy dormitory seats illegally could exert pressure on the election process.

According to JU Proctor AKM Rashidul Alam, around 1,500 graduates are still staying in the halls illegally. "The university authorities are working to evict illegal occupants from dormitories and will take more stringent action soon."

### VOTER LIST DISCREPANCY

Of the 11,919 voters, 6,102 are male and 5,817 are female. A review of the hall-based voter lists showed irregularities, including names of expelled Chhatra League activists, deceased students, dropouts, and students who left for abroad without completing their studies.

Electoral Commission Member Secretary Prof Rashidul Alam said they had received four complaints and would decide on them in a meeting. "The commission is committed to holding a fair and credible election."

The last Jucsu election was held in 1992.

day. We and her school were her life."

The Chief Adviser said, "It is painful to listen to you. At the same time, I feel proud that there are citizens in our country who have jumped into the fire to save the lives of others. They have proven this example of humanity."

"We have to bear their memory. Whatever needs to be done, we will do so."

Its vice-president candidate is Sheikh Tasnim Afroze Emi, who was elected VP of Shamsun Nahar Hall Sangsad in 2019 polls, while Meghmaller Bosu, president of Chhatra Union's DU unit, will vie for the general secretary post.

Other candidates include Jibir (finance) as assistant general secretary, Muzammel Haque (political science) as liberation war and democratic movement affairs secretary, Nuzia Hasin Rasha (linguistics) as common room, reading room and cafeteria secretary, and Akash Ali (philosophy) as human rights and legal affairs secretary. Liton Tripura (economics) was nominated as career development secretary.

Speaking at the announcement, Meghmaller said, "The forces that committed genocide in 1971 and those responsible for the 2024 atrocities, we will build a united democratic movement against them, and the Ducusu election will serve as a stepping-stone on the path of that democratic struggle."

According to the announced schedule, the election will be held on September 9. The last date for withdrawing nomination is August 25, with the final list of candidates to be announced on August 26. This year's election will see contests for 28 positions at Ducusu, which were 25 in 2019. Each hall union will elect representatives for 13 positions. DU currently has 18 residential halls. The final voter list has already been published, showing 39,775 eligible voters -- 20,873 male and 18,902 female students.

Meanwhile, a coalition of seven left-leaning student bodies under the banner of Gonotantrik Chhatra Jote, along with several non-partisan students, announced a 28-member panel named Protirodh Parishad.

Talking to reporters, Chief Returning Officer Prof Zashim Uddin, said, "We did not extend the deadline to favour anyone. You saw how many students came today [yesterday]. The Ducusu election is their right, and we stretched the deadline by one day so they can fully exercise that right."

After submitting his nominations as general secretary candidate yesterday, SM Forhad, president of Shibir's DU unit, said, "The sudden one-day extension reflects partiality. The administration should have adhered to the original schedule. Extending it without consultation, after many candidates already submitted their forms and began campaigning, unfairly benefits one quarter."

Sheikh Tasnim Afroze Emi, vice-president candidate from the left-leaning Protirodh Parishad, said,

## Govt to make guideline for next govt

FROM PAGE 12

repaid by the people. Therefore, if there are irregularities or corruption in these areas, the government must take action, and that is exactly what we are considering."

A secretary, requesting anonymity, said they were also instructed to prepare the revised budget for the current fiscal year and the Annual Development Programme (ADP) implementation progress report by December.

Officials said the goal is to avoid the year end spending rush that typically occurs when evaluations are delayed until March or April.

At the meeting, the advisers placed the highest emphasis on the slow pace of ADP implementation and directed secretaries to identify reasons for the delays and suggest remedies.

Adviser Salehuddin asked ministries to ensure visible progress on key interim government measures by December. "Work must move forward in such a way that the significant achievements of the interim government remain visible as a footprint," he said, according to

meeting sources.

Another major concern raised was the shortage of skilled manpower in project formulation and execution. Previously, officers from the economic cadre worked as project experts, but that cadre has since been merged into the administration cadre.

Many project directors currently lack specialised training in project management, officials noted. The meeting therefore decided to explore creating a separate pool of trained officers for project preparation and implementation.

During the meeting, a Cabinet Division joint secretary gave a presentation on the failed "Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)" project.

A senior secretary, on condition of anonymity, later told The Daily Star that there "might not be a worse project than this one", adding that lessons must be learned before approving future projects.

Secretaries were also told to rigorously examine objections over environmental impacts. "If no well-prepared proposals are submitted,

substandard projects are sometimes approved as there is no alternative in the government's hand. That must be avoided," said one source.

Land acquisition was identified as the single most troublesome aspect of implementation. Secretaries were directed to ensure that projects requiring land acquisition are finalised only after the land is secured.

A secretary present noted that a similar directive had been issued by the previous government but was never enforced.

The meeting also discussed weaknesses in the Public Procurement Rules (PPR). Since a handful of groups dominate government procurement and construction, advisers decided to amend the PPR to break this monopoly and allow greater participation of small entrepreneurs.

Secretaries from the ERD, Planning Division and IMED made separate presentations on project related issues.

A senior secretary said the discussions were open and constructive, with some participants suggesting that such meetings be held monthly.

## 2024 one of the deadliest years since '71

FROM PAGE 1

August 4-7, at least 890 people were killed, including 309 on August 5, the day Hasina fled.

Many of the victims, buried as unidentified, were not included in the report.

Of the killings documented, 520 or 75 percent died due to police atrocities, according to the HRSS report. It found that more than 84 percent of protest-related fatalities were caused by police and other security forces.

The violence left at least 30,000 people injured, including thousands who lost limbs or eyesight. Over 600 people lost vision in one or both eyes.

The victims included students, labourers, journalists, professionals, law enforcers, children, women, and political activists.

Among the dead, 143 were children and adolescents, and 14 were girls or women.

Of 855 identified victims, 17 percent were under 18, 54 percent young adults, 24 percent middle aged, and 4 percent elderly.

Strikingly, 71 percent of those whose ages were known were under 30.

Journalists faced severe risks in 2024, with at least 309 attacks affecting 727 media workers. Nine were killed, 370 injured, 109 assaulted, 95 threatened, 19 arrested, and 134 sued.

During the July-August protests, at least 270 journalists were assaulted, arrested, or threatened on duty, including six who were killed.

HRSS Executive Director Ijajul Islam said police and security forces were the main perpetrators of rights violations, yet no effective measures were taken by the interim government.

Such action should not be postponed until the next elected government, he said.

Ijajul added, "Over the past 15 years, members of the forces involved in human rights violations have often received promotions or been reassigned. In particular, those responsible for the killings during the July-August protests should have faced legal proceedings, but this was not carried out promptly."

"There remains a significant gap in implementing the Police Reform Commission's recommendations."

Between July 17 and August 4, more than 950 cases were filed, implicating over 600,000 people and leading to 12,000 arrests, according to the HRSS report.

In the chaos that followed Hasina's resignation, more than 500 police stations, outposts and government offices were attacked, vandalised or torched. Nearly 2,000 houses, vehicles and businesses were looted or destroyed, the report said.

Minority communities also came under attack: 65 incidents left two people dead, 61 injured, and damaged 15 temples, 228 homes, and 240 shops.

HRSS documented at least 3,407 incidents of political violence in

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & CHILDREN

1,499 women and girls attacked

558 rape cases, 130 gang rapes filed

40 killed after rape

4,378 children suffered abuse

664 Children were killed

### ELECTION-RELATED VIOLENCE

781 incidents of violence reported

Violence resulted in 43 deaths (39 AL supporters)

Over 820 homes, businesses damaged

### MOB VIOLENCE

201 incidents reported

Mobs caused 179 deaths

### ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS

727 media workers targeted

Nine journalists were killed

370 journos hurt, 95 threatened

134 facing cases

### ATTACKS ON MINORITIES

112 incidents reported

Violence resulted in the deaths of 2

28 temples, 284 homes, 240 shops damaged

2024, resulting in 1,180 deaths and 37,051 injuries, including in the July-August protests. More than 15,500 leaders and activists, mostly from BNP Jamaat and Awami League, were arrested. Authorities filed 1,383 cases implicating at least 66,000 individuals and another 660,000 unnamed suspects.

Opposition rallies were frequently disrupted: more than 700 events left 30,000 injured and 10,000 arrested.

The 12th National Parliamentary Election and the 6th Upazila Parishad Election were marred by violence, low turnout, and boycotts. A total of 781 incidents of electoral violence left 43 dead, including 39 Awami League supporters, and 2,538 injured. More than 820 homes and businesses were damaged.

Seventeen people were killed and over 2,500 injured during the parliamentary polls alone. The upazila polls saw 203 violent incidents, 17

deaths, and more than 1,000 injuries.

Violence against women and children remained alarming. In 2024, 1,499 women and girls were attacked, including in 558 rape incidents. As many as 284 of these incidents involved minors. Of these, 130 were gang rapes.

Forty victims, including 22 children, were killed afterwards while 11 survivors died by suicide.

Another 322 women and children faced sexual harassment.

Domestic violence claimed 319 lives, while dowry-related violence killed 48 women and acid attacks left 13 injured.

At least 4,378 children suffered abuse, resulting in 664 deaths. The July-August protests alone left 143 children dead and more than 3,000 injured.

Ijajul noted that limited media coverage during the uprising meant many incidents went unreported. "Many incidents did occur, but the published data did not fully capture them," he said.

He added that only 2-3 percent of rape and abuse cases are prosecuted, often taking decades to resolve, with perpetrators shielded by influence and social barriers.

The HRSS report also recorded 32 Cyber Security Act cases against 79 individuals. These cases saw 21 arrests.

Its other findings include a total of 112 incidents of attacks on minorities that left two killed and 83 injured, while 28 temples and 284 homes were damaged.

In 201 incidents of mob violence, 179 were killed and 88 injured.

Labour exploitation caused 439 deaths, including 240 by law enforcement gunfire, according to the HRSS report.

Workplace accidents left 168 dead while nine deaths and four injuries occurred from domestic worker abuse.

At the borders, 32 were killed and 50 injured in incidents involving India's BSF and Myanmar's forces.

HRSS reported 25 extrajudicial killings linked to law enforcement agencies and 102 deaths in prisons.

In its report, the rights group urged the government to hold perpetrators of extraj

## ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

# Climate change as a human rights concern

JEBIA MOBASHWIRA

Climate change is no longer solely an environmental issue; it has become a critical human rights challenge, especially for the most vulnerable communities. Its impacts—rising temperatures, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events threaten fundamental rights such as the rights to life, health, food, water, housing, and a dignified standard of living, as recognised in various international human rights instruments.

The international climate change regime has acknowledged this reality. The UN Human Rights Council (HRC), through Resolution 26/27 on Human Rights and Climate Change, recognised that climate change creates serious challenges to the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to life. The 2007 Male Declaration, the first intergovernmental declaration endorsed by small island developing states, marked a landmark moment in recognising climate change as an immediate threat to fundamental human rights. Similarly, the Preamble to the Paris Agreement 2015 urges nations to respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights and gender equality when taking action to address climate change.

Guaranteeing climate-related human rights requires a two-fold approach: substantively



Netherlands (2019), a Dutch court ruled that the government had a legal duty to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The recent advisory opinion of the ICJ in July 2025 reaffirmed that states have a responsibility under international law to protect the climate from human-induced emissions for the benefit of present and future generations. If they cause significant harm, they bear responsibility towards affected States, especially vulnerable small islands, and impacted people. However, it is important to note that climate experts and environmental activists believe this will not bring much meaningful change or benefit for a small country like Bangladesh.

Thus, despite some positive efforts, many climate policies fall short in addressing human rights and social justice concerns, including loss of livelihoods, displacement, and limited access to resources and information for climate-vulnerable communities. Notably, climate displaced individuals are still not recognised as 'climate refugees' under the 1951 Refugee Convention. Moreover, there is no unified global environmental court to ensure consistent enforcement of environmental rights or address climate-induced human rights violations. Even domestically, in Bangladesh, although the Environment Court Act 2010 allows claims for compensation for environmental pollution under the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act 1995, this is only possible through written reports by inspectors, which limits direct access to justice

for affected individuals.

Furthermore, climate change creates not only an immediate human rights crisis but also poses a major challenge to intergenerational justice. Thus, the rights of future generations must be considered as well. Traditional human rights laws focus on individuals, while climate law often emphasises community protection and long-term ecological sustainability. To ensure collective and generational justice, judicial activism, particularly through legal mechanisms such as Public Interest Litigation (PIL), has played an important role in shaping environmental rights in Bangladesh. Notably, in the landmark case of Dr. Mohiuddin Farooque v. Bangladesh (1997), popularly known as the FAP-20 Case, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court held that the right to life includes the protection and preservation of the environment and ecological balance.

Climate change cannot be addressed in isolation from human dignity, rights, and equality. Ensuring the right to participation, non-discrimination, and access to information is also essential for establishing effective, community-driven climate mechanisms. Additionally, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms may serve as effective tools in this context. Overall, effective climate governance must ensure that mitigation and adaptation strategies do not harm the very communities they are intended to protect, especially marginalised and vulnerable groups.

The writer is official contributor at the Law & Our Rights, The Daily Star.

**Climate change cannot be addressed in isolation from human dignity, rights, and equality. Ensuring the right to participation, non-discrimination, and access to information is also essential for establishing effective, community-driven climate mechanisms.**

realising the rights and procedurally ensuring access to remedies. Alongside other rights (e.g., the rights to life, health, and housing), substantive realisation involves either 'greening' existing rights by integrating environmental dimensions into them, or establishing a new, specific environmental right. Although both approaches remain anthropocentric, they also contribute to environmental protection. On the procedural side, affected individuals and communities must have the right to access legal remedies when their rights are violated due to environmental harm.

States, as duty bearers, have obligations under international human rights law to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights. Previously, the case law from the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) also reinforced this obligation and set an important precedent for climate-related human rights protections. In López Ostra v Spain and Fadeyeva v Russia, the Court held governments accountable for failing to prevent harmful pollution by private industries. Perhaps most notably, in the Urgenda Foundation v The State of The

## LAW MEMORIAL

## Remembering Obaidul Huq Chowdhury

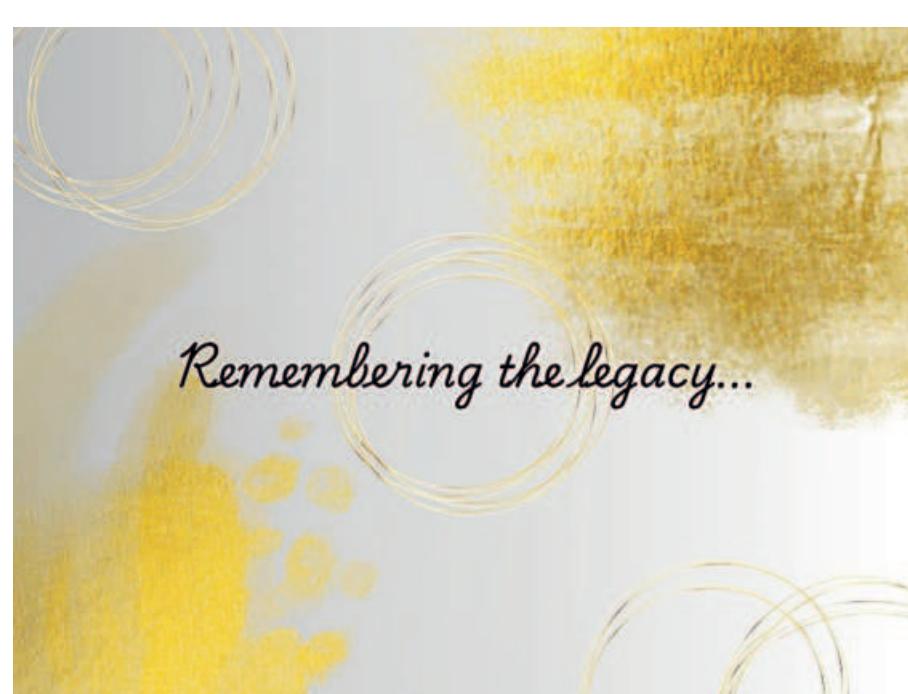
### Founder editor of Dhaka Law Reports and pioneer of legal journalism

MD. KHURSHID ALAM KHAN

Thirty-eight years ago, on the 7th day of August, the founder editor of Dhaka Law Reports (DLR) Obaidul Huq Chowdhury, left this mortal world for his eternal abode. Today, we remember him with a deep sense of reverence. He founded the DLR to project the views of the then Dhaka High Court on legal jurisprudence.

The late Mr Chowdhury breathed his last at 8 pm (GMT) on 6 August 1987 in London. The DLR was virtually orphaned by his sad demise. He was a torchbearer of legal learning and also the father of legal journalism in this country. A gentle legal colossus as he was, he kept the flame of legal learning and research burning for nearly four decades. Indeed, it has been enormously difficult to fill the vacuum he left behind.

Late Mr Chowdhury was born in a noble Muslim family of the then Noakhali (at present Feni) in 1903. He began his career as an Advocate of the Calcutta



**Obaidul Huq Chowdhury founded the Dhaka Law Reports to project the views of the then Dhaka High Court on legal jurisprudence.**

High Court in 1935. After the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, he came over to Dhaka and joined the University of Dhaka as a lecturer at the Department of Law. While practising law at the Dhaka High Court, he felt the necessity

for founding a law journal to meet the emerging needs of a young independent nation. Thus, was born the country's first and premier law journal in 1949. This law journal played a unique and dynamic role in shaping the legal thoughts and ideas of this country through its editorials over the years. It is often said that he also profoundly influenced the course of judicial navigation for the past four decades.

He played his role as the editor of the prime law journal as guardian and guide. The journal section of this publication is filled with articles and comments on

various legal matters. How much society has benefited from such writings calls for different inquiry, but he never fell behind in playing his part, going at times to the extent of waging war against undesirable laws.

This, he used to do in no half-hearted manner. His efforts were well-thought, consistent, and prudent. Illustrative in this context is his stance on the amendment brought through section 339C of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898. He published a series of writings on the matter, arguing at one point that it made no sense for the accused to be released after a prolonged trial, only for it to be later claimed that the release order did not amount to an acquittal. He noted that the courts of law have to deal with human affairs, and it is not possible to anticipate how much time the disposal of a case might take as there are various factors involved potentially making any such prediction unreliable.

The editorial notes that he wrote tirelessly bear testimony to his outstanding legal research and vast erudition. The various commentaries across different branches of law manifest his great learning and scholarship in the domain of law.

Mr Chowdhury is no more with us. In remembering him on this solemn occasion, we believe the DLR will continue its journey to fight against the dark corners of our legal sphere, following the path he has shown to us. May his living example inspire us to emulation. We pray for his eternal peace.

The writer is Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh, and Editor of Dhaka Law Reports (DLR).

## LAW LETTER

## Gendered effects of environmental crises

Unfortunately, the gendered effects of climate disasters are ignored by national policies in Bangladesh. This happens although women are more likely to be victims of trafficking, violence, and displacement. According to the UN Women Rapid Gender Analysis following Cyclone Amphan, Gender Based Violence (GBV) increased by 65% in the affected areas after Cyclone Amphan. Another report by Action Aid in 2007 found that 71% of respondents said they experienced more abuse during natural disasters such as flood. Women are disproportionately endangered and silenced by overcrowded, hazardous shelters and poor menstrual hygiene.

Climate change intensifies gender-based human rights violations in Bangladesh's coastal districts. Cyclones, floods, and storm surges threaten women's rights to life, liberty, and security, while displacement increases their exposure to violence and insecurity. The right to an adequate standard of living is compromised by the loss of homes and livelihoods. Reproductive health dwindles due to saline water exposure and poor sanitation impedes menstrual hygiene. Climate impacts also lead to an increased school dropouts, threatening the right to education, while insecure housing and public spaces endanger privacy and social security. Moreover, economic desperation increases child marriage, breaching the right to free consent. Thus, an array of constitutional as well as fundamental human rights get violated.

**Disaster-prone areas must have access to gender-responsive healthcare, including trained professionals, reproductive and mental health assistance, and menstrual hygiene. Additionally, laws should ensure that women with disabilities, widows, and single mothers are prioritised when it comes to disaster assistance and social safety nets.**

Bangladesh lacks specific protections for women and girls, despite the obvious connections between GBV and climate disasters. Although it recognises the concerns of women and children, the 2009 Climate Change Strategy does not include sufficient gender-responsive strategies. Again, although the 2010 Climate Change Trust Act allocates funds for adaptation of the affected communities and mitigation of harm, it has not adopted a gendered lens as such.

I argue that there is an urgent need for a legal framework that is gender responsive. To acknowledge GBV as a recurring concern in climate crises, current disaster management laws and climate policies need to be modified. In addition to guaranteeing victim support services and expedited prosecutions, legislation should especially focus on all kinds of abuse, harassment, trafficking, and forced marriage in displacement contexts. To strengthen legal protection and responsibility, important laws such as the Nari O Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain 2000 and the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010 should be amended to incorporate climate-induced displacement as an aggravating element.

National legislation must guarantee state accountability for protecting women in climate-vulnerable areas to fulfill our international commitments. Disaster-prone areas must have access to gender-responsive healthcare, including trained professionals, reproductive and mental health assistance, and menstrual hygiene. Additionally, laws should ensure that women with disabilities, widows, and single mothers are prioritised when it comes to disaster assistance and social safety nets. Lastly, it is necessary to enforce gender-sensitive infrastructure, such as safe water access, women-only cyclone shelters, and legislative protections for girls' education in times of crisis. Climate change will continue to exacerbate gender inequality drastically in Bangladesh unless laws are changed.

Era Sharmila Khan  
Apprentice lawyer at the Dhaka Judge Court.





UK-born Bangladeshi sprinter Imranur Rahman gets off the blocks during a practice session at the National Stadium in Dhaka on Monday. The 32-year-old has been competing in Bangladesh's national athletics events since 2021 but took a break from appearing in both domestic and international meets following Paris Olympics last year. The Navy athlete, who arrived in Dhaka on August 15, will be looking to regain the fastest-man mantle from Mohammad Ismail when the 17th National Summer Athletics Championship kicks off on Friday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## BCB's unique move to bridge gap with players

SPORTS REPORTER

In what was a unique move by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), its president Aminul Islam Bulbul held an open value-sharing session with the players and coaches in the presence of the board's directors yesterday, less than 24 hours after arriving from a vacation in Australia.

The players, who left for Sylhet to continue preparations for the upcoming three match T20I series against the Netherlands later this month and the Asia Cup in September following the meeting yesterday, shared their opinions on issues affecting performance and suggested developments that could help improve the national team's output.

The session, termed a "share & care" programme, was aimed at strengthening the bond and encouraging direct and open communication that would help guide both the team and the board, with Aminul quoted in the press release as saying that the board is "committed to acting on the insights shared."

It was learnt that one key concern raised was the lack of quality practice wickets. Players also pointed to domestic scheduling, particularly the Dhaka Premier League (DPL). They requested the league to be played earlier than its usual March-April window to avoid excessive heat. Traveling to BKSP for matches was another challenge, as players cited Dhaka's heavy traffic congestion.

All-rounder Mehidy Hasan Miraz stressed on importance of expertise and facilities, citing these as key to "create an environment where players can truly grow and perform at their best."

Addressing the infrastructure issues, Aminul mentioned that they are preparing new venues for next season's DPL. The outer stadium in Fatullah is being developed with new soil and raised wickets, while two new grounds in Purbachal are also under construction.

## QUEST FOR COMPLETION

Girls begin hunt for SAFF U-17 crown today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh girls are set to step onto Bhutan's Thimphu's Changlimithang Stadium today with one mission: to claim the only regional trophy missing from their glittering cabinet.

The booters, led by stand in coach Mahbubur Rahman Litu, begin their SAFF U-17 Women's Championship campaign against the hosts. The match kicks off at 6:00pm (Bangladesh time), following the tournament opener between India and Nepal, and will be streamed live on the Sportzworkz YouTube Channel.

Under the new format, all four teams will face each other twice in a double round-robin league, with each side playing six matches. The team topping the table after the final matchday on August 31 will be crowned champions.

Since its introduction in 2017 with FIFA's financial backing, the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) has staged six categories of women's age group tournaments -- ranging from U-15 to U-20 -- as preparation platforms for AFC competitions. Bangladesh have won every edition except the U-17s, last held in 2023 in Dhaka, where invitees Russia edged them to the title.



Opening match: Bangladesh vs Bhutan, 6:00pm (Bangladesh time), Thimphu.

**Bangladesh's record:** Champions in every SAFF women's age-group except U-17s.

**Coaching change:** Mahbubur Rahman Litu leads the charges, filling in for Peter Butler.

**Squad mix:** Nine newcomers plus players from last year's SAFF U-16 title-winning side.

Women's football in Bangladesh has enjoyed a breakthrough year. The senior side reached the Women's Asian Cup for the first time, while the U-20s also progressed to the AFC U-20 Asian Cup finals after lifting the SAFF U-20 Championship in Dhaka.

The squad -- with nine fresh faces blending with several players who clinched last year's SAFF U-16 title -- arrived in Thimphu four days early to adjust to the high altitude. The only major change is on the touchline, with local coach Litu continuing the commendable work of Englishman Peter Butler -- who

had overseen their development alongside the senior and U-20 teams and is currently enjoying a rare vacation back home.

"We are ready after a month and a half of preparation and... this championship is a chance to learn and grow," coach Litu told the media yesterday.

Joakim Alexandersson, head coach of title aspirants India, reckons that Bangladesh will be their toughest opponents. "From what I know, Bangladesh will be a big challenge, Nepal also strong, and Bhutan perhaps struggled more."

## 'BPL needs image rehabilitation'

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Nearly six months into its formation, the three-member inquiry body set up by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to look into the suspicious activities in the previous Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), is set to submit its preliminary report next week.

Former cricketer and committee member Shakil Kasem told The Daily Star yesterday that they will submit the preliminary report to the board president Aminul Islam Bulbul. According to BCB insiders, the probable date of submission is August 25.

"The reason why we are putting this preliminary report right now, is to assist the cricket board in its readiness for the upcoming BPL season. Complete details of our findings and recommendations will be in our final report, which we are going to submit in September," Shakil said.

Earlier this year, some reports in the media have suggested the ACU has identified eight matches in the previous BPL as suspicious, potentially involving spot-fixing and match-fixing, based on anonymous tips and media reports. Ten players and four franchises were reportedly under observation.

However, Shakil was tight-lipped when it came to naming any individual currently under suspicion, and reiterating that as an inquiry committee, he and his fellow committee members -- Justice Mirza Hussain Haider and



advocate Dr. Khaled H. Chowdhury -- can only make suggestions.

"This is an inquiry committee. Before undertaking any decision, you have to investigate it. We are not an investigation committee. We will suggest if this warrants further investigation," he said.

"We can't just talk about assumptions or say the names that have come up. We have to inquire whether there is any cricketing merit, did they violate any cricketing logic by doing a particular thing."

"Somebody bowled a wide, but was a factor, did the ball slip out of his hands, we had to inquire these things from a cricketing perspective. Was it a freak incident or was it part of a pattern, whether this player has a history of doing this kind of thing before. We had to take everything into consideration," he added.

The former cricketer also said the board did not try to influence the inquiry committee in any way and that it was up to the BCB whether the preliminary report would be made public or not.

The BCB had formed the inquiry committee on February 3 and Shakil what detailed what lengths he and his fellow committee members have gone to in this inquiry in the past six months.

"Because of the gravity of this exercise and importance of it, the committee took its time. Information mining took its time. We engaged in over 61 sessions with over 60 individuals, we reviewed about 3500 pages of documents, listened to 300 hours of recorded depositions and testimonies, viewed countless video footages, listened to audio footages and all that."

Shakil was hopeful that the preliminary report, followed by the final one, will aid BCB in rejuvenating BPL.

"The report we will submit, should not be seen as a conclusion of an exercise, rather a stepping stone for a beginning of a new chapter for Bangladesh cricket in general and the BPL in particular. There is potential for BPL to be a high class franchise league, we will outline how the possibilities can be lined up to achieve that objective. The BPL needs both a restructuring as well as a rehabilitation of its image in the international arena. We are looking into ways and means on how it can be done," he added.



World number two Carlos Alcaraz consoles top seed Jannik Sinner after the latter retired due to illness in the first set of their Cincinnati Open title match at the Lindner Family Tennis Center on Monday. Sinner came into the contest feeling unwell and lost the first seven points of the match before throwing in the towel at 5-0 down in a game played in 30-degree Celsius heat. Sinner will now focus on recovery as he is due to begin his title defence of US Open, starting on Sunday.

## SHORT CORNER

### Bangladesh grouped with holders S Korea in Asia Cup hockey

Bangladesh have been placed in Pool B with defending champions South Korea, Malaysia, and Chinese Taipei in the AHF Men's Hockey Asia Cup, scheduled for August 29 to September 7 in India. The Pool A features Kazakhstan, India, Japan, and China.

### Miraz set to miss Netherlands series for family reasons

Bangladesh all-rounder Mehidy Hasan Miraz won't feature in the upcoming three-match T20I series against Netherlands as he asked the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to be excluded from the series, citing family reasons.

### SA crush Australia in first ODI

Aiden Markram hit 82 before Keshav Maharaj tore through Australia's new-look batting order as South Africa claimed the first ODI of the three-match series by 98 runs in Cairns on Tuesday.

### Bangladesh 'A' bounce back

Bangladesh 'A' team returned to winning ways with a 22-run victory over Northern Territory Strike in their fourth match of the Top End T20 series in Darwin on Tuesday. The win lifted the Nurul Hasan Sohan-led side to seventh position on the 11-team table with four points from four matches as they have lost two games and won two.

\*\*Read full stories on The Daily Star's website

## Gill, Bumrah return for Asia Cup

REUTERS, New Delhi

Defending champions India named top order batter Shubman Gill and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah in their T20I squad on Tuesday for next month's Asia Cup in the United Arab Emirates.

Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal and batter Shreyas Iyer, however, could not make the cut in the 15-member squad led by Suryakumar Yadav.

India's Test captain Gill has not played a T20I since July last year when he was Suryakumar's deputy on the tour of Sri Lanka.

"That's where we started a new cycle," Suryakumar, who took over T20I captaincy from Rohit Sharma after India won the T20 World Cup last year, told reporters.

"After that he got busy with all the Test series and he didn't get an opportunity to play T20s because he was busy playing Test cricket and Champions Trophy."

India also included Bumrah, whose workload has been a major concern for the team think-tank, which played him in three of the five Tests in England recently. Bumrah last played in the T20 World Cup last year in June.

With three opening options in Gill, Abhishek Sharma and Sanju Samson -- India could not accommodate Jaiswal.

India begin their Group A campaign against hosts United Arab Emirates in Dubai before meeting arch-rivals Pakistan at the same venue four days later.

**India squad:** Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Shubman Gill, Hardik Pandya, Arshdeep Singh, Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel, Jitesh Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Varun Chakravarthy, Kuldeep Yadav, Harshit Rana, Rinku Singh, Sanju Samson



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## JU gears up for first Jucsu polls in 33yrs

SAKIB AHMED

As the long-anticipated Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union (Jucsu) elections gets closer, student organisations have stepped up preparations with panel discussions, nomination collection, and possible alliances.

The election is scheduled for September 11. The Election Commission began distributing nomination forms for Jucsu and hall elections on August 18. According to the schedule, forms can be collected until 2:00pm on August 21 and must be submitted by 4:00pm the same day.

So far, 328 students have collected nomination forms -- 87 for Jucsu and 241 for hall unions, said Election Commission Member Secretary Prof AKM Rashidul Alam.

A total of 25 posts will be contested in the Jucsu election, including six reserved seats for women. The total number of voters is 11,919.

Although the official campaign will begin on August 29, student bodies are already preparing and discussing panels.

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Md Masum Rana, a visually impaired student at Dhaka University, is seen at the Senate Building yesterday after collecting a nomination form for contesting in the Ducusu election scheduled for September 9.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## DUCSU ELECTION JCD yet to finalise panel

MAHATHIR MOHAMMED

With just hours left to submit nomination papers, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal has yet to announce its panel for the Ducusu election, due to internal issues.

According to JCD insiders, senior leaders have held multiple meetings to resolve the issues, as it faces stiff competition from the newly formed Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad (BGCS), Islami Chhatra Shibir, and several independent panels.

Today is the last day for submitting nominations. Yesterday was the last day for collecting nominations for the Dhaka University Central Student Council (Ducusu) polls.

On Monday night, the university authorities extended the deadline by a day, sparking criticism.

This correspondent spoke to at least seven 10 central and DU unit JCD leaders to understand the reasons behind the delay, but none agreed to go on record.

JCD sources say the delay might have been caused by debates over whether to reward senior leaders or field younger candidates who can connect better with current students.

According to the amended Ducusu constitution, the age limit for candidates has not been fixed. Yet most candidates being considered for top positions are from the 2015-16 session onwards.

JCD insiders said many leaders from the 2009-10 session and earlier, who remained loyal during the

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## PREVENTING PROJECT DELAYS Govt to make guideline for next govt

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and BAHARAM KHAN

The interim government by December will prepare a guideline for the next government to eliminate delays and irregularities in project implementation.

At a high-profile meeting at the Secretariat yesterday, all secretaries were instructed to submit recommendations to the planning ministry on the types of irregularities and problems faced in project planning, formulation and implementation, along with proposals for resolving them.

The meeting, co-chaired by Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud and Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed, was held at the Cabinet Division and attended by almost all advisers, the chief adviser's special assistants, and secretaries. The discussion ran from 10:00am to around 2:00pm.

Speaking to The Daily Star last night, Wahiduddin told the Daily Star last night that the government wants to leave behind a set of "practical, project-focused guidelines" based on experience for the next administration. "The planning ministry will coordinate this process by gathering inputs from all ministries and divisions," he added.

The meeting also decided to investigate delays and irregularities in several foreign-funded projects.

Where corruption or malpractice is identified, the findings will be shared with the respective development partners, sources said.

Secretaries were asked to collect information on projects with unusually high costs or those launched without proper feasibility studies.

"If irregularities are found in large-scale projects, and development partners had any responsibility in those, the matters will be placed before them," Wahiduddin said. "The assistance provided by development partners is ultimately

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## Mediators await Israeli response to new truce offer

At least 31 more killed in Gaza

AFP, Jerusalem

Mediators were awaiting an Israeli response yesterday to a fresh Gaza ceasefire plan, a day after Hamas accepted the proposal and signalled its readiness for a new round of talks aimed at ending nearly two years of war.

Mediator Qatar expressed guarded optimism for the new proposal, noting it was "almost identical" to an earlier version agreed to by Israel.

Meanwhile, Gaza's civil defence agency reported that 31 people were killed yesterday by Israeli strikes and fire across the territory.

Agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP the situation was "very dangerous and unbearable" in the Zeitoun and Sabra neighbourhoods of Gaza City, where he said "artillery shelling continues intermittently".

The two foes have held on-and-off indirect negotiations throughout the war, resulting in two short truces and the releases of Israeli hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners, but they have ultimately failed to broker a lasting ceasefire.

Qatar and Egypt, backed by the United States, have mediated the frequent rounds of shuttle diplomacy.

Egypt said Monday that it and Qatar had sent the new proposal to Israel, adding "the ball is now in its court".

Qatari foreign ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari yesterday said that Hamas had given a "very positive response, and it truly was almost identical to what the Israeli side had previously agreed to".

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### AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump yesterday said he hoped Russia's Vladimir Putin would move forward on ending the war in Ukraine, but conceded that the Kremlin leader may not want to make a deal at all, adding this would create a "rough situation" for Putin.

In an interview with the Fox News "Fox & Friends" programme, Trump said he expected that Putin's course of action would become clear in the next couple of weeks. Trump also again ruled out American boots on the ground in Ukraine and gave no specifics about the security guarantees he has previously said Washington could offer Kyiv under any post-war settlement.

"I don't think it's going to be a problem (reaching a peace deal), to be honest with you. I think Putin is tired of it. I think they're all tired of it, but you never know," Trump said.

"We're going to find out about President Putin in the next couple of weeks ... It's possible that he doesn't want to make a deal," said Trump, who has previously threatened more sanctions on Russia and nations that buy its oil if Putin does not make peace.

Trump has not specified what form any US security guarantees could take.

Earlier, the US leader said he had discussed security guarantees for Ukraine and that Putin had agreed to them, despite ruling out Kyiv's long-held dream of joining the Nato alliance.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was flanked by the leaders of allies, including Germany, France and Britain, at the summit, and his warm rapport with Trump contrasted sharply with their disastrous Oval Office meeting in February.

But beyond the optics, the path to peace remains deeply uncertain, and Zelensky may be forced to make painful compromises to

- Russia says peace deal must ensure its 'security'
- European leaders mull new sanctions on Putin
- Trump says Putin agrees to meet Zelensky

end the war, which began with Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. Analysts say more than 1 million people have been killed or wounded in the conflict.

Trump has not specified what form any US security guarantees could take.

Earlier, the US leader said he had discussed security guarantees for Ukraine and that Putin had agreed to them, despite ruling out Kyiv's long-held dream of joining the Nato alliance.

The guarantees "would be provided by the various European Countries, with a coordination with the United States of America", he said.

The Financial Times said Ukraine had undertaken to buy \$100 billion of US weapons financed by Europe in return for US guarantees for its security.

Zelensky later spoke to reporters about a \$90-billion package, and said Ukraine and its allies would formalise the terms of the security guarantees within 10 days.

Meanwhile, the British government yesterday said European leaders were weighing additional sanctions to ramp up pressure on Putin as part of a broader push to put an end to the war in Ukraine.

The government said the so-called Coalition of the Willing, which met virtually yesterday, had agreed that their planning teams would meet with US counterparts in the coming days to advance plans for security guarantees for Ukraine.

On the other hand, Russia yesterday said that any deal on Ukraine should ensure its own security and that of Russians in Ukraine.

The development came a day after Trump said the Russian leader had agreed to meet Zelensky during a phone call.

But Russia warned that any solution of the war in Ukraine must respect "Russia's security interests", with its Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov adding that any meeting between the leaders "must be prepared very thoroughly".

Some parties creating doubts among people about polls  
Says Tarique

UNB, Dhaka



BNP acting chair Tarique Rahman said yesterday that statements from various political parties have led citizens to have doubts about the election.

"I would like to draw the attention of all leaders of pro-democracy political parties. If the distance grows between democratic forces, it will open the door for the defeated and fugitive fascist groups to return. I sincerely urge all democracy-loving people across the country to stay alert and cautious," he said while virtually addressing a discussion.

Jatiyatabadi Sweekhaebak Dal arranged the programme at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre, marking its 45th founding anniversary.

The BNP leader said that holding elections is the only way to resist fascism and restore people's political rights.

"Through the practice of electing public representatives by direct vote, people gain strength in the state and politics. If the people are not strong, the state and the government

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The Chilmari-Haripur Teesta bridge opens today, fulfilling a decades-long dream of the people of Kurigram's Chilmari and Gaibandha's Sundarganj. The 1,490-metre bridge is the largest among the three bridges over the river and it would reduce distance between Dhaka and Chilmari significantly.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

## Case filed over stone looting in Jaflong

Replacement for Companiganj UNO changed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A case has been filed over the recent large-scale looting of stones from Jaflong, an Ecologically Critical Area (ECA), in Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila.

Monayem Hossain, an officer of the Purbo Jaflong Union Land Office, lodged the case with Gowainghat Police Station on Monday night, accusing 100 to 150 unidentified individuals, said Tofayel Ahmed, officer-in-charge of the station.

According to the case statement, around 40,000 cubic feet of stones were illegally removed from Jaflong during heavy rainfall between 1:00am and 4:00am from August 7 to 9.

No arrests have so far been made, the OC said.

This development comes just days after widespread reports of stone plundering at Sada Pathor in Companiganj upazila, another major tourist attraction in Sylhet.

On Friday, the Bureau of Mineral

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