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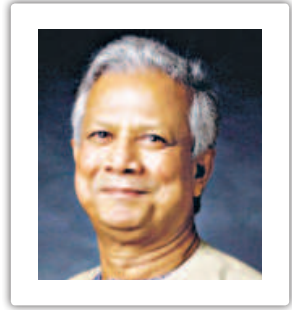


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ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্ণার' পূবালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়



## Coordinated action needed to fight NCDs Says Yunus

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Professor Mohammad Yunus yesterday underscored the need for developing a resilient generation, stressing that effective human resource management is vital for ensuring both individual wellbeing and the nation's sustainable progress.

"We have all come together today [yesterday] to address a critically important issue in the health sector. For national development

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Firefighters and locals dousing the blaze after a fire broke out at the capital's Mohakhali slum yesterday afternoon, gutting at least 70 shanties. PHOTO: STAR

## 'Everything gone in blink of an eye'

At least 70 shanties burnt to ashes at Mohakhali slum

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Rina, 25, who lost a leg in an accident, was inside her room on the first floor of a narrow house when a fire broke out at Mohakhali's Saat Tola slum yesterday.

As panic spread through the slum, she managed to crawl down from the upper floor and reach safety.

Her mother, 50-year-old Jahan Begum, works as a domestic worker in several households in the Mohakhali area. She was at her workplace at the time.

Hearing about the fire, she rushed back to the slum to check on her daughter.

When she arrived, she found that at least 70 shanties, including her own, had already been burnt down.

After the flames were doused, she went near her home and saw that the TV and refrigerator she had bought just last month – along with everything else – had turned to ashes.

The fire broke out around 2:30pm at the slum, located near the Infectious Diseases Hospital. Five fire service units brought the blaze under control at 3:18pm, and it was fully extinguished by 4:35pm.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

## Women, girls bear the brunt of climate crisis

They face severe health, livelihood, and safety challenges during disasters, says study on southwest Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Climate emergencies are hitting girls, women, and marginalised communities hardest in Khulna and Satkhira, a new study has revealed.

Over 60 percent of adolescent girls struggle to access menstrual health products, while only 2.5 percent of households have consistent access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services during disasters.



60% girls lack access to menstrual health products

2.5% households have access to sexual, reproductive health services

Unsafe drinking water affects 72% households

Early marriage, gender-based violence rise during climate crisis

The research also highlighted a worrying rise in early marriage and gender-based violence, with 78 percent of women reporting increased risks during climate crises.

The findings of the study,

titled "Understanding SRHR, WASH, and Livelihoods Situations and Pathways Forward in Climate-Vulnerable Locations of Southwest Bangladesh", were shared at a national dissemination

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

## Focus on regional dev to ease Dhaka's burden: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Creating jobs, education, and healthcare opportunities across the country is essential to reduce over-dependence on the capital and save the city, said speakers at a public dialogue yesterday.

"Eight to ten regional capitals must be developed, and every upazila should be transformed into a vibrant suburb to ease Dhaka's burden," said Shameem Haidar Patwari, secretary general of Jatiya Party (GM Quader), at the event held at CIRDAP auditorium in Dhaka.

He blamed Rajuk for the city's decline and called for its dissolution, alleging that it had failed in fulfilling its responsibilities.

The dialogue, titled "Complexities of DAP: Towards Sustainable Urbanization", was organised by the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) and was attended by policymakers, experts, business leaders, and civil society representatives.

At the discussion, Alamgir Kabir, former state minister for housing and public works, said, "Unplanned urbanisation is not only Dhaka's issue; it is a nationwide challenge. Unless corruption is addressed, the country's crises cannot be solved."

He criticised the cycle of blame between

bureaucrats and politicians.

Calling Dhaka a "dead city", BNP chairperson's adviser Habibur Rahman Habib warned that unless migration into the capital is curbed, the city cannot be saved.

Former lawmaker Nilufar Chowdhury Mony criticised lawlessness in the real estate

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Create jobs, edn opportunities outside Dhaka

Ensure quality healthcare in regional areas

Develop eight to ten regional capitals

Decentralise services, governance

Enforce laws to curb corruption in Rajuk

sector, where developers often construct buildings in narrow alleys without following safety rules.

"If an earthquake strikes, fire services won't be able to enter these areas, even in affluent neighbourhoods," she said.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

## Justice still elusive for July victims

Speakers tell BIP event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing frustration over the slow judicial process, families of July uprising martyrs and injured at an event yesterday demanded swift trials of the perpetrators and justice for the victims.

"After the fall of Sheikh Hasina's regime, we hoped we would get justice immediately. Even after a year, the minimum progress expected has not been achieved," said Samsi Ara Zaman, mother of martyred journalist Tahir Zaman Priyo.

She made the remarks at a dialogue organised yesterday by the Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) to mark the one-year anniversary of the 2024 uprising.

Junaid Islam, a student of Jahangirnagar University, said, "The July uprising represented the people's expectations for the freedom

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

## Honouring the stellar women

bti, Star award two individuals in banking, healthcare categories

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In 2023, bti and The Daily Star launched the "bti The Daily Star Stellar Women" initiative – a unique platform to honour and celebrate women from diverse walks of life for their contributions to society.

The inaugural season recognised 12 outstanding women across various fields.

The second season of the initiative began in September 2024, with the first two awards being presented in November.

Recently, a gathering was held at bti Celebration Point in Gulshan 2, Dhaka, where two more extraordinary women were recognised for their achievements.

Shaila Abedin, SEVP and head of liability consumer & SME banking at Prime Bank, was awarded the title in "Banking & Financial Institutions" for her unmatched contributions to women's banking and to the banking sector as a whole.

Simultaneously, Dr Tahsin Ferdous

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2



Shaila Abedin



Tahsin Ferdous

## Panel to probe controversial video of BFIU head formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Financial Institutions Division (FID) of the finance ministry has formed a four-member committee to probe and submit an inquiry report on the controversial image/video of AFM Shahinul Islam, head of the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU), that was circulating on social media.

Md Sayed Kutub, additional secretary of the FID, will be the convener of the committee, while the three members are Md Sirajul Islam, executive director of Bangladesh Bank; Md Matiuur Rahman, director of the ICT-2 Division of the central bank; and Mohammad Saidul Islam, joint secretary of the FID, who will be the member secretary.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2





# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

## We must fix the logistical issues

### Govt must implement a master plan to address these costly inefficiencies

A poor and costly logistics system has long been a thorn in the side of Bangladeshi businesses. At a recent roundtable organised by this daily, business leaders identified it as a major hurdle to the country's readiness for graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status. They warned that, post-LDC, when preferential trade benefits will end and a high tariff regime will drive up costs, inefficient logistics may further erode our competitiveness.

According to a World Bank official, as much as 16 percent of Bangladesh's GDP is spent on moving goods from factories to customers—well above the global average of 10 percent. Experts argue that the problem lies more with poor coordination and planning than with infrastructure deficits. For example, only four percent of Bangladesh's freight is transported by rail, compared to India's 20 percent. A lack of locomotives and skilled manpower to operate freight trains is commonly cited as a reason for this underutilisation. So why has the railway's freight-carrying operation not been prioritised over the years?

Between 1970 and 2019, the railway's freight transportation fell from 488,000 tonnes per kilometre to 396,000. A Financial Express report notes that since the 1980s, the modal share of road and highway transport for both passengers and goods has increased, while railways have declined and waterways have remained stagnant. However, road transport costs Tk 6 more per tonne per kilometre compared to water transport. Despite this, businesses are still opting for the more expensive mode due to delays and inefficiencies in the cheaper alternatives.

The inefficiencies and underutilisation of our existing sea and river ports compound the logistical challenges. In the last five decades, we have not been able to develop a fully functional alternative to Chattogram port, which often remains congested. Meanwhile, Mongla remains underutilised because of a lack of supporting infrastructure; construction work is still ongoing at Payra even after a decade, and Matarbari is functioning only partially. As a World Bank official recently pointed out, what is lacking in Bangladesh is not planning but execution.

Thankfully, the interim government is preparing a guideline for the next government to eliminate delays and irregularities in project implementation. We also hope that it will form an inter-ministerial panel to address the logistics issues and start implementing the 2024 National Logistics Policy. We agree with experts that the country requires a long-term master plan and a central logistics council—a single authority for coherent policy execution. An integrated transport ecosystem covering roads, rail, waterways, aviation, ports, and digital networks is a must to handle the higher volume of trade and retain our competitive advantage, whether we graduate out of LDC in 2026 or not.

This means not only investing in infrastructure development but also enhancing capacity through manpower development and training. At the same time, relevant laws should be updated to welcome private investment—under government oversight—in sectors such as the railway and waterways to reduce logistics costs and increase efficiency.

## Let's not ignore the risk of influenza

### Public awareness, vaccination can check its spread

We are quite concerned about the increasing number of influenza cases this year, with both children and adults falling ill to the virus. According to a joint surveillance study by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) and icddr, July saw 2.75 times more influenza cases than the same month last year. The study revealed that out of 2,455 patients who visited 19 designated hospitals with symptoms such as fever, cold, and body aches, 1,453 were diagnosed with influenza. The positivity rate was 21.5 percent in July last year, and 33.4 percent the year before—both far below this year's 59.2 percent. This is the highest rate recorded since influenza surveillance began in the country in 2007. Although health experts expect the caseload to come down from October onwards, we have to be prepared to deal with any possibility.

According to the World Health Organization, seasonal influenza is an acute respiratory infection that spreads easily through droplets when people cough or sneeze. While medication is generally unnecessary, those from vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and those with comorbidities, should seek medical attention, since the illness can significantly weaken the immune system. Health experts have advised wearing masks, avoiding gatherings, and maintaining hygiene to curb the spread. But with the presence of multiple viral diseases during this year—including dengue, chikungunya, and COVID—people suffering from high fever and severe cough are thronging hospitals fearing the worst. Due to this, diagnosis and treatment have also become more complicated, burdening our hospitals.

We, therefore, urge the authorities to take appropriate measures to prevent further spread of influenza. Since the infection rate is significantly higher this year compared to previous years, it must be addressed with greater efficiency. People, especially those experiencing cold and cough symptoms, should wear masks, avoid crowded places, and adhere to hygiene protocols to minimise transmission. For this, raising public awareness through campaigns and media advertisements is essential. It is also important to educate the public about influenza symptoms and care, as dengue, chikungunya, and COVID all can have similar symptoms. Typically, Bangladesh experiences two major flu seasons: March-April and August-September. Therefore, individuals should be encouraged to take the influenza vaccine during February-March, ahead of the seasonal surge. However, as the vaccine remains costly for many, health authorities must explore ways to make it more affordable for the general population.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Dhaka grenade attack

On this day in 2004, a grenade attack took place at a rally organised by the Awami League on Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka, killing 24, including senior party leader Ivy Rahman, and injuring about 300.

# How to make the BB autonomy ordinance effective

OPEN SKY

Dr Birkpasha Paul  
is professor of economics at the State  
University of New York in Cortland, US.



BIRUPAKSHA PAUL

While most reform initiatives under consideration by the interim government have achieved little progress or, at best, a fragile consensus, its banking reforms have gathered ample momentum among economists and civil society. The most notable among them is the long overdue Bangladesh Bank Ordinance (Amendment), 2025, which is designed to award long-coveted autonomy to the central bank. The ordinance seems good enough to fend off the finance ministry should it try, as it did during the Awami League regime, to use the Bangladesh Bank (BB) as its money-printing press in the name of deficit financing. If enacted, the amendment can bring a revolutionary change over the Bangladesh Bank Order (1972), which has fallen behind the art of modern-day central banking.

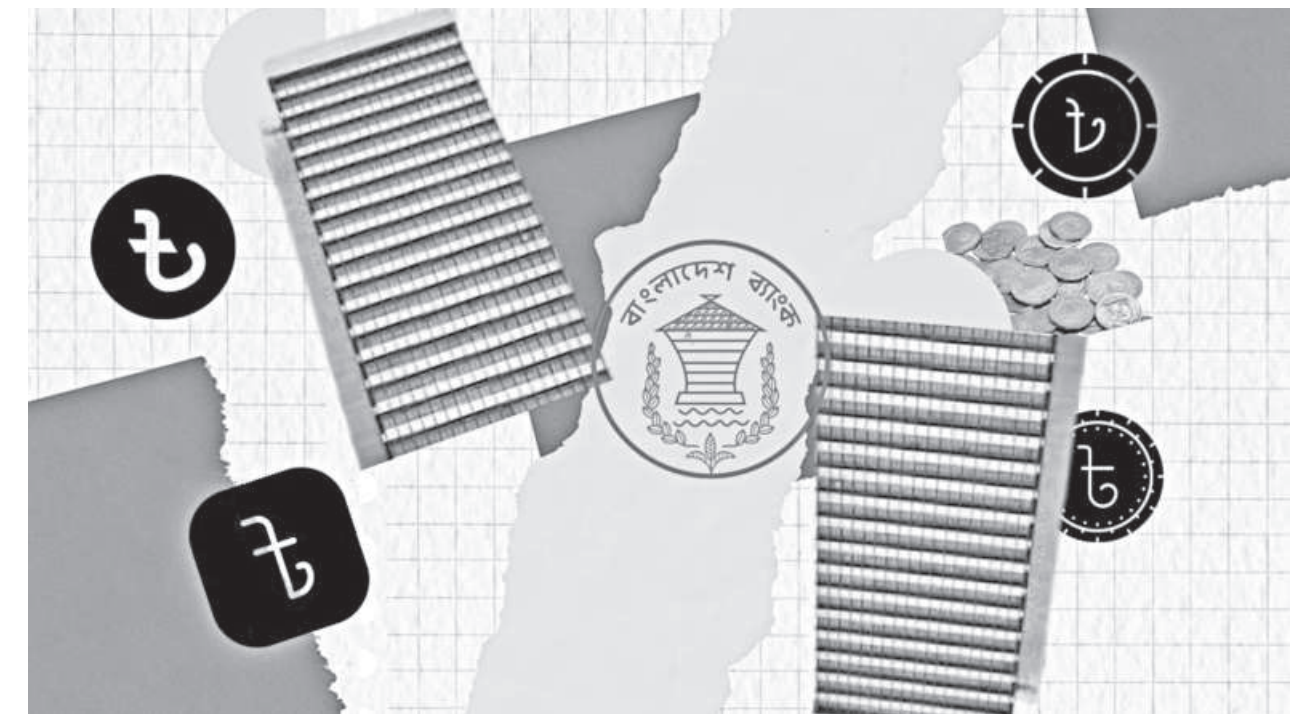
The main points of the proposed ordinance include: a) the governor's status which is to be equivalent to that of a minister; b) a search committee which will propose three names for the governor's post; c) the prime minister's advice to the president for the governor's appointment; d) parliamentary approval for the appointment and removal of the governor; e) exclusion of any government bureaucrats from the BB board; f) the governor and deputies to be sworn in by the chief justice; and g) the governor's tenure which is to be increased to six years from four.

While most of them reflect the necessities of modern-day central banking, some of them require corrections so that the governor's appointment remains fair and authentic to uphold the central bank's institutional integrity. The ordinance must clarify how the six-member search committee, which will propose three names for the governor's post, should be formed. The committee members must possess adequate expertise, banking-related knowledge, and ample reputation for wisdom to ensure fairness.

It is likely that a highly politicised committee will eventually choose the names suggested by the prime minister, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, the formation of the search committee is immensely crucial, as it would accept nominations or applications for the governor's position. The governor candidates must be known to society for their

scholarly contribution in the fields of economics, finance, banking, and macro policymaking. The search committee must be transparent in its recruitment guidelines and sequential decision-making in the selection process.

Next, these three names should go to parliament for open discussion



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

among the lawmakers. US Congress members engage in open debate about the potential Fed chair's background and credentials. After debate, the parliament should determine the order of its preference from one to three and give the list to the prime minister, who can select only two names from them and then hand over the shortlist to the president for the final selection. Here, judgement is expected to be invoked at every stage, and every entity has a role to play rather than being used like a rubber stamp. This level of rigour and integrity is required to select a central bank guru who will form a parallel government alongside the political regime.

The governor, being a constitutional position, is to be sworn in by the chief justice under the new ordinance. But why the deputies, too? Deputy governors are appointed

internally through promotion and sometimes favouritism. They are in-house professionals who are supposed to support the governor. Deputies would never go through the same selection process a governor would be required to.

The initial draft-makers seem to have cultivated bias from the central bank's point of interest without understanding the ground reality in a country where both fiscal and monetary policies must work in tandem. Hence, ignoring the political government and the bureaucratic apparatus quite enthusiastically has turned impractical. The task of forming the BB board must involve other government officials to make the central bank's policy measures work fruitfully. As the draft ordinance

expansion, investment promotion, reserves maintenance, employment maximisation, and ensuring macro stability.

The provision for the BB governor's removal should be equally important. The finance adviser supported BB's autonomy but insisted that security and accountability must be ascertained. Many central bank governors are fired when inflation breaks an upper ceiling set for their respective economies. The BB governor must use tools like the policy and exchange rates to ensure a healthy level of reserves and sound macro stability that can attract foreign investors. Hence, there should be another section in the documentation that includes clear guidelines for measuring

accountability. Authority without accountability breeds malpractice and corruption. There are three basic changes that demand consideration. First, monetary policy should be presented at parliament, just like the budget. The coverage of monetary policy in GDP is no less than that of the annual budget. Second, the proposed ordinance can be named as the Bangladesh Bank Autonomy Act, which clarifies the objective and justifies the move. Third, the time has come to think about changing the name of our central bank. Simply the "Bangladesh Bank" sometimes sounds like a private or public commercial bank, particularly overseas. Rather, the "Bangladesh Central Bank" sounds more appropriate to reflect its great stature as the supreme financial commander and the reserve bank of the country.

In addition, the inclusion of the finance secretary, NBR chair, BIDA chair, and BSEC chair is imperative since all of them are key policymakers for the economy. The success of the Bangladesh Bank's policymaking hinges on deep coordination with these institutions. BIDA, NBR, BSEC, and the finance ministry are all integral parts of the central bank's prime responsibilities involving inflation control, deposit mobilisation, credit

# When climate change becomes your doctor's problem too

Barrister Noshin Nawal  
is a columnist for The Daily Star. She can be  
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NOSHIN NAWAL

Climate change used to be that thing your cousin from abroad mentioned while nibbling gluten-free brownies. Now? It's here. It's in your armpits, your nosebleeds, your prescriptions, your health records, and your mum's dizzy spells. And it's barging into our hospitals—uninvited, unfiltered and, naturally, unfunded.

Dhaka has just endured one of the worst heatwaves in recorded history. Except we didn't really endure it; we sweated, we wheezed, we staggered around like dazed kebabs in an open tandoor. The government, ever efficient, issued guidelines, "Stay indoors," as if we all had the luxury of lounging in centrally air-conditioned drawing rooms, sipping electrolyte water and waiting for foreign remittance. Most of us were marinating in rooftop heat, trapped in tin sheds, or passing out on public buses that felt like mobile saunas with steering wheels.

Let's talk healthcare, that miraculous thing we keep expecting to work despite treating it like the last kid picked in a game of cricket. During the heatwave, hospitals

were flooded with patients with heatstroke, dehydration, asthma, and rashes—the full buffet of climate-induced ailments. Doctors were trying to resuscitate fainting grandmothers while wiping sweat off their own brows. And all this in buildings that haven't been renovated since the British Raj, with ceiling fans that sound like dying goats, and ventilation systems that give up by noon.

Meanwhile, dengue has returned with the punctuality of a Shakib Khan film on Eid. Mosquitoes are thriving in places they never used to—hello, climate change—and bringing the gift of viral fever to all. In 2023, over 1,700 people lost their lives suffering from dengue, not because they didn't use mosquito nets, but because our health system failed to contain the disease.

Coastal areas are now grappling with rising salinity, which is causing high blood pressure, kidney disease, and complicated pregnancies among the locals. In Satkhira, women are developing urinary tract infections (UTIs) simply because the water

they're using consists of elements that are unsafe for their hygiene. But sure, let's keep pretending climate change is just about "weather" and not the fact that it's literally pickling people.

Rural clinics, meanwhile, are collapsing under climate-linked disasters. Cyclones destroy infrastructure. Floods cut off access. There's one community clinic in a char area with no electricity, no medicine and no doctor. Still, climate change is treated like a side hustle in our health planning. Most district health strategies don't mention it. No one's training doctors to identify or respond to climate-related illnesses. There's no fund going into climate-proofing hospitals. And the best we've got are donor-funded pilot projects that disappear faster than ORS sachets in a paediatric ward.

But wait, there's more: the healthcare system is not just the victim. It's part of the problem too. Hospitals running on diesel generators, air conditioners from the '90s, and supply chains that emit enough carbon to make a Thanos snap look gentle. Medical waste—needles, bandages, expired medicines—ends up in rivers, lakes, and, if you're lucky, your nearest beel.

Now let's talk mental health—or the lack of it. Eco-anxiety isn't just some Western indulgence. It's what happens when Bangladeshi youth are told to study hard and dream big, only to see their future swallowed by floodwater or smog. One day it's their

exam results, the next day it's their school collapsing in a landslide. How are they supposed to function when climate-induced trauma is now a graduation requirement?

And let's not forget the healthcare workers. Expected to be Florence Nightingale, Bear Grylls and Dr House all rolled into one, while working 12-hour shifts in unbearable heat without PPE, training or even a working fridge to keep insulin cool. When a system burns out its staff as quickly as its diesel, you know the emergency isn't coming—it's already here.

The solution? No, it's not more awareness campaigns with "climate-smart" slogans and forced group photos. It's hard cash and hard reform. It means redesigning hospitals to withstand floods and heatwaves. It means training healthcare workers on climate-linked illnesses. It means integrating climate data into epidemic forecasting. It means treating climate not as a buzzword, but as the underlying diagnosis behind half our public health crises.

Climate change is no longer creeping in—it's taking your blood pressure, biting your ankles, and casually suggesting an ICU admission. And if we don't act now, your next trip to the hospital won't be for treatment. It'll be for shelter.

So yes, climate change is your doctor's problem now. And if our leaders don't start treating it like one, they'll soon need a different kind of prescription: one for a collective collapse.









BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

# Letters across the silence

Review of 'Thorns in My Quilt: Letters from a Daughter to Her Father' (Rupa Publications India, 2024) by Mohua Chinappa

NAMRATA

In *Thorns in My Quilt*, Mohua Chinappa offers readers a searingly honest and emotionally resonant series of letters addressed to her late father. But before these letters unfold, we are led into a history that anchors the personal in the political—a story of displacement, privilege, and loss that stretches from Dhaka to Shillong.

Mohua's father, one among 11 siblings, was raised in an educated East Bengal family. Her grandfather, Jamini Kumar Bhattacharjee, was a gold medalist from Dhaka, a principled man whose values were rooted in knowledge and integrity. Her grandmother, Thamma, came from an established household in Cumilla. The vivid image of her childhood home, complete with a temple, a large pond teeming with fish, and a bustling atmosphere of care, evokes the pre-Partition Bengali world that many in Bangladesh will recognise intimately.

But like countless Bengali families uprooted by Partition, theirs too became a life of fragments. The ancestral home was left behind, and the family rebuilt itself in Shillong, carrying with them the echoes of a lost homeland and the weight of survival in a new one. This layered legacy of privilege turned precarity, of memory strained by migration, forms a quiet yet persistent undercurrent through the book.

Against this backdrop, the letters from daughter to father feel even more poignant. Mohua writes not only to grieve her Baba, but to confront the complexity of their relationship. He was, she says, "as kind as he was cruel, as well-read as he was unworldly." In this paradox lies the core of the memoir, an aching tenderness entwined with unresolved pain.

The cover, too, speaks volumes. A photograph of Mohua standing behind her aged father, both staring off into the distance, captures the emotional tenor of

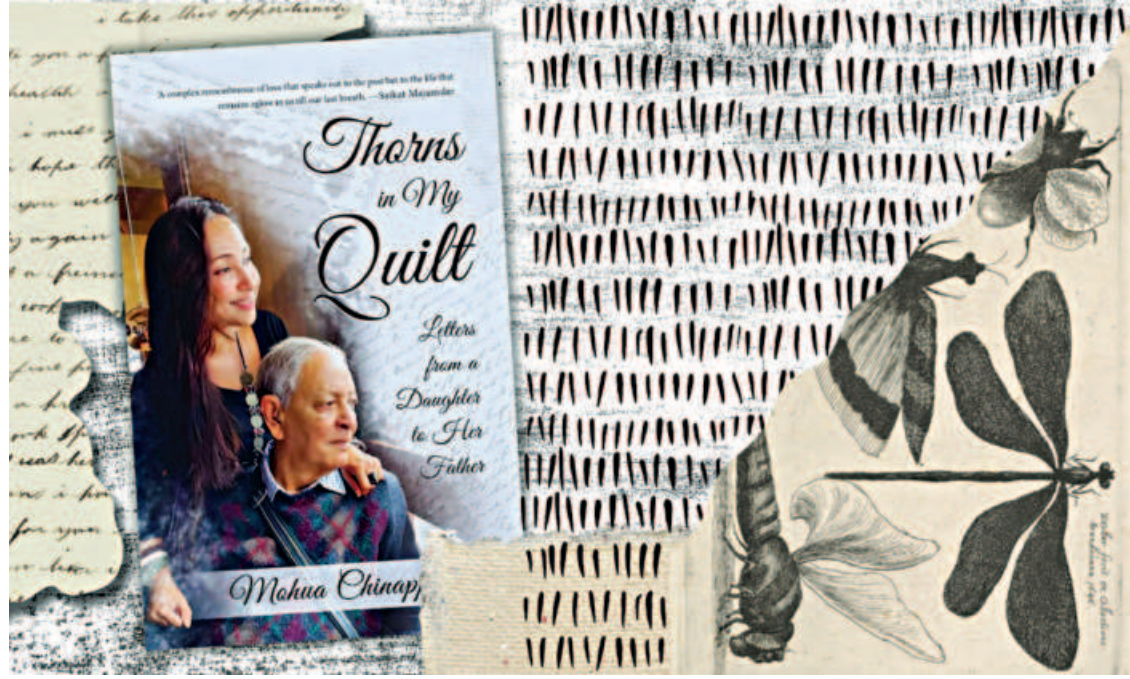


ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

the book perfectly. There is space, both physical and emotional, between them. Yet there is also presence, loyalty, and longing. It is a powerful image of connection and distance, of a bond shaped by time, silence, and everything in between.

Her prose is direct and intimate, capturing not only the love and disappointment she felt, but also the solitude of dealing with his death. Childhood memories, like the scent of vanilla in the butter cookies he baked, or the image of her small hand in his as they walked the rainswept roads of Shillong, are recalled with sensory richness and emotional clarity. These memories are neither idealised nor embittered. They are held gently, examined with care.

What sets *Thorns in My Quilt* apart is its courage in acknowledging that love does not erase hurt. Mohua's letters are at times raw and selfish, but never dishonest. They reveal a woman grieving not just her father, but the version of herself she lost in a

failed marriage, in abandonment, and in trying to measure up to an impossible ideal. In these confessions, there is a quiet resilience, a refusal to look away from emotional truth.

The book resonates on multiple levels. It is a daughter's reckoning, but also a shared memory of displacement. The grandeur of the Cumilla household and the intellectual legacy of Dhaka are not just Mohua's inheritance. They belong to a collective Bengali past fractured by borders. Her family's migration to Shillong mirrors the stories of many East Bengalis who were forced to start anew, carrying only memories of what was left behind.

Despite all this, *Thorns in My Quilt* does not dwell in nostalgia. Instead, it becomes an act of reclamation. By writing these letters, Mohua not only confronts the silence between her and her father but also stitches together the fragments of a life shaped by exile, love, and endurance.

This is a memoir of grief,

but more importantly, it is a portrait of a woman finding voice in loss. Mohua's emotional honesty, combined with her sharp eye for detail, makes this an unforgettable read. What truly elevates *Thorns in My Quilt* is her writing. It is measured, lucid, and deeply intimate. She writes not with the flourish of a performer but with the clarity of someone unburdening the heart. Her style is emotionally restrained yet piercing, allowing the reader to feel the unsaid as much as the spoken. Each letter reads like a quiet act of courage, stitched with vulnerability, sharp introspection, and a poetic sensitivity to both place and feeling.

*Thorns in My Quilt* is not just a memoir. It is an act of remembering, of reclaiming, and, finally, of release. It speaks quietly, but powerfully to all those who have loved and lost, and to those still carrying the ghosts of places once called home.

Namrata is a literary consultant, columnist, and podcast host.

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

# Revisiting the hidden scars and echoes of Bengal Partition

Review of 'Bengal and Its Partition: An Untold Story' (Rupa Publication, 2025) by Bhaswati Mukherjee

REZAU KARIM REZA

Bengal was partitioned twice. First in 1905 when the heightened protest against this reunited Bengal in 1911. Then, it was divided again in 1947 during the partition of India. But this time, it was unavoidable. Although the trauma of the Punjab Partition has been widely written about in English, the experiences of Bengal partitions have often remained underrepresented. This is where Bhaswati Mukherjee aims to fill the gap through her book *Bengal and Its Partition*. It offers a compelling, accessible narrative that situates Bengal's Partition not as an isolated event, but as the result of long-term socio-political maneuver.

A retired Indian diplomat, Bhaswati Mukherjee

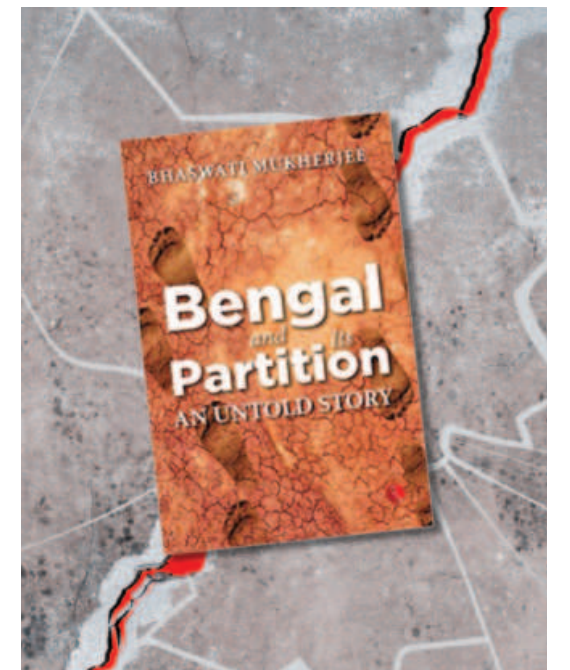


ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

**The final chapters of the book delve deep into the hurried and chaotic process of demarcation. And thus was the result of the Bengal Partition in 1947. Sadly, it decided so quickly that the division was done without proper demarcation, consultation, or transition planning.**

is an acclaimed scholar. She has deep personal and ancestral ties to the Bengal region. Mukherjee served both as high-ranking roles in the Indian Foreign Service and as an international policy forum. Her diplomatic insight and lived family memory approaches the Partition of Bengal with a rare mix of analytical precision and emotional depth. Her works with this book reflect correcting historical omissions and reviving the erased Bengali narratives.

The book unfolds as a deeply researched yet highly readable history of the Bengal Partition. The research is grounded in archival data, oral histories, and literary references. It explores the roots of communal division in Bengal long before 1947. It exposes how the British colonial regime nurtured those divisions through policies of divide and rule. Through the book, the author critically examines the political negotiations between the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League, and colonial administrators.

It has the finest illustration of how Bengal's fate was shaped by a mix of ideological rigidity, communal anxiety, and geopolitical expediency. Mukherjee's narrative stands out for placing East Bengal (now Bangladesh) at the heart of the discussion. She has proved that it was a long overdue Bengali-centric lens on Partition. The book has also portrayed the cultural fragmentation, administrative chaos, and deep sense of betrayal. This was the pain felt by millions on both sides of the Bengal border.

*Bengal and Its Partition* is a nonfictional work, but the book is structured with the flow of a narrative history. Mukherjee begins with the 1905 Partition of Bengal which was created by Lord Curzon. She has clearly set the tone for how administrative manipulation laid the foundation for communal division. She then moves through the rise of Bengali nationalism, and outlines the failed Bengal Pact of 1923, as well as the roles of key figures like Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee through various plots.

The final chapters of the book delve deep into the hurried and chaotic process of demarcation. And thus was the result of the Bengal Partition in 1947. Sadly, it decided so quickly that the division was done without proper demarcation, consultation, or transition planning. Mukherjee has also brought stories of displacement, the collapse of culture, and the long-term implications for Indo-Bangladeshi relations.

*Bengal and Its Partition* is not only a history of political events but also a tribute to a lost cultural unity and a call to remember the human cost of division. Mukherjee's work clearly claims that remembering East is just as important as remembering West within Bengal.

Rezaul Karim Reza is an English teacher and an academic.

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

# No heroes in Shonagachhi

Review of 'A Death in Shonagachhi' (Pan Macmillan India, 2011) by Rijula Das

SEJAL RAHMAN

Don't mistake *A Death in Shonagachhi* for a murder mystery, or you'll be setting yourself up for disappointment. Some moments will remain unexplained, threads will refuse to tie neatly, and certain ends will stay frayed. Strictly speaking, Rijula Das's explosive debut can be classified as literary noir. More poetically, it is a soul-baring depiction of a community built in the most unexpected of places—a testament to resilience in the face of crushing blows, and a promise that love can overcome the agony of circumstances beyond one's control.

Tenderness is difficult to find in a neighbourhood like Shonagachhi, yet Das's words evoke a softness you'd be thoughtless to ignore. Asia's largest red-light district becomes unexpectedly homely—despite the gore and grit of the horrors that unfold. Her prose is both kind and unrestrained; it does not shy from pain, nor does it hide the agony waiting behind those walls. It is maddeningly honest and, at times, disastrously funny.

So you trust her—and her characters—as they descend into hell. It's bodies all the way down, with degradation and decay on every side. You might pray for the unfortunate, the wicked, or the dead, but it would do no good. God hides them far away. Das's characters are shaped by the impediments placed before their dignity, hope, and spirit—a damning indictment of society's careless treatment of its outcasts. This is ostracisation for ostracisation's sake.

The first person we meet is Tilu, though all eyes are on Lalee—the woman of Tilu's dreams and the source of his addiction. Lalee is the river in Tilu's bloodstream: thoughts of her ebb and flow without cease. Barely clinging to the lowest rungs of the caste system, Tilu is without charm and desperate for some. He is Lalee's most dependable customer, and Lalee's most dependable sinner. Lalee, meanwhile, seldom spares him a glance outside of business; she is the archetypal cynical, practical prostitute familiar from



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

brothel portrayals in fiction. Other stock figures populate the novel: the cruel madam Shefali, the comically villainous zealot Maharaj, the greedy upstart pimp Rambo Maity, corrupt policemen who exploit the women they disdain, and frustrated social workers chasing leads that go nowhere.

Yet, despite these archetypes, moments of originality shine through—like when macho cop Samsheer Singh shyly tells his terrified wife he would love to have a daughter, despite his mother's protests. Or when the number one fan of Tilu's explicit works joins him in a high-stakes chase to rescue the woman he loves, knowing nothing about her. Or when the indifferent Sonia, prized for her exotic looks, comes to Lalee's aid in her darkest hour. These small moments coalesce into a portrait of community, starkly contrasted by the "small deaths" that slowly erode it.

The first major shock is the brutal, graphic murder of Lalee's neighbour, Mohamaya—known as Maya—an "A-lister" in The Blue Lotus hierarchy.

What is less shocking is the response: the police do not visit the scene until ten days later. Singh, the examining officer, arrives to find the room scrubbed clean and already occupied by another sex worker. Maya's death propels the plot, driving Lalee to take her place, and leading the reader into what will become her own grave. The story meanders through Tilu's plans for a novel, Singh's domestic life, and everyone's rage at demonisation. These tangents can frustrate, especially as the most compelling figure—Lalee—is often sidelined.

None of the events in the novel would occur without the underlying degradation of safety for women and girls, particularly in rural areas. In forgotten corners of the Indian subcontinent live countless innocents, sold to settle debts, to feed fewer mouths, or to quench a father's drunken thirst. They are thrust into the hands of unforgiving madams, chained to bedposts, forced into the arms of violent men, and trapped in a system

that refuses to acknowledge them. As Samsheer Singh observes: "It's not for nothing that they put them in one corner, in these floating towns where they can remain among their own folk and not be a part of 'normal' life."

*A Death in Shonagachhi* builds to an excruciating crescendo that ultimately rings hollow. There is no resolution, no solution to the world's oldest problem: how do you protect the innocent? Whether that emptiness is deliberate or not, it forces the reader to confront the blindness with which society treats sex workers. More enduring, however, is the lesson tucked within its winding paragraphs: friendship among the forgotten, the camaraderie of laughing at one's woes, the comfort of knowing that "once loved is always loved." Even in a world that tries to swallow you whole, you can carve out your own place—and, if you dare, swallow the world right back.

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SAFF U-17 WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

## Bangladesh off to winning start despite 'mistakes'

SPORTS REPORTER

Alpi Akter scored twice and Sauravi Akanda Prity added another as Bangladesh started their SAFF U-17 Women's Championship campaign with a 3-1 win against hosts Bhutan at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu on Wednesday.

It was a comfortable victory for the charges of Mahbubur Rahman Litu, the assistant coach stepping in for Peter Butler, but far from a convincing one for a team that had brushed aside the same opposition with a 6-0 drubbing on way to claiming the title in the under-16 event last year.

The girls in red and green had their chances though to claim a much bigger margin of victory, but Bhutan goalkeeper Kelzang Wangmo was in inspired form, especially in the first half, as she thwarted a number of goal-bound attempts from Bangladesh.

It started in the second minute when Wangmo made a one-handed diving save to deny Alpi the opening goal



before denying Prity from a one-on-one situation in the 20th minute. The Bhutan shot-stopper produced another fine save to deny Alpi again in the 28th minute before the Bangladesh No. 9 saw her header cleared off the goaline by a Bhutan defender.

Prity, who had emerged as the top scorer and the best player last year, hit

the crossbar from the edge of the box in the 42nd minute before finally breaking the deadlock in the third minute of stoppage time, heading in Shiuly Roy's lob as Wangmo and two defenders were caught in a tangle.

Alpi doubled Bangladesh's lead nine minutes after restart with a powerful shot from the edge of the box following

a nice little pirouette as Bangladesh started to breathe easy. However, two unfortunate injuries – one for midfielder Moumita Khatun in the first half and another for Prity early in the second half, debilitated Bangladesh's attacking options.

It was trouble at the back too as goalkeeper Meghla Roy's fumble in the 62nd minute helped Bhutan reduce the margin, courtesy of Rinzin Choden's fine finish. Alpi, however, restored Bangladesh's two-goal cushion four minutes later, bundling in a corner on the second attempt before Mamoni Chakma had a shot cleared off the goaline by a Bhutan player.

Coach Litu expressed his concern over the mistakes that the team made as Bangladesh will face India, who beat Nepal 7-0 in the first match on Wednesday, in their second match of the four-team competition on Friday.

"I think we made a few mistakes, especially early on but we came back well. We will work on the mistakes we have made," Litu said.

## Cabrera finds 'positivity' despite player shortage

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national team head coach Javier Cabrera remains confident about preparing his side for the two upcoming FIFA friendlies against hosts Nepal on September 6 and 9, despite 10 Bashundhara Kings players expected to join the national camp only next month.

Cabrera began training on August 15 with just 13 players after Kings declined to release their squad members, citing pre-season preparations and injury concerns. To fill the gap, the 40-year-old coach called up eight U-19 players, and he is pleased with how the camp is progressing.

"We have 13 senior players in camp, as some others are with the U-23 team, while Kings players stayed back. To complete the group, we brought in some U-19 players, and we are happy with the positivity so far," Cabrera told reporters before yesterday's training at the National Stadium.

"I think it is going to be effective. There is enough time to prepare. Kings players will hopefully join next month, and we will still have time to get ready for the Nepal matches."

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is still hoping to have England-based Hamza Choudhury arrive directly in Nepal, but Canada-based Shamit Shome will miss the friendlies. Despite this, Cabrera remains optimistic about the young players stepping up.

"The more games we play, the more players will be ready for the future. We still have many senior players, but with U-23s coming in, some seniors will naturally get less time. Now the young ones have a chance to prove themselves as we play practice matches before traveling to Nepal for the two friendlies," Cabrera said.

The Spanish coach also admitted that he had spoken with Bashundhara Kings president Imrul Hasan, who is also BFF senior vice president and deputy chairman of the National Teams Committee, regarding domestic and international schedules. Cabrera emphasised he has "a lot of respect" for Imrul and does not want to get into any controversies over the issue of player availability.

## Dutch announce squad for Bangladesh T20Is

SPORTS REPORTER

Netherlands on Wednesday have named a 15-member squad for their three-match T20I series against Bangladesh, starting August 30 in Sylhet.

Led by skipper Scott Edwards, the squad includes seasoned opener Max O'Dowd, pacer Paul van Meekeren, the Klein brothers Ryan and Kyle, off-spinner Aryan Dutt, and leg-spinner Shariz Ahmed.

The Dutch will arrive in Dhaka on August 26 before moving to Sylhet for a three-day training camp ahead of the opener.

**Netherlands squad:** Max O'Dowd, Vikramjit Singh, Anil Nidamanuru, Scott Edwards, Noah Croes, Saqib Zulfiqar, Ryan Klein, Kyle Klein, Aryan Dutt, Paul van Meekeren, Shariz Ahmed, Ben Fletcher, Daniel Doram, Tim Pringle, Fred Klaassen.

## Jessy to officiate in Netherlands series

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh umpire Shathira Jakir Jessy will be officiating in the Tigers' upcoming T20I series against the Netherlands.

Jessy, who was earlier informed that she is set to officiate in the upcoming women's ODI World Cup in Sri Lanka and India in September, was announced as the fourth umpire in the first and third T20Is of the Netherlands series. She will be in charge as a TV umpire in second T20I.

"I would like to thank Bangladesh Cricket Board for giving me an opportunity to officiate in a men's national team series for the first time. I think it will help me to take good preparation for the upcoming World Cup," Jessy told The Daily Star yesterday.

Tanvir Ahmed, Masudur Rahman Mukul, and Morshed Ali Khan have been named on-field umpires for the series, which will take place in Sylhet on August 30, September 1, and 3, respectively.

Jessy has umpired in the Dhaka Premier League previously and has also officiated in the Women's Asia Cup, the ICC Women's World Cup Qualifiers held in Pakistan in April, and during the recent men's Emerging Team's series between Bangladesh and South Africa.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh team are in Sylhet and have begun their skill camps. The Tigers will play a practice match against BCB HP on August 26.

## DISCORDANT TUNE-UP leaves Tigresses vulnerable

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Women's cricket in Bangladesh still receives far less attention than men's, and their preparation continues to lag. Yesterday's Challenge Cup match in Savar showed just how poorly the team's arrangements have been, given a quadrennial global event is fast approaching.

In a match designed to help fine-tune the Tigresses ahead of September-November ICC Women's World Cup, national captain Nigar Sultana Joy-led team – named Red Team, which include several players from the 50-over set-up – lost by 87 runs to Bangladesh men's U-15 side, a bunch who had never played a white-ball match.

The defeat itself was less significant than the circumstances surrounding it. Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had tried but failed to secure international oppositions after being turned down by neighbouring countries. In the end, the only available solution was a makeshift three-team event, featuring two women's squads and a men's youth team.

The Tigresses have not featured in an international fixture since April, and the shortcomings of such an appalling preparatory arrangement quickly became apparent, further exposing the national team's "inconsistent" batting.

At the BKSP-3 Ground, Red Team folded for just 94 runs after reaching 50 without loss in pursuit of 182, while the boys – assembled barely a fortnight ago – looked sharper and hungrier despite their sheer lack of match experience; and that too in front of a decent crowd, media presence and a live telecast.

"After forming this U-15 team, we had



only two weeks of camp, and most of the boys had only played red-ball cricket before," said the winning team's pace bowling coach Mahbubul Alam Robin.

For Joy, the match offered perspective rather than despair. "We weren't getting matches for preparation, so it's better to face different opponents than to just play intra-squad games," she said.

Beyond results, however, deeper concerns lie in the conditions and resources available. Matches in Savar are being staged on slow, low pitches – ones that bear little resemblance to what awaits in India and Sri Lanka.

"If you compare these wickets with the World Cup tracks, the difference is huge. The wicket was slightly better [than the first fixture] because the sun came out, but still not ideal for preparation," said one

experienced player.

The lack of pace bowling options adds another layer to the challenge. "Apart from Marufa [Akter] and Trishna [Fariha], we don't really have pacers. You can't take rookies to a World Cup, but you need a proper pace attack to back up the spinners. There's no pipeline for pacers in the women's game, and our batting is inconsistent too," admitted another cricketer, also requesting anonymity.

Despite the concerns voiced by players, the selectors remain unfazed. "In the subcontinent, most teams don't play with more than two pacers," said women's chief selector Sazzad Ahmed Shipon.

For Bangladesh, the scoreline in Savar mattered less than what it revealed: a team heading into a global tournament after seemingly being set up to fail.

## 'No bias': BHF defends Asia Cup squad selection

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) dismissed allegations of bias in the selection of the national team for the upcoming Men's Hockey Asia Cup, beginning August 29 in Bihar, India.

The BHF yesterday finalised an 18-member squad with two standbys, leaving out most-recent captain Pushkor Khisha Mimo, seasoned campaigner Moinul Islam Koushik, along with Nayeem Uddin and Abed Uddin – all of whom featured in April's AHF Cup in Indonesia.

The dropped players, who had been staying at the BHF dormitory, reportedly confronted general secretary Riazul Hassan after the announcement and engaged in a heated exchange with a joint secretary.

"Both spoke loudly but it was amicable and later it was settled down because they [players] understood it," BHF general secretary Riazul Hassan told the reporters yesterday.

"If anyone thought that there has been bias in the selection, then it was a wrong idea because the members of the selection committee watched the training in the last 10 days – even I also watched the matches. The effort was to form the squad with the best available



**Squad:** Biplob Kujur, Nuruzzaman Nayan, Ashrafur Islam, Rezaul Karim Babu, Fahad Ahmed Shitul, Sohanur Rahman Sabuj, Hojaifa Hossain, Amirul Islam, Mehedi Hasan, Roman Sarkar, Fazole Hossain Rabbi, Al Nahian Shuvo, Tayeb Ali, Tanvir Rahman Siam, Rokibul Hasan, Obaidul Hossain Joy, Arshad Hossain and Mohammad Abdullah.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

players."

One of the excluded players claimed they had been punished for protesting against food and other issues during the

AHF Cup. Hassan, however, denied the accusation.

"I also heard the allegation, but the fact is that there was no such official allegation in the manager's report. If there are any such allegations, then we must investigate the incident. And we never called those players to the camp, but we called all those players in the camp," said Hassan, adding that the players who were dropped would have the opportunity to join the preparation camp in future.

Head coach Moshir Rahman Biplob said, "What we wanted from them in the preparation camp, they could not deliver, and the players have been picked up on the basis of performance and some other things."

Rezaul Karim Babu has been named captain, with Ashrafur Islam as his deputy.

"The squad is a mixture of senior and junior players. Senior players are experienced, but the junior players are ahead of the seniors in terms of fitness.

"If we can provide the right guidelines to the junior players and follow the instructions of the coach, then we expect something good," said Babu, hoping that they can qualify for the World Cup if they perform as per their strength despite the lack of preparation.



PHOTO: FLUMINENSE

Fluminense goalkeeper Fabio overtook Englishman Peter Shilton's longstanding record for the most competitive appearances in men's football, playing his 1,391st match during his side's 2-0 victory over America de Cali on Tuesday. After the game which confirmed Fluminense's qualification to the quarterfinals of the Copa Sudamericana at the Maracana in Rio de Janeiro, the 44-year-old was honoured with a plate and a commemorative painting during a ceremony also attended by his family.



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## Dhaka asks Delhi to close alleged AL offices in India

Delhi says it's unaware of any anti-Bangladesh activities there

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka has urged New Delhi to immediately close any party office of the Awami League in India and ensure that no Bangladeshi engages in any anti-Bangladesh activity there.

It said any form of political activity or campaign by Bangladeshis against the interests of Bangladesh is a clear affront against the people of Bangladesh and the state.

This development also jeopardises the upholding of the good neighbourly relations with India driven by mutual trust and mutual respect and carries serious implications for the political transformation underway in Bangladesh, said the foreign ministry in a statement yesterday.

"This may also trigger public sentiment in Bangladesh which may

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A cross-dam of nets and bamboo under Khegoraghat Bridge in Kashimpur village, Bagerhat Sadar, has blocked the Huji River's natural flow. Once vital for boats, fishing, and irrigation, the river is now largely divided into similar private fish enclosures. Photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PARTHA CHAKRABORTY

## Govt to discuss reducing metro costs with Japan

Adviser Salehuddin to lead team to Tokyo for talks

REJAU KARIM BYRON

A high-level team of the interim government led by Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed will hold meetings with the Japanese government on the possibilities of reducing the metro-rail project costs.

The delegation will leave Bangladesh for Japan on Sunday and return on September 5.

Japan is financing several projects in Bangladesh, including three metro rail projects.

Of these, MRT Line-1 and MRT Line 5 are at the initial stage, while MRT Line-6 is about to be completed, with its major part from Uttara to Motijheel already in operation.

When the MRT Line-1 and MRT Line 5 were approved in 2019, their estimated cost was Tk 95,000 crore. Now, according to bidders' proposals, the cost might be almost double the initial estimate.

"Even the initial costs approved for the two projects are

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## ICT CASE Doctors falsified records to treat injured protesters

2 physicians tell tribunal that police threatened them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As police threatened doctors not to treat protesters with gunshot wounds during last year's uprising, physicians falsified records to ensure their treatment, doctors of two Dhaka hospitals told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday.

They said they showed on paper that the protesters were either suffering from diseases or were victims of accidents.

Mahfuzur Rahman, associate professor at the National Institute of Neurosciences & Hospital (NINS), told the court that on July 19, when the number of bullet-wounded protesters surged, a team of DB police pressured him not to admit the injured.

"Don't be overenthusiastic. You will be in danger. Don't release those already admitted. There are instructions from high-ups. Legal action will be taken against them," he quoted the police as saying.

Then doctors altered admission registers to conceal the true nature of the wounds sustained by students and civilians, recorded them as road accidents or illnesses, and secretly provided treatment to victims, he said.

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## One in three community clinic buildings in disrepair

Authorities say medicine supply disruption to end soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Infrastructure at more than one-third of the 14,467 community clinics, which serve 4.9 lakh people daily, has become risky and now requires replacement or repair to continue providing healthcare, said officials of the Community Clinic Health Support Trust.

Of them, 3,136 clinics — or 22 percent — are classified as high risk and need immediate replacement as some have broken roofs while others have different parts damaged.

The buildings that house 5,080 of the clinics, which provide primary healthcare and 22 types of medicine, are found to be risky, Monzoor KH Uddin, an architect who works with the trust to prepare a model for the clinics, told a seminar yesterday.

Seeking anonymity, another official said that out of the 5,080 clinics, 3,136 were found highly risky and 1,944 moderately risky. Highly risky buildings need to be replaced while those at moderate risk require repairs.

The trust is preparing a project for repairing and constructing new buildings, and the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is expected to fund the project, he said.

The infrastructure problem has been compounded by a disruption of medicine supply at community clinics over the past year, leaving thousands deprived of necessary medicines.

The supply of medicine got severely disrupted after the sectoral programme, under which funding for community clinic medicine comes from, ended in June 2024 and the interim government could not initiate a project to continue the supply of medicines.

The trust officials, however, said it has already supplied 15,000 boxes of medicines to the clinics and that the medicine supply will be normal soon. The organisation is planning to construct 516 more community clinics, and Japan is expected to finance those, officials said.

The issues came to the fore at a seminar titled "Media Participation in Grassroots-Level Health Services", held

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## Polls will be in February

Says Adviser Asif Mahmud

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain



yesterday said the upcoming national election will be held in February and there is no possibility of delays.

"The Election Commission has already completed the necessary preparations. If the meeting between the commission and political parties on the July charter proves successful, the electoral road map will become clearer. But there is no possibility of deferring the polls," he said after laying a wreath at the memorial of Shaheed Abu Sayed at Park Mor in Rangpur city.

He also highlighted government plans to boost development in northern and disadvantaged regions, focusing on reducing regional disparities and strengthening local government.

In the evening, the adviser attended the final of the July 36 Gold Cup Football Tournament.

## Star INTERVIEW

## Calls to extend reform timeline a bid to stretch interim govt tenure

Saiful Huq tells Star

MD ABBAS

Biplobi Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Huq warned that removing secularism while retaining Islam as the state religion is a fundamental deception of the people.

Addressing the debate over religion in the constitution, he said the people aspired to an inclusive state.

"A modern democratic state must be secular by definition. If state religion stays, we can't call it democratic — it directly contradicts the goal of inclusivity," he told The Daily Star in a recent interview.

Challenging narratives that seek to delay the election until after reforms, Saiful dismissed the long-term versus short-term reform debate as "a misrepresentation".

"If the government acts with genuine political intent, the election can be held before February. The issue is not time but political will. If that exists, reforms can be completed within months."

He said those calling for extended reform timelines are actually trying to create uncertainty. "That is an indirect attempt to extend the interim government's tenure."

Saiful stressed that reform and elections must go together. "Without an elected parliament, no constitutional reform is legitimate. We need elections to begin that process."

On regional issues, Saiful spoke of Bangladesh's relationship with India, calling it complex but critical.

"Maintaining a respectful, balanced relationship based on mutual interests and international law is essential. With deep interdependence on issues such as security and trade, both countries must cooperate

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## RECRUITING SYNDICATE Assets worth Tk 500cr seized from kingpin: CID

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department has seized about Tk 500 crore worth of assets belonging to Ruhul Amin Swapan, the alleged chief of a syndicate formed to send manpower to Malaysia.

In a press release issued yesterday, CID's Special Superintendent of Police (media) Jasim Uddin Khan said the agency's Financial Crime Division sought a court order to freeze the assets. Acting on the petition, the Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court ordered the seizure.

Through his recruiting agency, Ruhul embezzled Tk 8,000 crore, which was spent on buying houses and land, according to the release. It accused him of money laundering.

The CID statement mentioned that Ruhul's recruiting agency, Catharsis International, owns 231 kathas of land in Dhaka's Bashundhara Residential Area, Banani, and Uttara under seven separate deeds.

While the deed value of the land stands at Tk 15.55 crore, the market value of the land, including infrastructure built on them, has been estimated at Tk 500 crore.

The CID added that investigations are still underway against Ruhul and other members of the syndicate, and actions will be taken against them under the Money Laundering Act.

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Palestinians rush for cover as an Israeli strike hits a building near refugee tents in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## India tables bill to remove ministers jailed for 30 days

Opposition calls move draconian

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Indian Home Minister Amit Shah yesterday introduced the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025, in the Lok Sabha, proposing automatic removal of a prime minister, chief minister, or any other minister if they remain in jail for 30 consecutive days on serious criminal charges.

The bill seeks to amend Article 75 of the Indian Constitution, which outlines the powers and responsibilities of the Council of Ministers.

According to the draft, "A Minister, who for any period of 30 consecutive days during holding the office as such, is arrested and detained in custody, on allegation of committing an offence... punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years or more, shall be removed from his office by the President on the advice of the

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