



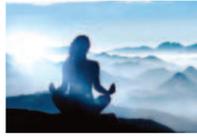
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# Divisions widen over July Charter's status, implementation

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and RASHIDUL HASAN

Major political parties are divided over the July Charter's implementation timeline and its standing in relation to the constitution and existing laws.

Giving the July Charter precedence over the constitution would set a "negative" precedent, the BNP said in its official feedback on the final draft prepared by the National Consensus Commission.

The party also opposes any provision barring legal challenges to the charter in court.

BNP Standing Committee Member Salahuddin Ahmed said the bid to allow the July Charter to override the constitution is illogical and unacceptable.

"Can a consensus document be treated as a 'supra-constitutional instrument' — one that stands above the constitution itself?" he said at a press conference regarding BNP's feedback on the final draft of the charter on Tuesday.

On the other hand, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami supported the commission's proposal that the charter take precedence in the event of a conflict with existing laws or the constitution.

"Because the July Charter contains all the aspirations and expectations of the nation and the people," Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair, assistant secretary general of Jamaat, told The Daily Star.

Many major changes were incorporated in the July Charter in comparison to the constitution.

"That's why the charter must be given preference over the constitution," he added.

The Communist Party of Bangladesh, Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (Marxist) and the 12-Party Alliance all opposed the commission's proposal to grant the July Charter precedence over the constitution and existing laws.

The National Citizen Party wants a new constitution enacted by a new constituent assembly. That constitution should have a provision stipulating that there can't be any amendment that conflicts with the July Charter.

"The new constitution that will be framed through the constituent assembly should function as the guiding principle for resolving all national issues," said Javed Rasin, joint convener of the NCP.

On August 16, the commission sent the final draft of the July National Charter to political parties, without specifying a deadline for implementing the proposed reforms, a shift from its earlier stance.

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



- So far, 24 parties submit feedback
- Commission to sit with experts, parties again
- Jamaat, NCP for full implementation before the upcoming election
- BNP says the next parliament should deal with the constitutional issues

"Since the method by which all provisions, principles, and decisions of this charter would be incorporated into the constitution has not been specified, we do not agree with this clause," the NCP said in its feedback to the consensus commission.

All provisions, principles, and decisions of this charter must be incorporated into the constitution through a constituent assembly election, the party proposed.

"All recommendations should be implemented before the election and formalised through a constituent assembly," said Javed Rasin.

Regarding the implementation timeline of the July charter, Salahuddin said that the election schedule will be announced in mid-December. Until then, the few months available are sufficient for drafting laws and regulations.

"All ordinances can be issued within one or one and a half months, and executive orders can be implemented. It would be better not to include the phrase "before the national parliamentary election" in the charter."

But issues related to constitution changes should be implemented through the next national parliament, he said.

Jamaat and the NCP said they prefer full implementation of the charter before the polls.

The NCP in its feedback said the commission has proposed that the recommendations deemed "immediately implementable" be carried out by the interim government and relevant authorities without any delay.

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Boys scrape the bottom of large pots to get some food at a charity kitchen in Gaza City yesterday, amid widespread hunger in the tiny Palestinian territory. Story on page 12.

PHOTO: AFP

## STUDENT UNION ELECTIONS

### JCD panel delayed over internal feud

SAKIB AHMED

The Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, long absent from Jahangirnagar University campus politics, has yet to announce a panel for the upcoming Jucusu election, though



submissions closed on August 21.

According to sources, internal feuds are the main reason for the delay.

The JCD last formed a full-fledged JU committee in 2007. A new one was announced on January 8

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### Housing, food may top the manifestos

MAHATHIR MOHAMMED

Panels contesting Ducsu election are signalling key reform priorities in their upcoming manifestos, including accommodation, food quality, research, campus safety, employment, transport and administrative overhaul.

The university is set to publish the final list of candidates on August 26, with formal campaigning beginning the same day. At least nine panels have been announced, alongside several independents.

While most panels are yet to unveil their manifestos, leaders are already outlining pledges in conversations with students and the media.

The Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal-backed panel has pledged to transform Dhaka University into a fully residential university. Its VP candidate Abidul Islam Khan said, "When the full manifesto is unveiled, you'll see it all. For now, one thing that will be included in our manifesto is uprooting the culture of guest rooms and common rooms [gono rooms] permanently."

The panel's VP, general secretary and assistant general secretary candidates visited three hall canteens yesterday. "While I ate there, I tried to identify problems myself and also spoke to students to include solutions in our manifesto," GS candidate Tanvir Baree Hamim told The Daily Star.

Abu Baker Mojumder, GS candidate of Boishommo Birodhi Shikharthi Sangsad, backed by Bangladesh Gonatantrik Chhatra Sangsad, said, "This panel is different from others in terms of political

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### Tensions swirl on campus ahead of Rucusu polls

NUR AHSAN MRIDUL

As the Rajshahi University Central Students' Union polls are set to take place after 35 long years on



রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

September 15, protests, disputes and various demands have gripped the campus.

Since the election date was announced in late July, student organisations have been scrambling to secure positions with excitement

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## Ties based on mutual interests stressed

**Pak deputy PM meet NCP, Jamaat, BNP leaders**

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of political parties met Pakistan Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in Dhaka yesterday, where both sides discussed strengthening bilateral ties on the basis of mutual respect and interest.



Delegations of the National Citizen Party (NCP), Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, and BNP met with the Pakistani at the Pakistan High Commission.

After the meeting, NCP National Member Secretary Akhtar Hossen said Pakistan should resolve the unresolved issues of 1971 with Bangladesh to advance bilateral ties. "We believe that any move to strengthen ties must address the 1971 issue. We raised that matter with them," he told reporters.

He said the NCP sees scope to build a friendly relationship between the two nations but stressed that the perception of Bangladesh's people must be handled "in the most sensitive manner."

Akhtar said, "We tried to present to them the perception of the people of Bangladesh about Pakistan. The NCP believes that there is room for improvement in the previously held hostile relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh."

The three unresolved issues are Pakistan's formal apology for the 1971 genocide and atrocities,

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BGB patrols the Naf River in Teknaf to prevent possible Rohingya infiltration yesterday morning.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF BGB

## Threat of fresh Rohingya influx looms as clashes erupt in Myanmar

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, Cox's Bazar

Gunfire and explosions were heard late Friday night from villages across the border in Myanmar opposite Whykong union in Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar. Residents, gripped by panic, reported that this was the most intense gunfire they had heard in months.



Quoting their relatives in Rakhine, community leaders (Majhis) at Teknaf Rohingya camps said armed clashes broke out between the Arakan Army and Rohingya armed groups on the opposite side of Whykong from Friday night until early yesterday morning.

They said it was the fourth such clash in the past month amid reports of Myanmar junta troops preparing to retake parts of Rakhine.

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## Five killed in New York state tourist bus crash

AFP, New York

Five passengers aboard a tourist bus were killed Friday when their driver got distracted and crashed on a New York state highway, police said.

The wreck happened 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of Buffalo as the tourists headed back to New York City after visiting Niagara Falls.

The passengers were of Indian, Chinese and Filipino origin, authorities said.

"It's believed the operator became distracted, lost control, over corrected and ended up... over there," said New York state police commander major Andre Ray at the scene Friday evening, giving the toll for the first time.

No one else was in a life-threatening condition, Ray said. Several passengers received medical treatment and were released.

Fifty-four people were on the bus when it crashed and no children were killed, US media reported, contradicting an earlier police briefing.

Six Chinese citizens were aboard the bus, China's state broadcaster CCTV said quoting the Chinese consulate in New York. Five were treated for minor injuries and discharged, while the sixth was undergoing surgery.



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan Ishaq Dar being welcomed by Foreign Secretary Asad Alam Siam at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday afternoon. Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Imran Haider and Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan Muhammad Iqbal Khan were also present at the time.

PHOTO: PTD

## 3-day int'l seminar on Rohingya begins in Cox's Bazar

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A three-day international seminar on the Rohingya crisis will be held in Cox's Bazar starting today, aimed at highlighting the cause of Rohingya rights and repatriation.

The Office of the High Representative for the Rohingya Issue and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are organising the event, titled "Stakeholders' Dialogue: Takeaway to the High Level Conference on the Rohingya Situation".

The seminar will serve as a preparatory event for the High Level Conference on the Rohingya Crisis scheduled in New York on September 30, 2025, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, according to a statement from the foreign ministry.

Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus will attend the event as the chief guest on August 25.

Experts from home and abroad, diplomats, representatives of the Rohingyas, international organisations and academicians will participate in the dialogue to discuss their views and table propositions to address the Rohingya issues.

The dialogue is also expected to take stock of different aspects of the crisis, including funding gaps for the Rohingyas in the camps, recent developments in Rakhine, dignified repatriation of Rohingyas, and a way forward for a sustainable solution to the crisis.

It will include five thematic sessions on humanitarian assistance, confidence building for repatriation, accountability for atrocities, and ways to achieve a sustainable, time-bound and actionable long-term solution to the crisis.

Participants are scheduled to visit the Rohingya camps on August 26.

## JCD panel delayed over internal feud

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this year, but disputes soon followed. Insiders in JCD factions, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the feuds slowed polls preparations.

The situation worsened on August 8 after the JCD announced its extended and hall committees, sparking controversy over post allocation.

Dissident leaders alleged the committees included former Chhatra League activists, clandestine Shibir members, murder accused, and individuals expelled for drug abuse and mugging. They staged protests, barring the JU unit's top leaders from campus for nearly nine days.

Tensions peaked on August 17, when the JCD central general secretary arrived on the campus and the JU unit's leaders re-entered, triggering a face-off with dissidents. That same day, a probe committee was formed to investigate the disputed appointments, with its report due on September 15.

Although the conflict has since cooled, several senior leaders allege the rift was provoked by infiltrators to weaken the JCD ahead of the polls.

JU JCD Convener Jahir Uddin Muhammad Babor said, "We're united over Jucus. We have multiple aspirants for several posts, many of whom submitted nominations for more than one position. We're taking time to select the most qualified candidates."

He said the JCD would announce a full panel for Jucus and hall elections

in two to three days. "We'll contest with a full panel in four of the II male halls, while in the others, partial panels will be announced. No panels will be formed for female halls, but if anyone seeks support, we will provide it."

He added that non-committee-based candidates with strong standing on the campus were also being considered.

Sources said Sheikh Sadi, Tanjila Hossain Boishakhi, Mirza Saki, Syeda Ananna Faria, Abdul Gaffar Jisan, Rubel Hossain, Arshad Habib Bishal, and Mehadi Emon are likely to contest top posts from the JCD panel.

They added that a female candidate may run for vice president or general secretary.

Meanwhile, Islami Chhatra Shibir and Bangladesh Gonotantik Chhatra Sangsad (BGCS) have already announced full panels.

On Friday, BGCS declared its "Shikharthi Oikkyo Forum" panel, in which Convener Arifuzzaman Ujjal will run for VP, while Member-Secretary Abu Touhid Mohammad Siam will contest for GS. Ziauddin Ayan and Maliha Namlu will vie for AGS in the male and female categories.

Two BGCS leaders, Nazmul Islam Limon and Kawsar Alam Arman, who failed to secure posts, are preparing to contest independently for AGS.

Ahsan Labib, a murder accused and former leader of the banned Chhatra League, was nominated for

secretary of social services and human development. The panel has yet to name candidates for drama and sports secretary.

On Thursday, Islami Chhatra Shibir announced the "Shomnito Shikharthi Jote" panel. Arifullah Adib has been nominated for VP, and Mazharul Islam for GS. Ferdous Al Hasan will contest for male AGS, and Ayesha Siddika Meghla for female AGS. The panel does not include indigenous or minority students.

Three other panels are also in the fray: one jointly backed by Jahangirnagar Sangskritik Jote and a faction of Chhatra Union (Adri-Ankur); another by Jahangirnagar Theatre and a faction of Chhatra Union (Imon-Tanjim); and an independent alliance led by Abdur Rashid Jitu and Shakil Ali.

The "Sampriti Oikyo" panel, likely to be led by former JU Chhatra Union president Amartya Ray and former Sangskritik Jote president Sharan Ehsan, will include leaders from cultural organisations under the Teacher-Student Centre, along with indigenous and minority students.

Sharan said, "We'll announce our full panel by Monday or Tuesday. It will include 8-10 women along with members of indigenous and minority communities." Sources said Prapti Taposi, Irfanul Islam Itu, and Nur-e-Tamim Srot might vie for top posts from this panel.

Another panel, possibly named "Shikharthi Oikkyo Sangsad", is expected under theatre activist and former Students Against Discrimination coordinator Mahfuz Islam Megh, and Jahidul Islam Imon, president of another JU Chhatra Union faction.

Megh said, "It [the panel] will be inclusive, with cultural activists, indigenous and minority students. We plan to contest around 10-12 posts," he said, adding it will be announced within two days.

The "Swatantra Jote" panel, led by former Students Against Discrimination coordinator Abdur Rashid Jitu and Shakil Ali, is expected to contest around 20 posts. Jitu said he would run for VP and Shakil for GS, adding that Sultan Mulk Shubho and Anwar Hossain Rudro will run for other key positions in the panel, which will be announced by Monday.

Several independents and partial alliances, including Chhatra Front's Sohagi Samia with a possible partial panel, are also expected to contest.

A total of 276 nominations were submitted for the Jucus polls and 467 for the hall elections. For Jucus, 25 posts will be contested, with six reserved for women. The number of voters is 11,919 - 6,102 men and 5,817 women.

The Jucus election, which was held in 1992, is scheduled for September 11.

MoUs to be signed include establishing a joint working group on trade and commerce, as well as cooperation between the Bangladesh Sangbad Sangshtha and the Associated Press of Pakistan, the two countries' Foreign Service Academy, and the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies and the Islamabad Policy Research Institute.

This is the highest-level Pakistani visit since 2012. Pakistan's interior minister visited Dhaka in July following foreign secretary-level talks in April, held after a 15-year hiatus.

Dhaka-Islamabad ties soured after Pakistan condemned the 2013 execution of Jamaat leader Abdul Quader Mollah for 1971 war crimes. Relations have improved since last year's political changeover.

Bilateral trade reached \$865 million in FY2024-25, with Bangladesh's exports rising 20 percent to \$78 million and Pakistan's exports up 28 percent. Since last August, the two countries have launched direct shipping, eased visa and trade regimes, and plan to start direct flights.

## Ties based on mutual interests stressed

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repatriation of stranded Pakistanis, and Bangladesh's share of undivided assets.

NCP Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary said the Pakistani side expressed willingness to address these matters. He added that discussions also covered Pakistan's plan to establish a cultural centre in Dhaka, expanding university-level exchanges, cooperation in the defence sector, river management, the pharmaceutical industry, and ways to revive SAARC.

He said the talks also touched on Bangladesh's foreign policy shifts, from the Liberation War of 1971 to the mass uprising of 2024.

The rest of the NCP delegation were Chief Organiser (North) Sarjis Alam, Senior Joint Convener Ariful Islam Adeb, Joint Convener Arpita Shyam Deb, Joint Secretary Tarek Reza, and member Sagar Barua.

At a press briefing after the meeting, Jamaat's Naye-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher told reporters the 1971 issues were "matters for the two governments to discuss."

He, however, stressed that the unresolved issues in bilateral relations should be settled swiftly.

"Discussions were also held on how to advance relations with the brotherly Muslim state in the future and how to make the regional alliance SAARC more active and stronger."

Taher added that Bangladesh's foreign policy had been somewhat one-sided over the past 15 years. The current government, along with others, now believes the region requires maintaining good relations with all neighbouring countries.

"The upcoming national election in Bangladesh also came up," he said.

Pakistan's foreign ministry posted on X that Dar lauded the "courage and steadfastness" of Jamaat leaders in the face of difficulties.

Meanwhile, BNP leaders held a 55-minute meeting with Dar. BNP media cell member Sayrul Kabir Khan said the discussion focused on bilateral relations, though the party did not issue an official statement.

The Pakistan foreign ministry said regional cooperation featured

prominently, with Bangladesh's foundational role in establishing SAARC "fondly acknowledged." Dar also expressed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening bilateral ties "on the basis of mutual respect and mutual benefit."

Dar is scheduled to meet BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia today at her Gulshan residence Feroza.

The BNP delegation, led by Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, included Standing Committee members Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan, Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, Selima Rahman, Vice Chairman Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, and Organising Secretary Shama Obaed.

**BILATERAL MEETING TODAY**  
Dar will hold delegation-level talks with Bangladesh Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain at the state guest house Padma today. One agreement and five MoUs are expected to be signed.

He is also expected to meet Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus today.

The agreement to be signed is for visa-free entry for holders of diplomatic and official passports. The

## Tensions swirl on campus ahead of Rucusu polls

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and tensions stirring across the university.

While some groups prepare to contest independently, others are forming coalitions to strengthen their chances. However, internal conflicts, leadership crises, and unresolved demands have cast doubt over the smooth conduct of the polls.

Student bodies including the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, Islami Chhatra Shibir, left-leaning alliances, and independents have already begun campaigning.

With only four of its top leaders listed as voters, Chhatra Dal is struggling with a leadership crisis. The studentships of its President Sultan Ahmed Rahi and General Secretary Sardar Jahurul expired earlier, making them ineligible to contest.

The organisation intends to field its own panel but has kept the option of alliances open.

Organising Secretary Mahmudul Hasan Mithu is the likely vice-president candidate, while Nafiul Jibon, Jahin

Biswas Esha, and Gazi Ferdous Hasan are also in the race for other posts.

Chhatra Dal earlier announced it would join the polls only if its demands were met: shifting polling centres to academic buildings instead of residential halls, removing Jamaat-linked teachers from provost posts, and taking legal and administrative action against Awami League-leaning teachers.

RU Chhatra Dal President Sultan Ahmed Rahi said, "The university administration has failed to ensure the participation of all political organisations. The election should have been arranged through discussions, like in the case of Ducsu. This election has no meaning before the trial of the fascist teachers. The administration must announce a new schedule after discussions with everyone."

The organisation has also threatened protests if demands are not met.

RU Islami Chhatra Shibir has re-emerged after the 2024 political

changeover.

Although its influence has grown with Jamaat-backed individuals in the administration, Shibir will not contest under its own banner and is preparing to run as part of an "Anti-Fascist Inclusive Panel" to attract students from diverse backgrounds.

Its President Mostakur Rahman Zahid is expected to contest for vice-president, while General Secretary Mujahid Faisal and Najmus Shakib are likely candidates for general secretary and assistant general secretary.

However, leaders have been instructed to include general students in the panel, even if it means ceding top posts.

Mujahid Faisal said, "We had been kept away from the general students for a long time. However, after August 5, we have been able to mix with them. The misconceptions that general students had about Shibir have been broken. That's why we are hopeful about winning the election."

Meanwhile, left-leaning organisations continue to struggle

with limited campus support. This time, they are pushing for broader coalition with cultural groups.

Fuad Ratul of the Socialist Students' Front is tipped to be their vice-president candidate, alongside contenders Nasim Sarkar, Tarek Ashraf, Kaiser Ahmed, Alif Shahriar, and Shamim Tripura.

However, they too have pre-polls demands, including keeping polling centres at academic buildings, forming a cyberbullying prevention cell, and cancelling voting rights for accused attackers.

On August 14, they observed a hunger strike, but the administration did not respond.

Rucusu Treasurer Setaur Rahman said, "Student organisations are regularly presenting their demands. We're constantly reviewing them. We're also sitting with the student organisations for discussions. However, it isn't possible for the administration to meet all the demands."

## Divisions widen over

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"It is unclear which specific proposals or recommendations are considered immediately implementable. We oppose this ambiguity," the party said.

The NCP firmly stated that the July Charter must be implemented in full, without delay, by the government and all relevant authorities before the next national parliamentary election.

NCP Member Secretary Akhtar Hossain yesterday said that without providing and implementing a legal basis, the July Charter will fail to contain people's aspiration for freedom.

If the National Consensus Commission does not announce a new constitutional proposal through a constituent assembly election to incorporate the July Charter into the constitution, then it is a failure.

"There is no meaning on the part of the NCP in signing the failed charter," he said.

Jamaat's Zubair said that all proposals can be implemented before the election.

"On another point, we have clearly said that a presidential proclamation or a referendum is a must to give the July Charter a legal framework. Finally, we have told the commission that the 13th parliamentary polls must be held in light of the July Charter."

Apart from this proposal, Jamaat has submitted a separate note to the commission in which the party demanded that the election be held under the proportional representative system, claiming that a large number

of people support the PR system.

"We have mentioned to the Consensus Commission that the PR system is one of the ways to thwart fascism and autocracy. Besides, everyone's opinions would also be reflected through the PR system," Zubair added.

CPB in its feedback said they had proposed excluding the four principles enshrined in the constitution from the discussion as reaching a consensus on the issues was not possible.

"For this reason, we decisively boycotted the meeting. Yet, without consulting us, there has been an implicit attempt to secure our consent to alter those fundamental principles. This is entirely unacceptable," it said.

Mojibur Rahman Monju, chairman of AB Party, said they have proposed giving constitutional status and legal basis to the July Charter.

"The implementation process of the July Charter must begin immediately, and we demand that the upcoming 13th National Assembly election be held based on the July Charter," he said.

Ali Riaz, vice-chairman of the National Consensus Commission, said they will soon sit with experts to discuss the process of making the charter legally binding and explore ways for its implementation.

"We will also hold discussions with political parties," he added.

Until yesterday, 24 parties submitted their feedback to the consensus commission regarding the draft of July Charter.

## Housing, food may top

FROM PAGE 1

commitment, especially with a clear pledge to stop politics in dormitories and academic premises.

"We are also working on the idea of 'One Student, One Bed'. This mainly aims to ensure a seat for each student."

Jabir Ahmad Jubel, AGS candidate from Pratirodh Parshad, said their panel is prioritising four issues: accommodation crisis, transport shortage, food quality and affordability, and administrative complexities.

"Non-residential students face major difficulties with transport. According to the current bus schedule, they have to leave by 5:00pm. We want to make sure that university buses run at least till 8:00pm."

Independent VP candidate Umama Fatema of "Swatantra Shikharthi Oikya" earlier said, "My goal is to build a politically conscious and academically sound campus." She promised teacher evaluation by students, syllabus redesign, and expanded classroom facilities.

The Islami Chhatra Shibir-backed "Oikkoboddo Shikharthi Jote" will address accommodation and student security, especially for women. Its VP candidate Abu Shadik Kayem said, "Security at halls and the safety of students' food are also included."

Other panels include Chhatra Odhikar Parishad-backed "Ducusu for Change"; Islami Chhatra Andolan's "Socheton Shikharthi Sangsad"; former NCP leader Mahin Sarkar's independent panel "DU First"; and Aparajeyo 71-Adomyo 24 Parishad, a left-leaning coalition of Bangladesh Chhatra Union, Samajtantrik Chhatra Front and BCL (Jasod).

**ALLEGATIONS AHEAD OF POLLS**  
Shibir's VP candidate Abu Shadik Kayem alleged rivals were spreading propaganda and cyberbullying female candidates. "Our opponents are

failing to face us ideologically, so they are resorting to propaganda. They are bullying our sisters online. We call on them to compete with ideas, merit and new initiatives instead."

GS candidate for Shibir SM Farhad accused the election commission of favouring one side. "Even after clear violations of the code of conduct, the commission is protecting one side. We are worried about the fairness of the polls."

Abu Baker Majumder, GS candidate of Boishommo Birodhi Shikharthi Sangsad, accused JCD nominee Tanvir Baree Hamim of repeatedly violating election rules.

"During nomination collection, Hamim entered with slogans, which is against the code. He posted campaign content on Facebook and even used posters with Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman's photos. These too are violations."

Chief Returning Officer Prof Zashim Uddin said no formal complaints of code violations had been submitted. "By August 25, candidates may withdraw. We hope to conduct this election in a safe environment for the benefit of students and the country," he told reporters.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan described the Ducsu polls as a major event and urged all candidates to maintain discipline. "As long as you hold my hand, I will stay on the ground. If you let go, I will make it clear to everyone where I am being obstructed."

The appeal period for cancelled nominations ended yesterday, with 34 appeals filed. The final list of candidates will be released on August 26. According to the preliminary list, 48 candidates are contesting for VP, 19 for GS and 28 for AGS posts.

In total, 565 nomination forms were collected for the 28 central posts, while 1,226 were collected for the 18 hall unions.

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## Young innovators lead the way in climate solutions

Star, ActionAid Bangladesh host grand finale of Climate Justice Idea Competition 2025

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With unhygienic public toilets being a major problem in Dhaka, three young women have come up with an innovative solution to protect users, especially women, from health hazards such as infection transmission.

The team, named Neo Kagoj, has produced a tissue-paper-like product made from recycled paper, which can be used in public toilets and safely flushed afterwards due to its high water absorbency.

They have named the product "Hygie Guard".

For this idea, Neo Kagoj has won the top prize at the grand finale of the Climate Justice Idea Competition 2025, an initiative of The Daily Star and ActionAid Bangladesh.

The finale was held at The Daily Star Centre yesterday, where nine youth teams presented their ideas to address the impacts of climate change, protect the

environment, and improve lives.

The ideas included transforming waste into energy and purifying contaminated water in adverse situations such as salinity or floods.

The nine teams competed in three categories - Green Business, Water Rights, and Energy Transition.

Neo Kagoj won the top prize in the Green Business category.

Team Sustyre won the first runner-up prize in the same category for the idea of producing recyclable footwear soles from waste tyres to reduce wastage, while Econappy became second runner-up for innovating biodegradable, pocket-friendly baby diapers.

In the Water Rights category, Projonmo bagged the top prize for developing an affordable water purifier. Aqua Rights was first runner-up for presenting the idea of a solar-powered filtration machine to mitigate freshwater scarcity in coastal

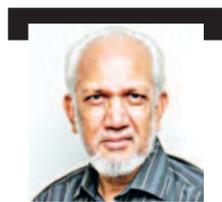
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**Nine teams recognised for presenting solutions to climate, energy, and water challenges**



Winners of the Climate Justice Idea Competition 2025, an initiative of The Daily Star and ActionAid Bangladesh, yesterday. The grand finale of the competition was held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital, where nine teams presented their ideas to address the impacts of climate change, protect the environment, and improve lives.

PHOTO: STAR



**Journalist Alamgir Mohiuddin passes away**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Veteran journalist and former founding editor of Naya Diganta, Alamgir Mohiuddin, passed away yesterday. He was 83.

He breathed his last around 1:30pm while undergoing treatment at Anwar Khan Modern Medical College Hospital in Dhaka. Khalid Saifullah, a senior reporter of the newspaper, told The Daily Star.

Mohiuddin had fallen ill at home on May 30 and was taken to the hospital, he said. After showing signs of recovery, he was discharged and taken home a few days later.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

## Regional growth key to easing Dhaka's burden

Experts tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Climate change, unplanned urbanisation, river encroachment, pollution, excessive use of polythene, and severe traffic congestion are making life increasingly difficult in Dhaka, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

They also stressed that nationwide sustainable development is essential to decentralise the capital and ensure its liveability.

The remarks were made at a focus group discussion titled "Decentralisation & Environmental Welfare of the Capital: Towards a Sustainable Dhaka", organised by Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) at its auditorium in the capital.

Speakers emphasised that only coordinated efforts between the government, the private sector, and citizens can reduce pressure on Dhaka.

In his welcome remarks, DCCI President Taskeen Ahmed said,

### KEY ISSUES

- Over-centralisation of population in Dhaka
- Urban sprawl, housing shortages
- River encroachment, environmental degradation
- Poor waste management, sanitation
- Shortage of greenery, public spaces

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop surrounding towns as functional satellite cities
- Implement integrated urban planning, decentralisation
- Strengthen River Commission, enforce river protection
- Expand public transport, replace old buses
- Launch large-scale afforestation, greenery projects

"Dhaka contributes nearly 45 percent to the national GDP, yet according to a 2022 Buet study, traffic congestion alone causes an economic loss of Tk 140 crore worth of working hours daily."

He urged transforming surrounding areas into functional secondary cities for administrative and commercial activities.

Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan noted that while population growth in Dhaka is difficult to control, decentralisation must go hand in hand with developing adjacent towns such as Savar, Narayanganj, and Gazipur into liveable cities.

"Despite the large number of housing projects in Dhaka, thousands of people remain homeless. Due to river erosion and other effects of climate change, many are forced to migrate to the capital in search of survival," she said.

She also stressed curbing polythene use, improving industrial compliance, and strengthening environmental

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## Autopsy of Bibhuranjan finds no injury marks

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

No external or internal injuries were found on the body of journalist Bibhuranjan Sarker, according to his autopsy report.

The postmortem was conducted yesterday at Munshiganj General Hospital, in the presence of police and family members.

Dr Sheikh Md Ehsan, residential medical officer of the hospital who conducted the autopsy, said, "The body was recovered from water and was in a slightly decomposed state. We did not find any signs of injury."

"However, samples of teeth, hair, liver, kidney, and parts of the stomach have been collected and preserved for forensic analysis in Dhaka. A final opinion can only be given after receiving the laboratory reports," he told reporters.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## Will form commission to ensure fairness in journalism: Khosru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Standing Committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday said their party will form a commission to ensure free and transparent journalism if it returns to power.

"Journalism in Bangladesh was completely devastated during the fascist era. BNP's Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman has always been vocal in favour of independent journalism. A commission will be formed in the future to ensure press freedom," he said.

Speaking at a seminar titled "Journalism during fascist regime and present situation" at Dhaka Reporters Unity, he alleged that the Awami League destroyed journalism in Bangladesh during its regime.

Khosru mentioned that many journalists were forced to leave the country, as they could not survive in the hostile environment, while others abandoned the profession altogether. "I personally helped a few journalists go abroad since they could not sustain themselves here," he added.

Stressing the need for a clear division between management and editorial practices in media houses, the BNP leader said, "Just as the Hasina government destroyed the state by removing the dividing line between the judiciary, the Election Commission, and parliament, it also destroyed journalism by removing the dividing line between

SEE PAGE 9 COL 8

## Four more die of dengue, 247 get hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least four dengue patients died, and 247 others were hospitalised across the country in 24 hours till yesterday morning, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

All four deaths were reported in areas under Dhaka South City Corporation.

With the latest figures, the total number of dengue deaths this year has reached 114, while the total number of cases has risen to 28,202.

Among them, 26,781 patients have been released from hospitals, including 20,647 from outside Dhaka.

Currently, 1,307 dengue patients are undergoing treatment in different hospitals across the country, 867 of whom are from outside the capital.



Workers take to the streets after a garment factory in the capital's Tejgaon industrial area was shut down without notice. As a result, traffic came to a halt on Bir Uttam Mir Shawkat Sarak (Gulshan-Tejgaon link road) for a couple of hours around noon yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Pakistan assures direct ship movement with Bangladesh

BSS, Ctg

Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin and Pakistan's Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan yesterday visited Chattogram Port and expressed satisfaction over the progress and improvements made at the country's prime seaport.

They observed the port's operational activities and overall performance.

During the visit, Chattogram Port Authority (CPA) Chairman Rear Admiral SM Moniruzzaman briefed them on the current state of the port, including container and cargo handling, labour management, foreign investment, and automation.

He said the port handled a record number of containers last year, while the vessel waiting time has been reduced to zero to two days and the average ship turnaround time has also been decreased significantly.

The port has also achieved remarkable progress in the areas of automation and digitalisation, he said.

The Pakistani commerce minister lauded the port's advancement.

He noted how reputed private port operators are also engaged in Pakistan, such as Hutchison Port Group at Karachi Port Trust, Abu Dhabi Port Authority at a bulk terminal, and DP World at Port Qasim under long-term contracts.

He assured that necessary steps would be taken for enhancing export-import and the introduction of direct ship movement between Bangladesh and Pakistan.



## IRAN REPORT Iran report US defense Intel chief removed

AFP, Washington

The head of the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and two other senior officers are being removed, officials said Friday -- the latest in a series of military firings this year.

The removal of Lieutenant General Jeffrey Kruse, who led the DIA since early 2024, comes after the agency produced a preliminary assessment that said US strikes on Iran set back Tehran's nuclear program by just a few months.

The assessment -- which was widely reported on by US media -- contradicted claims from President Donald Trump that the strikes totally destroyed the nuclear sites, drawing the ire of both him and officials within his administration.

Kruse "will no longer serve as DIA director," a senior defense official said on condition of anonymity, without providing an explanation for the general's departure.



A plane drops retardant over the Pickett Fire in Napa County, California, US. Besides the US, wildfires are also raging in Europe. A fourth Portuguese firefighter died of injuries sustained battling a wildfire yesterday as Spain slowly got the upper hand over fires that have scorched vast swathes of territory.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## STALEMATE OVER UKRAINE PEACE DEAL

# Trump again threatens Russia with sanctions

REUTERS, Washington/Kyiv

US President Donald Trump renewed a threat to impose sanctions on Russia if there is no progress toward a peaceful settlement in Ukraine in two weeks, showing frustration at Moscow a week after his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska.

"I'm going to make a decision as to what we do and it's going to be, it's going to be a very important decision, and that's whether or not it's massive sanctions or massive tariffs or both, or we do nothing and say it's your fight," Trump said on Friday.

He said he was unhappy about Russia's strike on an American factory in Ukraine this week, which caused a fire that injured some of the facility's employees.

"I'm not happy about it, and I'm not happy about anything having to do with that war," Trump told

reporters at the White House.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, meanwhile, said on Friday that Russia was doing everything it could to prevent a meeting between him and Putin, while Russia's foreign minister said the agenda for such a meeting was not ready.

Zelensky has repeatedly called for Putin to meet him, saying it is the only way to negotiate an end to the war.

Trump had said he had begun the arrangements for a Putin-Zelensky meeting after a call with the Russian leader on Monday that followed their Alaska meeting on August 15.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told NBC there was no agenda for such a summit.

"Putin is ready to meet with Zelensky when the agenda would be ready for a summit. And this agenda is not ready at all," he said.

The statement echoed Moscow's

established rhetoric about a leaders' meeting being impossible unless certain conditions were met.

Asked for his response to Lavrov's comments and what the next steps are, Trump told reporters earlier on Friday: "Well, we'll see. We're going to see if Putin and Zelensky will be working together. It's like oil and vinegar a little bit."

Russia has maintained its longstanding demand for Ukraine to give up land it still holds in two eastern regions while proposing to freeze the front line in two more southerly regions Moscow claims fully as its own and possibly hand back small pieces of other Ukrainian territory it controls.

Zelensky meanwhile has dropped his demand for a lengthy ceasefire as a prerequisite for a leaders' meeting, although he has previously said Ukraine cannot negotiate under the barrel of a gun.



With the arrival of President Trump, I think that a light at the end of the tunnel has finally loomed.

And now we had a very good, meaningful and frank meeting in Alaska. The next steps now depend on the leadership of the United States, but I am confident that the leadership qualities of the current president, President Trump, are a good guarantee that relations will be restored.

Vladimir Putin  
Russian president

## 'They fear he might return to power'

Lanka opposition says about  
Wickremesinghe's jailing

AFP, Colombo

Opposition parties in Sri Lanka yesterday accused the government of jailing the country's former president over fears he could return to power.

Former leader Ranil Wickremesinghe, 76, who lost the last presidential election in September to Anura Kumara Disanayake, was remanded in custody Friday on charges of misusing state funds for foreign travel.

Anti-graft units have ramped up investigations since Disanayake came to power on a promise to fight endemic corruption in the island nation, which is emerging from its worst economic meltdown in 2022.

Wickremesinghe's own United National Party (UNP), which has two seats in the 225-member parliament, said the government felt threatened by the former president.

"They fear he might return to power, and that is why this action," UNP General Secretary Thalatha Athukorala told reporters in Colombo.

Wickremesinghe stands accused of using state funds to finance a private visit to Britain in September 2023, while returning from attending the G77 summit in Havana and the UN General Assembly in New York.

The offences carry a maximum punishment of 20 years in jail and a fine not exceeding three times the value of the misappropriated funds.

Wickremesinghe denies the charges.

## Trump names close political aide as ambassador to India

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump on Friday tapped close political aide Sergio Gor as US ambassador to India, sending one of his feared enforcers at a delicate time in ties with New Delhi.



The 38-year-old Gor rose quickly in conservative politics to become one of the most powerful, if low-profile, aides in the White House with a task of vetting some 4,000 appointees to ensure utmost loyalty to Trump.

Gor's influence does not include extensive experience in foreign policy.

"For the most populous Region in the World, it is important that I have someone I can fully trust to deliver on my Agenda and help us, MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform. "Sergio will make an incredible Ambassador," he wrote.

Trump wrote that Gor would also hold a role of special envoy for South and Central Asia.



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# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

## Reverse Gaza famine at all costs

### Israel must stop using starvation as a method of warfare

We remain deeply concerned by the unfolding man-made famine in Gaza. On August 22, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) system officially declared a famine in Gaza City and nearby areas, warning that it could soon spread across the entire enclave. This is the first time the IPC has declared a famine outside of Africa. According to this global hunger monitoring coalition, around 514,000 people—nearly a quarter of Gaza's population—are already experiencing famine. This number is expected to rise to 641,000 by the end of September.

Over the past 22 months of this unjust war, Israeli forces have destroyed a significant part of Gaza's vital infrastructure, including hospitals and bakeries, blocked humanitarian aid, and targeted and killed desperate Palestinians seeking food aid. But despite overwhelming evidence of the deliberate starvation and obstruction of aid, Benjamin Netanyahu has dismissed the IPC's findings as an "outright lie." This denial is deeply disturbing, albeit not surprising any more.

Israel has been going ahead with its plan to seize Gaza City despite international outcry. Its ongoing bombardment continues to claim lives daily. A classified Israeli military database reportedly shows that the vast majority of Palestinians killed so far are civilians. During this war, nearly 200 journalists have also been killed, according to Reporters Without Borders. The recent deaths of four Al Jazeera journalists—including 28-year-old Anas al-Sharif—have again triggered global outrage. These targeted killings have made it clear that Israel is deliberately targeting journalists to suppress the evidence of its war crimes. Netanyahu's dismissal of the IPC famine report further suggests an attempt to prevent global awareness of the humanitarian crisis and hints that Israel wants to expand its offensive in Gaza no matter what.

According to UN aid chief Tom Fletcher, the unfolding famine was entirely preventable, but "because of systematic obstruction by Israel," food could not get through to Palestinians in need. UN Secretary-General António Guterres demanded a ceasefire, saying that the ongoing crisis must not be allowed to persist without accountability. World leaders must, therefore, raise their voices in unison and demand immediate and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

The famine in Gaza must be averted at any cost. As food and medicine sit idle at border crossings, innocent civilians, including children, face deadly consequences. The IPC's projection that over 132,000 children under five will be at risk of death from acute malnutrition by June 2026 is a stark warning that the international community must act now. It must increase pressure on Israel to agree to the ceasefire proposal from Egypt and Qatar, rather than escalating its military action. The people of Gaza deserve more than sympathy; they deserve action.

## Another mob, another killing

### How will the govt stop this brutality, and when?

Another appalling mob killing took place in Chattogram's Fatikhkhari upazila on Friday. This time, a 15-year-old boy was beaten to death, while two other teenagers accompanying him were left critically injured. Reports suggest it may have been a premeditated attack, as the assailants shouted that the three teenagers were thieves, giving them the "license" to ambush them, tie them to the guard rails of a bridge, and beat them mercilessly. Only the other day, two men were beaten to death by a mob in Rangpur on suspicion of being van thieves. By now, this has become a frightening trend—where anyone, anywhere may become a victim. But why is mob violence persisting, despite all the criticism and heightened security?

In the Rangpur case, the police were present while people were mercilessly beating the two men, as seen in a widely circulated video. But they left the scene as the beating continued, possibly feeling outnumbered. Eight police personnel were already suspended for negligence. Incredibly, the police have submitted a case statement that, according to the victims' family members, casts aspersions on the victims and makes no mention of police presence during the attack. What message does this send to the public, and especially to the perpetrators of this heinous crime? That law enforcers are intimidated by mobs and will do nothing when collective violence occurs. That the police can give false case statements to save themselves or to serve the interests of those who take part in such activities.

Four men suspected of taking part in the Rangpur incident have been arrested. As there is video footage, it should not be hard to identify the others. The government, therefore, must ensure that the police arrest all perpetrators regardless of their connections and that they are given exemplary punishment through speedy trials. It also must take responsibility for the low morale and ineptitude of the police in controlling such situations. Mob justice will largely stop when the public realises it will be punished by law, and when they begin to trust the legal system, especially the police.

Unfortunately, in the first year of the interim government, there have been no effective steps specifically addressing mob violence. But the frightening regularity with which such incidents continue occurring, it is extremely crucial that the government ensures that all attackers are arrested and punished to signal its toughening approach.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Eruption of Mount Vesuvius



Italy's Mount Vesuvius is believed to have erupted on this day in 79 CE, destroying the ancient cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and the excavations of these sites in mid-18th century precipitated the modern science of archaeology.

# The architectonics of mob violence



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

FARIDUL ALAM

Mob violence has become one of the most pressing challenges confronting Bangladesh since the ouster of Sheikh Hasina's authoritarian government. The collapse of her iron grip, once held together through coercion, patronage, and a politicised security apparatus, has not translated into institutional stability. Rather, the vacuum has been filled with volatile eruptions of mob anger, pointing less to isolated law-and-order failures than to a deeper structural malaise embedded in the country's political, social, and governance fabric.

At first glance, mobs appear as spontaneous, combustible gatherings—neighbours, strangers, onlookers suddenly transforming into perpetrators of violence. Yet beneath this spectacle lies a complex architectonic of rage, frustration, and dispossession. Crowds become mobs not simply out of irrational frenzy but through a convergence of unresolved grievances, weakened state authority, and decades of systemic impunity. The collapse of credible justice mechanisms and accountability structures has habituated citizens to taking matters into their own hands when possible, blurring the boundary between community defence and collective lawlessness.

Law enforcement's role in this configuration is crucial. For years under Hasina, the police were weaponised to protect regime interests rather than the public good. Arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and partisan policing corroded public trust in the force. In the current interim dispensation, the police remain demoralised, under-resourced, and often inert, even after the passing of a year since the uprising. Citizens, too, continue to have little expectation of justice from them. Thus, law enforcement is both largely absent and complicit in this scenario: absent in preventing mob flare-ups, complicit in having created the culture of impunity that fuels them.

The civil bureaucracy, similarly, has shown inertia at a moment

when nimbleness and credibility are required. Bureaucrats, long accustomed to following the dictates of political masters rather than serving the public, now operate in a fog of uncertainty. The interim government, lacking a direct electoral mandate, cannot yet command the kind of accountability structures necessary to restore confidence. Governance drifts, and in the drift, mobs flourish.

Youth gangs warrant special attention in this equation. They are



'If left unchecked, mob violence risks becoming a permanent feature of our political landscape.'

FILE VISUAL: STAR

not the prime movers of mob violence but rather a symptom of broader dislocation. Many of these groups emerged during the Awami League years, nurtured through patronage politics, and tolerated as muscle for electoral dominance. Deprived of political sponsorship in the post-Hasina vacuum, they now reappear as free-floating agents of disorder. Their presence highlights the blurred line between politics, criminality, and mob behaviour in Bangladesh's urban and rural spaces. To treat them as the "cause" of mob violence would be a misdiagnosis; they are better understood as symptoms of a deeper breakdown in governance, justice,

and political accountability.

The psychology of the crowd adds yet another layer. Individuals, once submerged in the anonymity of the mob, undergo a transformation: responsibility diffuses, moral inhibitions dissolve, and violence becomes not just possible but contagious. This contagion is intensified by an environment of generalised distrust—distrust of the police, the courts, the bureaucrats, and the political elites. The mob, for all its destructiveness, paradoxically becomes the only arena where these individuals feel a fleeting sense of empowerment.

But this pattern is not merely sociological; it is political, and also neuropsychological. The absence of an elected government has created a profound accountability deficit. The interim authority, by definition temporary, cannot claim to embody the sovereignty of the people. Its legitimacy rests on its ability to

Mobs thrive in the interstices of this transitional moment not only because institutions are weak but also because individuals, swept into collective frenzy, undergo a neurological shift that lowers inhibitions and amplifies aggression. In the absence of political actors capable of channelling discontent into democratic expression, this volatile fusion of structural instability and neuropsychological susceptibility turns the street into the most immediate outlet of power.

If mob violence is the symptom, then the disease lies in the long legacy of authoritarian rule, politicisation of state institutions, and the systematic hollowing out of democratic accountability. The Hasina years entrenched a logic of patronage and fear: those within the circle of loyalty enjoyed impunity, while dissenters faced harassment or worse. Over time, this produced not only a culture of fear but also a culture of resentment. When the edifice collapsed in July-August 2024, the resentment had no institutional outlet. It spilled onto the streets.

Mob violence, then, cannot be reduced to "bad people doing bad things." It is the visible surface of a subterranean crisis that spans governance, justice, politics, and social psychology. To address it requires a multidimensional strategy. Law enforcement must be depoliticised and re-professionalised, beginning with visible steps to restore public trust. The bureaucracy must be jolted out of its inertia and made responsive to citizen needs. Youth gangs must be disengaged from the circuits of patronage that sustain them today and redirected towards constructive civic and economic opportunities. Above all, the interim government must remember that it is not an end in itself but a bridge; its most urgent task is to prepare the conditions for a credible election that reestablishes accountability at the top.

Without such steps, mob violence risks becoming a permanent feature of Bangladesh's political landscape. If that happens, the interim government's promise of stability will curdle into further disillusionment, and the very idea of democratic transition may be undermined rather than bolstered post-election. For ordinary citizens already battered by economic precarity, price hikes, and a fraying social fabric, that would be the final betrayal.

## What Bolivia's election can teach us?



Barrister Khan Khalid Adnan is an advocate at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, fellow at the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, and head of the chamber at Khan Sajfur Rahman and Associates.

KHAN KHALID ADNAN

The first round of Bolivia's national election, which took place on August 17, produced an unprecedented runoff and a decisive shift in the country's political balance. With centrist Rodrigo Paz leading on 32 percent and former president Jorge "Tuto" Quiroga second on roughly 27 percent, voters will return to the polls on October 19 under a clear two-round rule that requires either 50 percent plus 1 or 40 percent with a 10-point lead for an outright win. Notably, close to a fifth of ballots were null or blank—an outlet for protest, yet still counted transparently. Polling day itself was calm by regional standards, results were accepted as preliminary, and the system moved towards a conclusive second round.

Three design choices underpinned that experience. First, Bolivia separated a rapid preliminary tally from the official count, promising final certification within days while making preliminary data public on the same night. The new OEP's SIREPRE portal—an official, public-facing system—streamed these preliminary results in real time and was trialled openly ahead of polling day. Second, authorities welcomed robust international scrutiny: the European Union (EU) deployed around 120 observers, and the OAS mission issued a same-day preliminary assessment. Third, the law's runoff threshold ensures the eventual winner commands broad legitimacy rather than a narrow plurality.

Bangladesh's recent experience could hardly be more different. Its 12th parliamentary polls held on January 7, 2024 were boycotted by the principal opposition and widely

criticised; Washington stated plainly they were "not free or fair," while rights groups documented a pre-election crackdown that poisoned the environment. Official turnout was just over 40 percent—a figure that, even if accurate, speaks to deep public disengagement.

Today, however, Bangladesh has an opening. The National Consensus Commission (NCC)—formed in February, with its tenure recently extended till September 15—has already brokered agreement on significant constitutional and electoral reforms, while circulating the July National Charter to parties for signature. Among the areas of emerging consensus are a law to govern the Election Commission, curbs on Article 70 to allow MPs to vote their conscience on key matters, independent delimitation, and opposition control of crucial parliamentary committees. The debates over a caretaker-style election-time government, term limits for the prime minister, and an appointments process that reduces partisan capture are ongoing but have shifted from taboo to negotiable policy.

What, then, are the Bolivia-to-Bangladesh lessons the NCC should bring squarely to the fore? First, ensuring radical transparency in results. Bangladesh should legislate an OEP-style public portal for the next election that publishes, in real time, the image and data of every polling station result form as soon as it is logged, clearly labelling the feed as preliminary until the official tabulation is complete. Domestic observers should be guaranteed access to those same images for parallel vote tabulation (PVT), and

parties' agents should be protected by law and police directives to obtain copies at source. The aim is not speed for its own sake but a transparent chain of custody that builds public confidence as the count proceeds. Bolivia's SIREPRE shows this is feasible with paper ballots and modest technology.

Second, credible, invited scrutiny is a must. The NCC should recommend an open invitation to full-fledged international missions (EU, Commonwealth and credible regional networks), with guaranteed nationwide access from pre-election through post-results dispute resolution. Bolivia's experience illustrates how such missions can

scaling. Bolivia's two-round rule is explained in contemporary coverage and statute; the principle is what matters here.

Fourth, ensuring election-time neutrality with teeth. However it is structured—whether a revived caretaker format or a functionally equivalent, time-bound neutral administration—the mechanism must be codified and verifiable. That means a clear legal mandate, ground rules for police and administration postings, a transparent process for appointing and disciplining election officials, and rapid judicial remedies for campaign violations. The NCC's charter already outlines some of these elements; it should bring them

**Bangladesh's last election was judged wanting and left scars. Bolivia's was imperfect too, with high protest votes, elite churn, and economic pain. However, its institutions offered citizens a visible, comprehensible path to closure. If the NCC can translate these lessons into enforceable rules, such as open data on results, protected observers, a legitimate mandate-building formula, and real neutrality, it can give February's election a chance to be believed.**

help deter abuse and make technical recommendations that all sides can accept precisely because they stand outside the domestic trench war.

Third, bringing forth a winner that the country can live with. Our first-past-the-post system routinely hands a seat to candidates with thin pluralities in fractured races, which can tempt manipulation at the margins. The NCC need not copy Bolivia's presidential runoff, but it should consider recommending either ranked-choice voting in single-member seats or carefully piloted two-round runoffs where the winner fails to reach a floor (say, 40 percent). The goal is to raise legitimacy, not to engineer outcomes. If that feels too ambitious for 2026, the Commission can still propose ranked-choice pilots in city mayoral polls to build confidence and skills before

together into a unified "election confidence package" to be applied in the 2026 election, with political parties pledging that the newly elected parliament will adopt it at the earliest opportunity.

Finally, name the stake. Bangladesh's last election was judged wanting and left scars. Bolivia's was imperfect too, with high protest votes, elite churn, and economic pain. However, its institutions offered citizens a visible, comprehensible path to closure. If the NCC can translate these lessons into enforceable rules, such as open data on results, protected observers, a legitimate mandate-building formula, and real neutrality, it can give February's election a chance to be believed. That, far more than who wins, is the reform the republic needs most right now.

BANGLADESH-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

# Reassessing the past, reimagining the future

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SK. TAWFIQUE M. HAQUE and MD. PARVEZ HASAN YOUSUF

On Saturday, Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar arrived in Dhaka for a two-day bilateral mission. His visit overlaps with that of Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan, who arrived on a four-day trip on August 21. During these high-level engagements, Dhaka and Islamabad are expected to sign several agreements, including provisions for visa-free travel for diplomatic and official passport holders, cooperation between their respective Foreign Service Academies, and the establishment of a Joint Working Group under the two commerce ministries. Other possible instruments include the renewal of a cultural exchange memorandum of understanding (MoU) and a media cooperation agreement between the Bangladesh Press Institute and the Associated Press of Pakistan.

The countries' two foreign ministers are scheduled to meet on Sunday, August 24, followed by a formal signing ceremony. Later that afternoon, Ishaq Dar is expected to pay a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus. These meetings and agreements, blending trade diplomacy with cultural and institutional cooperation, represent more than ceremonial symbolism. They mark a deliberate attempt to reset bilateral relations on a broader foundation encompassing political, economic, and social dimensions. For two countries bound by a turbulent and intertwined history, this moment offers an opportunity to revisit the past, recalibrate the present, and reimagine the future.

The timing of the visits could not be more significant. Bangladesh is currently governed by an interim administration led by Muhammad Yunus, whose declared policy of "friendship to all" marks a sharp departure from Awami League's India-centric diplomacy. In less than a year, Dhaka and Islamabad have re-established high-level communication, revitalised economic ties, and even begun to explore nascent military cooperation.

Yet history cannot be set aside so easily. For Bangladesh, the legacy of the 1971 Liberation War remains etched into its national consciousness. For Pakistan, sensitivities surrounding a formal acknowledgement of its wartime atrocities persist, with Islamabad continuing to view the 1974 Tripartite Agreement (with India being the third party)

as a final settlement. This unresolved discord is both a visible obstacle and the defining backdrop to any future rapprochement.

During Sheikh Hasina's premiership, relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan remained deeply strained for much of her 15 years of rule. The establishment of the International Crimes Tribunal in 2009 to prosecute 1971 war crimes and the subsequent execution of several Jamaat-e-Islami leaders drew sharp condemnation from Pakistan,

trade surged by 20 percent in the 2024-25 fiscal year, rising from approximately USD 712 million to USD 865 million. Direct sea trade resumed in November 2024, marking the end of a hiatus of over half a century. An MoU on rice procurement was signed in January 2025, while Pakistan's budget airline, Fly Jinnah, received approval to operate flights to Dhaka. Military contacts also resumed, with discussions on joint exercises and training.

Even so, the warming of relations does not

participating in Pakistan-led naval exercises could concern India. On the economic front, diversification is strategically wise, but both countries have historically had low trade volumes and narrow complementarities, raising the possibility that political symbolism may outpace substance unless supported by targeted agreements and enhanced connectivity.

Nevertheless, genuine prospects for building a balanced and mutually beneficial

Even in the sensitive defence sphere, carefully calibrated cooperation in non-offensive areas such as UN peacekeeping, disaster relief, or counterterrorism intelligence sharing could deliver tangible benefits without alarming regional actors. The task, therefore, is not to erase history but to build a forward-looking partnership that is proportionate, transparent, and grounded in national interest.

India's perspective inevitably looms over these developments. For New Delhi, Bangladesh has long been a vital partner in ensuring stability along its north-eastern frontier, and the Awami League era witnessed unprecedented strategic alignment. The cooling of Dhaka-Delhi relations since 2024, coupled with Bangladesh's renewed engagement with Pakistan, has raised concerns of a possible China-Pakistan-Bangladesh axis for our giant neighbour. India's likely responses include the imposition of non-tariff barriers and import restrictions on Bangladeshi goods, a broader diplomatic recalibration to engage with a wider array of Bangladeshi actors, and security signalling to discourage deep military cooperation with Pakistan. For Dhaka, the challenge will be to demonstrate that engagement with Pakistan complements rather than undermines its relationship with India.

Reimagining the future of Bangladesh-Pakistan relations requires a change in mindset on both sides. For Bangladesh, this means acknowledging that while the past cannot be erased, the future can be shaped by pragmatic interests and mutual respect. For Pakistan, it requires recognising that symbolic and meaningful gestures can build trust and goodwill. Practical steps could include joint historical research initiatives, sector-specific trade agreements in areas such as pharmaceuticals, information technology, and textiles, annual foreign secretary-level dialogues to ensure continuity beyond political cycles, and expanded parliamentary exchanges to include opposition parties, thereby broadening the constituency for improved ties.

The visits of Ishaq Dar and Jam Kamal Khan offer both symbolic and strategic openings. Whether this becomes a milestone or a missed opportunity will depend on how both nations navigate the interplay of history, politics, and pragmatism. Bangladesh and Pakistan now stand at a diplomatic crossroads. The path forward will require patience, mutual sensitivity, and a focus on shared interests. A working relationship will be a gradual process, requiring sustained commitment from governments and societies alike. The ultimate goal should not be to erase the past, but to ensure that it does not imprison the future. That may be the most constructive way forward for two nations with intertwined destinies in an evolving South Asia.



'Enhanced ties with Pakistan need not be seen as antagonistic to India; instead, they can serve as a pragmatic balancing tool in a multipolar South Asia.'

PHOTO: COLLECTED

which dismissed the trials as politically motivated. Dhaka's consistent demand for a formal apology further fuelled tensions. Awami League also actively leveraged anti-Pakistan rhetoric as a tool of domestic legitimacy, in sharp contrast to Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which historically maintained more cordial ties with Islamabad.

The August 2024 changeover brought an immediate shift in tone. Within months, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Adviser Yunus met on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly and the D-8 Summit, signalling a mutual intent to reset ties. Tangible progress soon followed. Bilateral

partnership lie within these constraints. Reopening direct maritime routes creates opportunities to reduce costs and improve competitiveness. The Joint Business Council, if expanded to include small enterprises, digital platforms, and textiles, could help push bilateral trade towards the ambitious target of \$3 billion. Pakistan's offer of 300 fully funded scholarships for Bangladeshi students and expanded cultural and academic exchanges can slowly erode mistrust at the societal level. Enhanced ties with Pakistan also need not be seen as antagonistic to India; instead, they can serve as a pragmatic balancing tool in a multipolar South Asia.

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# Strategic education policy is key to a job-ready Bangladesh

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MD. RAKIB HASAN

Bangladesh's higher education sector was once envisioned as a driver of socio-economic progress, but it now faces a troubling paradox: producing too many graduates in certain fields while leaving critical shortages in others. At the core of this dilemma is the absence of a centralised strategic policy, which is required to guide educational institutions on how many graduates to prepare across various specialised disciplines.

The consequences of this imbalance are increasingly evident. In 2022, nearly eight lakh university graduates in Bangladesh remained unemployed, resulting in an unemployment rate of about 12 percent (tertiary)—significantly higher than the national average of approximately 3.5 percent. This widening gap between graduate supply and actual market demand adversely affects individuals and subsequently constrains overall economic growth.

A prominent example of this problem lies in the field of computer science and engineering (CSE). Every year, universities produce approximately 12,000 CSE graduates, while only 5,000 jobs are available. Why do we keep producing more of what we cannot accommodate? More concerning, employers consistently highlight severe skill gaps, reporting that a significant rate of IT/CSE graduates fail basic competency assessments in crucial areas, such as coding, mathematics and English. This oversupply, coupled with skill mismatches, causes personal hardship for thousands of young graduates, while also diminishing national productivity and competitiveness.

Conversely, significant shortages persist in some other disciplines, particularly in healthcare. Despite graduating large numbers of medical professionals annually, the country still struggles with a pronounced deficit of qualified healthcare workers. We may have more doctors on paper, but rural clinics often go days without one. According to a BMC Human Resources for Health study, the density of doctors, nurses and midwives in Bangladesh was only 9.9 per 10,000 population, well below the indicative sustainable development goals

index threshold, underscoring an urgent need for targeted policy interventions.

Students and guardians naturally gravitate towards subjects and career paths perceived to offer the highest immediate market demand and financial security. This preference leads to mass production of graduates in specific disciplines, saturating the job market and significantly reducing employment opportunities for freshers. The University Grants Commission (UGC) introduced a unique student ID system for private universities to regulate student intake, significantly capping the number of students per semester. Yet, challenges remain as universities continue to

**We stand at a pivotal moment where our education system must evolve—from prioritising quantity to ensuring quality, from chasing trends to embracing future-focused planning. The imbalance between oversupplied graduates and underserved sectors is not inevitable; it is a solvable challenge with coordinated, data-driven action. With the right strategies, Bangladesh can transform its vast human capital into a dynamic, future-ready workforce.**

offer numerous, closely related programmes within the same domain.

Without accurate market forecasts, we would only build skills that lead nowhere. To bridge this gap, we must adopt a systematic, data-driven approach. Comprehensive labour-market analyses should be conducted regularly to forecast workforce requirements, clearly identifying existing skill gaps and areas of oversupply. This process would enable policymakers, educational institutions and industry stakeholders to adapt proactively to changing market dynamics, creating an agile

and responsive educational environment.

Strong collaboration among industries, academic institutions and policymakers is equally critical. Establishing advisory committees composed of these stakeholders would facilitate continuous dialogue and rapid decision-making. Additionally, dynamic educational programmes should be promoted, with institutions incentivised to consistently review and realign their curricula based on reliable employment data. This strategic collaboration would significantly enhance the responsiveness and relevance of educational offerings.

For example, the Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), established in 2022, aligns education with the workforce. Replacing the former National Skills Commission, JSA systematically forecasts labour-market demands and identifies skill gaps to guide policymakers and educational institutions. Through its annual Occupation Shortage List (formerly the Skills Priority List), JSA ensures curricula remain agile and relevant. Apart from tracking job trends, it also tells universities exactly what to train for.

Singapore anticipated this challenge with SkillsFuture, its national initiative to track labour trends and build future-ready skills. Its annual Skills Demand for the Future Economy (SDFE) report identifies high-growth job roles and emerging skills across sectors such as digital services, green industries and the care economy. The 2025 edition introduced interactive dashboards, offering real-time, publicly accessible insights to help educators, students, and job seekers make informed decisions based on evolving industry demands.

Bangladesh is not without efforts in workforce planning. The establishment of the National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) is a significant step. It coordinates skills development across ministries and sectors, following the National Action Plan (2022-2027) to align training with workforce needs in areas like ICT, healthcare, construction and RMG. To enhance its impact, NSDA must strengthen collaboration with universities and industries through sector-specific councils, shared labour data and co-developed curricula. This would better align education with market needs and produce a more job-ready workforce.

We stand at a pivotal moment where our education system must evolve—from prioritising quantity to ensuring quality,

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challenge with coordinated, data-driven action. With the right strategies, Bangladesh can transform its vast human capital into a dynamic, future-ready workforce.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার	
মহিলা ও শিশু বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়	
জরিতা ফাউন্ডেশন	
জরিতা টাওয়ার, বাসা নং- ২০/এ (নতুন),	
রোড নং- ২৭ (পুরাতন), ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা- ১২০৭।	
নং- ০২.০৪.০০০০.০০০.০০২.৬১.০০০২.২৫ - ১১১	তারিখ: ২০/০৮/২০২৫ খ্রি.
<b>অকেজো মালামাল নিলামে বিক্রয়ের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি</b>	
১. প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম	জরিতা ফাউন্ডেশন
২. দরপত্র আদানকারী	ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক, জরিতা ফাউন্ডেশন
৩. নিলাম প্রক্রিয়া	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আদান পদ্ধতি
৪. টিকাকারের শোষণ	আয়কর সার্টিফিকেট যে কোন ব্যক্তি বা ট্রেড লাইসেন্সধারী যে কোন প্রকৃষ্টান দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবেন।
৫. মালামালের বিবরণ	এয়ার কন্ডিশনার, আসবাবপত্র, ওভেন, সাইট, কম্পিউটার ও এক্সপেরিড ও অন্যান্য দায়িত্বিক মালামাল।
৬. মালামালের প্রাক্কলিত মূল্য	৩১,৬৯,০৫০/- (উনচত্বিশ লক্ষ উনসত্তর হাজার তিনশত পঞ্চাশ টাকা)
৭. দরপত্র সিডিগুলির মূল্য	১০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য)
৮. দরপত্র আমানত	প্রাক্কলিত দর মূল্যের ১০% (ফেরতযোগ্য) ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক, জরিতা ফাউন্ডেশন এর অনুমুখে যে কোন রাষ্ট্রায়ত্ত্বাধীন ব্যাংক হতে পে-অর্ডার/বাংক ড্রাফট দরপত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে। আমানত ব্যক্তি দরপত্র সরাসরি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
৯. নিলাম দরপত্র সিডিগুলি বিক্রয়ের তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	২৬/০৮/২০২৫ তারিখ হতে ০৬/০৯/২০২৫ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে বিকাল ০৫.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত। জরিতা টাওয়ার, বাসা নং- ২০/এ (নতুন), রোড নং- ২৭ (পুরাতন), ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা- ১২০৭।
১০. নিলাম দরপত্র বাতিলের সর্বশেষ তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	আগামী ১৬/০৯/২০২৫ তারিখ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত অফিসে রক্ষিত দরপত্র বন্ধে জমা অথবা ডাকযোগে/কুরিয়ার সার্ভিস এর মাধ্যমে উক্ত নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে জরিতা ফাউন্ডেশনে শৌখিত হবে।
১১. দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	১৬/০৯/২০২৫ তারিখ বেলা ১২.০০ টায় উপস্থিত দরপত্রদাতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেই উপস্থিত থাকেন) খোলা হবে। অনিবার্য কারণে উক্ত তারিখে দরপত্র প্রত্যবেশিতা সম্ভব না হলে পরবর্তী কার্যবিধি দরপত্র প্রকল্প খোলা হবে।
১২. ব্যক্তি দরপত্রের ক্ষেত্রে TIN ও জারিতা পরিচয় পত্র এবং প্রকৃষ্টানের ক্ষেত্রে হালসনের ট্রেডলাইসেন্স এবং VAT নিবন্ধন প্রত্যয়নপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে।	
১৩. কৃৎকার্য দরপত্রদাতা প্রতি পূর্ণের মালামালের উচ্চ মোট মূল্যের উপর সরকারি নিম্ন অনুযায়ী আয়কর, ভ্যাট বা অন্য কোন কর প্রযোজ্য পরিবেশ করবেন।	
১৪. পরিচালক (প্রশাসন), জরিতা ফাউন্ডেশন এর পূর্ব অনুমতি সাপেক্ষে মালামালসমূহ ২৫/০৯/২০২৫ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে অত্র অফিসে দেখানে যে অবস্থায় আছে সে অবস্থায় সরেজমিনে প্রত্যক্ষ করতে পারবেন।	
১৫. ছাড়পত্র আবেদন প্রাপ্তির ০৭ (সাত) কার্যদিবসের মধ্যে সকল দরপত্রদাতাকে নিজ মালামাল পরিবেশিত হতে হবে অন্যথা এ বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন দায় দায়িত্ব বহন করবে না।	
১৬. দরপত্রের আমানত নিলাম কার্যক্রম সম্পন্ন হবার তারিখ হতে ১৫ (পনেরো) কার্যদিবসের মধ্যে ফেরতযোগ্য।	
১৭. কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শালে ব্যক্তিকে যে কোন দরপত্র বা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।	

স্বাক্ষর  
ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক (অতিরিক্ত দায়িত্ব)  
জরিতা ফাউন্ডেশন  
বাসা নং- ২০/এ (নতুন), রোড নং- ২৭ (পুরাতন),  
ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা- ১২০৭।

GD-1850

# Towards Legal Protection for Domestic Labour

The dialogue "Transforming Policy into Law: Domestic Workers' Rights and Implementation Barriers" was held on July 16, 2025, under the EWCSA project, jointly organised by Shobujer Oviyan Foundation, Oxfam in Bangladesh, The Daily Star, and co-funded by The European Union. Here is a summary of the discussion.

**Mahmuda Begum**  
Executive Director, Shobujer Oviyan Foundation



Under the EWCSA project, by Oxfam and co-funded by the EU, there have been numerous discussions over the years concerning the rights and recognition of domestic workers in Bangladesh. The primary objective of today's roundtable is to advance the process of formally recognizing domestic workers as labor and ensuring their inclusion within relevant legal frameworks.

A crucial step in this direction is the ratification of the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 189, adopted in 2011, which calls for the protection and decent working conditions for domestic workers worldwide. Bangladesh has yet to ratify this important convention.

On behalf of domestic workers, the Domestic Workers Rights Network (DWRN) has formally submitted a request to the government, urging the enactment of the Domestic Workers' Protection and Welfare Policy, 2015 into law. Our aim is to raise awareness of this policy among both employers and workers, particularly across urban and peri-urban areas, so that all stakeholders understand its significance and support its legal implementation.

**Abul Hossain**  
Acting Coordinator, Domestic Workers' Rights Network (DWRN)



In 2008, a code of conduct was developed to safeguard the rights of domestic workers, marking a significant milestone. This was later formalised with the publication of the Domestic Workers' Protection and Welfare Policy in the government gazette on 21 December 2015.

Despite these advancements, Bangladesh has yet to ratify the ILO Convention No. 189. Given the current political context and the presence of a non-partisan interim government, it is an opportune moment to move forward with the ratification process. The lack of political will has historically hindered progress in this area.

It has been suggested that the policy can only proceed to the Cabinet for approval once it has been endorsed by the Tripartite Consultative Council (TCC). We urge all relevant authorities to expedite this process and take concrete steps towards enacting this long-awaited legislation.

**Parveen**  
Domestic Worker from Kallyanpur, Beneficiary of Shobujer Oviyan Foundation



Before receiving awareness sessions and training under EWCSA, we were unaware of many things—especially our fundamental and legal rights. We often did not receive our daily or monthly wages on time. I want to emphasize the importance of continued training and awareness programs to help us understand how to protect ourselves.

Please continue supporting us so we can learn more about our rights and how to claim them. For example, in disputes between domestic workers and employers, law enforcement often sides with the employer, making it difficult for us to get justice.

My demand is to treat domestic workers as human beings. Show us dignity, respect, and humanity—just as every individual deserves.

**Shathi**  
Employer at South Abason, Kallyanpur, and Employee of Shobujer Oviyan Foundation



I strongly believe that a formal contract between a household employer and a domestic worker is essential. Such agreements can help clarify roles, responsibilities, and rights for both parties. The implementation of



**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Include and recognize domestic workers under Bangladesh Labor Law.
- Enact the 2015 policy as law and ratify ILO Convention 189
- Make written contracts mandatory for all domestic workers
- Create a national, police-managed domestic worker database
- Form community-level support and advocacy committees
- Ensure fair wages, leave, health benefits, and safety nets
- Provide training on leadership and skill development.
- Focus on relation build up and connection between employee and employer.

this practice should begin without delay to ensure better protection and accountability.

**Sumaia Islam**  
Executive Director, Bangladesh Nari Sramik Kendra (BNSK)



The remittances sent by domestic workers employed abroad must be acknowledged as a vital part of our economy. Despite working overseas, they remain integral contributors to our national development, and their contributions should be properly recognised.

It is also important to note the fundamental difference between a factory worker and a domestic worker—the nature of their work, employment conditions, and employers vary significantly. This distinction must be reflected when reviewing or formulating labour policies.

Above all, the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy, 2015, must be enacted into law—not only for the benefit of domestic workers but for the advancement of civil society and the country as a whole.

**Murshida Akter**  
General Secretary, National Domestic Women Workers Union



Unfortunately, domestic workers are still not treated fairly. Incidents of injustice against them rarely receive media attention. Since the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy was published in 2015, police stations have begun to register complaints involving abuse or mistreatment of domestic workers. However, without a binding legal framework, these cases often fail to progress beyond the initial stage of investigation. The absence of specific legislation significantly hampers the delivery of justice.

**Razequzzaman Ratan**  
Former Member, Labour Reform Commission



It is crucial to distinguish between "domestic work" and "domestic labour." While we all contribute to household tasks, domestic labour refers to individuals employed in others' homes in exchange for wages—making them workers with specific rights and responsibilities. These include clear identification of the employer, defined duties,

fair remuneration, and outlined liabilities, often summarised as the three Rs: Recognition, Registration, and Remuneration.

Despite the introduction of the Domestic Workers' Protection and Welfare Policy in 2015, it has yet to become law. The Labour Reform Commission, launched by the interim government in November 2024, proposed including domestic workers in the Labour Law—though these reforms are pending gazette notification.

A written contract is essential for both accountability and protection. Community-based committees at ward or neighbourhood levels could offer vital support in emergencies. As household dynamics evolve, so does the scope of domestic work—requiring skill development and upskilling support.

Current labour laws still exclude domestic and sanitation workers and allow child labour under 14. The Commission has recommended addressing these gaps. Drawing from global examples like Germany and Argentina, Bangladesh must leverage digital tools and social mobilisation to uplift the dignity and well-being of domestic workers—who are integral to our households.

**Mahmuda**  
Psychologist



Domestic workers constantly live with fear of job loss, which leads to chronic stress, anxiety, and in severe cases, post-traumatic stress disorder. This insecurity affects not only their mental well-being but also their children's development. Many domestic workers lack family support to care for their children, resulting in emotional neglect and long-term psychological impacts on the next generation. When falsely accused at work, they often have no one to turn to. Whether or not a law exists, we must provide job security—through contracts or alternative measures. Above all, the mental health challenges faced by domestic workers must be formally recognised and addressed in policy frameworks. A mentally healthy workforce is essential for both the workers and the families they serve.

**A H M Shafiquzzaman**  
Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment



Let us begin with a question: how many of us have a formal written contract with our domestic

workers? Advocacy and protests have their place, but I believe structured dialogue is more sustainable and impactful. Just as trade unions engage in collective bargaining to resolve disputes, we must adopt similar mechanisms for domestic work.

Although the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy 2015 exists, it lacks legal enforceability. There is no legal mandate requiring written contracts or agency involvement, and recruitment mostly occurs informally. To address disputes, we have introduced Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)—a non-judicial method that offers a middle path.

I urge stakeholders to come together under a unified platform to push for legal recognition and reform. The call for converting the 2015 policy into law is notably absent. Many NGOs and organisations are working individually; collective efforts would be more effective. Regarding international obligations, Bangladesh has yet to ratify ILO Convention 189, which ensures rights and protections for domestic workers. Ratification requires consensus among the government, labour representatives, and employers. A proposal summarising ILO Conventions 155, 187, and 190 has already been submitted to the Cabinet for review. If Convention 189 is ratified, its provisions—such as protection from abuse and harassment—will become legally binding.

Bangladesh has already ratified the ILO Conventions on the Minimum Age (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour (No. 182), listing 43 hazardous tasks prohibited for children.

Finally, we have a "Workers Welfare Fund" which domestic workers can benefit from—covering children's education, maternal support, and compensation in case of a worker's death. However, progress must start at home, with written contracts and registration to build a national database of domestic workers.

**Farida Akter**  
Advisor, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock



The formation of the Labour Reform Commission is a notable step forward. Shobujer Oviyan represents a progressive movement in women's empowerment, where both employer and employee are women, a relationship built not only on labour but also solidarity. Without the contributions of domestic workers, many of us would struggle to manage our homes. This interdependence must be recognised with dignity and respect.

Respect also needs to be built into the physical spaces we inhabit. Most modern homes lack designated resting areas for domestic workers, despite increasingly relying on them. As homes become more technology-driven with washing machines, dishwashers, and vacuum cleaners, we must provide appropriate training so domestic workers can build relevant skills and reduce their

physical burden. From a health perspective, research shows that many domestic workers use betel leaf, jorda, or tobacco to suppress hunger, harming their well-being. As citizens and employers, we have a responsibility to ensure their access to proper nutrition and healthcare. It is a matter of fundamental rights.

Lastly, we must include domestic workers in policy and social dialogue. Without their voices, we risk crafting solutions that don't reflect their realities. Listening to them directly is essential to addressing their problems meaningfully and building inclusive and respectful systems for their empowerment and protection.

**Roksana Sultana**  
Executive Director, Breaking the Silence (BTS)



Creating awareness is the most important step. How many of us here today truly understand our responsibilities towards domestic workers? Living in government quarters, I once had to explain to the building owners' association why I give my helper one day off each week and why I advocate for their rights. Some time ago, I initiated a pilot project in the Mirpur area to facilitate online wage payments for domestic workers. The project was successful, with telecommunication companies kindly waiving extra fees for these transactions. This initiative remains sustainable and shows the potential of practical solutions to improve domestic workers' welfare.

**Maheen Sultan**  
Senior Fellow of Practice- Gender and Social Transformation, BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University also a Former Member of Women Reform Commission



Even after the law is enacted, the work will not end there. Every task a woman performs, whether paid or unpaid, inside or outside the home, deserves recognition. The lack of respect for domestic women workers and their employers is deeply rooted in social norms and customs. Therefore, even with legal reforms, a shift in public mentality is essential.

BIGD and Shobujer Oviyan jointly researched sexual harassment faced by domestic workers, especially young women. The study revealed alarming issues such as domestic workers being fed unsafe or spoiled food, denied access to homeowners' restrooms, and deprived of vacations and holidays.

To address these challenges, fostering solidarity between employers and employees is crucial. The research also highlighted the existence of an informal but strong support network among domestic workers, which should be institutionalized.

Local governments must establish effective grievance mechanisms and support all residents, regardless of their voting status, as a moral responsibility. It is not too late to pursue social change and transform mindsets, ensuring domestic workers receive their rightful recognition and protection.

**Tanjim Ferdous**  
In-Charge, NGOs and Foreign Missions, The Daily Star, and Moderator of the Session



The dialogue underscored the urgent need to enact the 2015 Domestic Workers' Policy into law to ensure legal protection for millions of workers. Through the EWCSA project, Shobujer Oviyan Foundation, Oxfam, EU and partners are championing awareness, leadership, and access to justice. True progress now demands collective action: government, civil society, and stakeholders must unite to guarantee recognition, dignity, and rights for domestic workers across Bangladesh.

**Tapon Kumar Das**  
Deputy Director, Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE)



Although CAMPE primarily focuses on education, the organization began working on domestic workers' rights in 2017. Several measures were recommended to be implemented both before and after the passage of

# NEWS

## Will step down if asked to follow

FROM PAGE 12  
parliamentary election, in line with the timeline announced by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

"The day the government seeks to make me act according to its orders, I will no longer remain in this chair," he said at a views exchange meeting with election officials of the Rajshahi region at the Regional Public Administration Training Centre.

The CEC also issued a stern warning against any irregularities. "For those who plan to seize polling centres or snatch ballot boxes, there is no news. Their dreams will be shattered. This time, there is no scope to win the election through violence or capturing centres."

Nasir said the Election Commission has 5,700 officials who served in previous polls, and those found involved in irregularities in the last elections will not be given the responsibility this time.

He said preparations are underway to hold the elections before Ramadan in February. "The law-and-order situation will improve as the polls approach. If anyone tries to occupy polling centres, strict action will be taken. If a centre is occupied, the polling there will be cancelled."

The CEC also said the commission is working to have the army play the role of law enforcement agencies during the polls.

Commenting on the Awami League, Nasir said the party can't engage in

political activities as all their activities are banned at present.

"With ongoing trials against them, Awami League leaders cannot participate in elections. Let's see what happens in the verdicts."

Regarding holding the election under the proportional representation (PR) system, he said as the Constitution does not allow it and that it is not possible unless the law is amended.

"Debate is ongoing among political parties on this matter. I will not join this debate. If the law is changed, then it will be possible," said the CEC, adding, "The Election Commission cannot go beyond the Constitution."

He also provided detailed instructions to regional election officials on the commission's preparations for the polls.

Meanwhile, Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said all necessary preparations are being undertaken for the upcoming election.

"We're preparing for the election as required. We will have no difficulty in holding the election scheduled for next February," he said after visiting the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation's cold storage, central seed testing laboratory, and vegetable seed processing centre.

"Now the people, political parties, and the media are all election focused. No conspiracy will succeed in disrupting this [election]," said Jahangir, also adviser to

the agriculture ministry.

In another development, Ansar and VDP Director General Maj Gen Abdul Motalab Sazzad Mahmud yesterday said a total of 650,000 Ansar members will be deployed at polling centres across the country to handle electoral challenges.

For this purpose, 180,000 new Ansar members have been trained, he added.

Speaking at an event at the Ansar Academy in Gazipur, he also said constant communication will be maintained with Ansar members at every polling centre. "If any attempt at sabotage occurs, immediate action will be taken."

## Four bodies

FROM PAGE 12  
male and one female – bore injury marks and their hands were found to be tied.

Locals spotted the bodies floating at different points of the river between the afternoon and evening, Abdullah Al Mamun, superintendent of Dhaka district river police, told The Daily Star last night.

He said the body of the child was found floating near Mirerbagh Cold Storage under Sadarghat River Police Station around 12:30pm. After an hour, the body of a woman, approximately 25, was also recovered from the same spot.

Later around 7:30pm, the bodies of the man, aged about 40, and a woman, aged about 30, were recovered near Barishur area in Jinjira, the policeman added.

"We informed the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). They are working to identify the bodies using forensic techniques," Mamun said.

Sohag Rana, officer-in-charge of Sadarghat River Police Outpost, told The Daily Star, "The CID are trying to identify the bodies of the woman and the child through different means as their fingerprints are missing."

Meanwhile, Monirul Haque Dablu, officer-in-charge of Keraniganj Model Police Station, said, "The hands of the male and female bodies were tied, and injury marks were visible on their bodies."

All four bodies have been sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue for autopsy, he added.

## Threat of fresh

FROM PAGE 1  
According to them, between 400 and 700 Rohingyas have already fled their homes in Laldia, across from Teknaf's Jalia Island. Many have already tried to cross into Bangladesh but failed due to tight border patrols.

Sirajul Mostafa, a member of Whykong union parishad, told The Daily Star that from Friday evening to early yesterday, he heard sounds of gunfire from across the border, including heavy firing between 11:00pm and 4:00am, which spread panic among locals.

Lt Col Md Jashim Uddin, commanding officer of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) Battalion 64, confirmed that gunfire was heard across the border Friday night. "Such incidents often occur along this frontier. We are keeping strict watch, though it is unclear who was involved in the clashes."

Mohammad Zubair, chairman of the Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights, said, "Many Rohingyas have gathered in Laldia fearing clashes between Myanmar troops and the Arakan Army in Maungdaw."

He said past clashes had turned Rohingya villages into battlegrounds, with heavy casualties from gunfire and airstrikes.

"People are now trying to flee before such horrors are repeated. If fighting resumes, there could be another large-scale Rohingya influx into Bangladesh," he warned.

Zubair also said, "Apart from military clashes, Arakan Army's extortion and harassment are also pushing Rohingyas to seek refuge in Bangladesh."

Mohammad Kamal, community leader of Camp-27, said after speaking to his close relatives across the border, he learned that around 300 Myanmar junta troops arrived in southern Maungdaw by navy ship on Friday morning.

At around 2:00pm, they carried out a drone strike on an Arakan Army base locally known as "BGP Camp-8," killing several fighters while others fled into nearby hills,

he added.

"After the clashes, panic spread among local Rohingyas. Around 700 people abandoned their homes in Laldia and are now trying to enter Bangladesh," Kamal said.

Three more Rohingya community leaders in Teknaf also said they heard junta troops had moved into southern Maungdaw but could not provide an exact number of displaced Rohingyas, estimating between 400 and 700.

The Daily Star could not independently verify these claims.

Meanwhile, Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Mizanur Rahman said he had not received such reports.

A senior official of his office said that BGB patrols had increased along the Teknaf border since Thursday.

Lt Col Ashiqur Rahman, commanding officer of BGB Battalion-2, confirmed the gunfire was indeed heard across the Whykong frontier Friday night.

Referring to media reports about junta troop movements, he said, "As far as we know, they are still far from Maungdaw town. But there have been reports of airstrikes on Arakan Army positions."

He, however, dismissed claims of a looming mass Rohingya influx as rumours spread by brokers seeking financial gain. "These brokers, both Rohingya and Bangladeshi, are exaggerating the situation to exploit people. We have already launched operations against them," he said, adding that the border was under strict guard.

Clashes between Myanmar forces and the Arakan Army began early last year along the Bangladesh border. By December, the Arakan Army had taken control of Maungdaw township. It now controls 14 of Rakhine's 17 townships, while junta forces have recently launched new offensives to retake lost territory.

## Young

FROM PAGE 3  
areas affected by salinity, and Ecohydra became second runner-up with their idea of a portable water purifier.

In the Energy Transition category, team Eternical won the top prize for its idea of producing a "hybrid fuel" by blending a liquid substance extracted from plastic waste with diesel. Team Sonali Urja was first runner-up for an app-based system to collect farm waste from farmers to produce electricity, while Trendsetters became second runner-up for their idea of generating electricity from Dhaka's garbage using solar power.

Speaking at the event, Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, urged the corporate sector to come forward and implement the amazing ideas.

While climate change has been affecting countries all across the globe, funding to mitigate the challenges remains inadequate, she said.

In his speech, The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said there is no way for Bangladesh to progress without innovation.

He said while climate change is a massive global challenge, Bangladesh has also been facing numerous other problems like high population and limited land.

Besides, inefficiency is a major problem, which is like a "disease," he added.

Lauding the young participants for their innovative ideas and solutions to different issues, he said The Daily Star will continue to promote and support these ideas to help turn them into reality. "Even if one, two, or three of these ideas succeed, they can bring a huge change," he added.

The finale marked the conclusion of the fourth edition of the Climate Justice Idea Competition, which was launched in 2022 under the campaign "Our Planet, Our Responsibility".

This year, the competition received 271 ideas across the three categories.

Following a rigorous selection process, a panel of six selectors shortlisted nine finalist teams, who then received mentorship from experts before presenting their ideas at the grand finale.

## Four months

FROM PAGE 4  
Another resident, Basanti Paul, 59, said many families have no access to clean water as their tube wells remain submerged. "We are forced to fetch water from other areas or buy it," she added.

Sawpan Paul, 47, said waterlogging has also rendered toilets unusable, creating a severe sanitation crisis.

The residents of the village believe the only permanent solution would be to lay a large drainage pipe under the Dhaka-Barishal highway on the eastern side, channeling the water into the Kumar river.

Abdur Razzak, former councillor of ward 27, said, "A plan was once taken to install a 10-inch pipe under the highway, but landowners objected. Later, a project was proposed to build a drain from Paull Para to the north, connecting to the Kumar river via a canal near Bismillah Shah Dargah. The proposal was submitted to the Local Government Engineering Department, but I don't know its current status."

Faridpur municipality's executive engineer, Md Shamsul Alam, said, "We placed the drainage construction proposal with LGED about six months ago. But without budget approval, work has not started. We are waiting for the project to be sanctioned."

## Education for Rohingyas

FROM PAGE 12  
million is needed to cover educational expenses for Rohingya children this year, but less than \$10 million has been received.

Meanwhile, another two lakh Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh since 2023, raising the total number of refugees to 1.2 million.

The funding cuts forced UNICEF to suspend classes for students from kindergarten to class-4 and lay off 1,100 teaching volunteers in June this year.

While most of the volunteers accepted the decision, a small section protested. It was fine except that the protest turned violent. Some angry ex-teachers issued threats to UNICEF and NGO staff, stormed offices and even resorted to physical assaults, said Flowers.

"They stormed the office of one of our partners... They threw a chair across the room and the person who was hit was hospitalised," she said.

Bangladeshi NGO workers, who have been targeted, are afraid to report to police and that's not okay, Flowers said, adding that violence against the UNICEF staff or against any of its partners cannot be allowed.

She further said UNICEF provided one-month severance pay to the volunteers even though it was not mentioned in their contracts. Besides, around 25 percent of the laid-off teachers joined a new UNICEF skills development programme.

Flowers said education remains the cornerstone of hope for Rohingya children, as it allows the Rohingyas to feel competent, capable and happy.

Currently, UNICEF covers about 75 percent of education programmes in the camps, reaching some 228,000 children in over 4,500 classrooms. But it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain even a reduced programme.

For now, UNICEF is focusing on continuing classes at the secondary school level, arguing that adolescents are most at risk of child marriage, violence, and involvement in crimes if left idle.

She also warned of a wider humanitarian crisis unless fresh funding arrives, with looming shortages of food, cooking fuel, and basic health services in 2026.

"LPG [supply] will stop at the end of September. That means they [Rohingyas] can't cook. What is the alternative? When you don't have LPG gas, you start cutting down all the trees... and then you get worse landslides."

## Journalist Alamgir

FROM PAGE 3  
Last week, when his condition deteriorated again, he was readmitted to the same hospital, said Khalid.

Doctors said he had been suffering from multiple health complications, including urine-related problems, breathing difficulties, and fluctuating blood pressure.

His namaz-e-janaza was held after Maghrib prayers yesterday at the Krishi Laboratories Mosque in the capital's Monipuri Para.

He was buried at the Rayerbazar Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard.

Born in Natore, Mohiuddin completed his graduation in English from Rajshahi University. He is survived by two daughters, relatives, friends and admirers.

The Editors' Council has expressed profound grief over the passing of Alamgir Mohiuddin, one of the council's founding members.

In a statement yesterday, the council prayed for the eternal peace of his departed soul and conveyed heartfelt condolences to his bereaved family.

The message was signed by its President Mahfuz Anam and General Secretary Dewan Hanif Mahmud. Information Adviser Mahfuz Alam also expressed profound shock and sorrow at the death of the veteran journalist.

In a condolence message, the adviser said Alamgir

Nutrition services have already been hit, and acute malnutrition among children increased significantly compared to last year, she noted.

WFP currently has no funding for food in 2026, she said.

"The Rohingya did not choose to be refugees. They fled persecution and violence. It is unacceptable that they should now suffer hunger and deprivation because the world has turned away."

Flowers issued a strong appeal to donors and governments to renew their support.

"We are at a breaking point. Unless resources are restored, we will see reversals in education, malnutrition rates climbing, preventable disease outbreaks, and further desperation among families."

## Entire system

FROM PAGE 12  
from the small town does not come to the capital, then where will the bribe come from?" he said.

He also alleged that university teachers are recruited through bribes, school teachers are recruited through bribes, and nurses are also recruited through bribes.

It is impossible to expect a functional democracy and just society without restructuring the existing state system, which, he said, fosters inequalities and corruption.

He also said inequalities, rooted in Bangladesh's state structure for decades, cannot be eradicated overnight, though structural reforms are essential.

"Instant solutions to long standing issues of injustice, corruption, authoritarianism and structural discrimination cannot be expected," he said.

Fakhrul said reforms of the state framework and the electoral process are still at a preliminary stage. He said the recent mass uprising has opened a new opportunity for change, but cautioned that sustainable reforms require well-defined planning, political sincerity and structural change.

The seminar, titled "How Well is Social Protection Secured?", was organised by Arpon Alok Soghoo. Senior journalist Sohrab Hassan, Ganosamhati Andolon's Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki, Nationalist Democratic Movement (NDM) Chairman Bobby Hajjaj, former BNP MP Rehana Akter Ranu and Policy Exchange Chairman M Masruq Reaz spoke at the event as special guests.

## I too might be pushed

FROM PAGE 12  
There remains a possibility that I might be sent back to Bangladesh because my ancestral home is in Dhaka. And I do not have much objection to that," said Sen, who was born in Santiniketan.

The 91-year-old Nobel laureate made the remarks on Friday while speaking at a public discussion in Kolkata on the social opportunities the Indian youth should have.

"I saw in the newspaper that someone was sent to Bangladesh because he was speaking in Bengali. It made me a bit worried," Sen said.

Later, in response to media queries regarding the reported harassment

of Bangla speaking individuals in BJP-ruled states, he stressed the diversity of Indian civilisation, stating that every cultural identity, including Bangalee and Punjabi, has reasons to be celebrated.

"People from Bengal or the Bengali-speaking people are facing professional obstacles and are being disrespected. I am not claiming that the Bengali culture and civilisation are the best, but we must highlight the history of the Bengali language, culture and civilisation. There must be respect for Bengali culture.

If not, there needs to be protests," the economist said.

## Push-ins, border killings

FROM PAGE 12  
BGB officials say the Indian authorities also forced in at least 39 Myanmar nationals registered with UNHCR in India and more than 100 Indian citizens.

In the latest incident, Chapainawabganj police arrested six Indian nationals, including a pregnant woman, for entering Bangladesh without valid visas on Friday.

The detainees are Md Danesh, 28; his wife Sonali Khatun, 26; and their eight-year-old son from Delhi's Sahababad village; and Sweeti Bibi, 33, with her two sons, aged 16 and six, from Birbhum district of West Bengal. Sonali is eight months pregnant.

"They were detained first, and once their identities were verified, we handed them over to court, which sent them to jail," Mohammad Motiur Rahman, the officer-in-charge of Chapainawabganj Sadar Police Station, told The Daily Star.

They were arrested by Delhi's Kalimata police on June 24 on suspicion of being Bangladeshis. The next day, BSF pushed them into Bangladesh through Kurigram, from where they kept moving around until their arrest.

Officials at BGB headquarters said the push-ins violate bilateral frameworks including the 1975 India-Bangladesh Joint Guidelines, the 2011 Coordinated Border Management Plan and commitments made during earlier DG-level talks. The issue will again be raised

strongly in the upcoming meeting, they added.

Border killings will be another priority since Bangladesh has raised concerns over repeated incidents despite earlier assurances from India to reduce casualties and maintain restraint.

At least 17 Bangladeshis were shot dead by BSF between January and July, compared with 16 in the same period last year, according to Ain o Salish Kendra. The figure stood at 25 for the whole of 2024.

BGB also plans to raise issues related to construction within 150 yards of the border, unauthorised infrastructure, protection of riverbanks, equitable sharing of common river waters and reducing tensions caused by anti-Bangladesh propaganda in Indian media.

In its statement, BSF said the Dhaka talks would focus on action against Indian insurgent groups allegedly sheltering in Bangladesh, tackling smuggling of drugs, arms and ammunition and preventing unauthorised construction within 150 yards of the international border.

The Indian side is also expected to emphasise the need to prevent attacks on BSF personnel allegedly by Bangladeshis, while pushing for the construction of a single-row fence along the frontier, reads the statement.

Implementation of the Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP), designed to ensure better communication and

coordination between the two forces, will feature prominently in the talks.

BSF said the agenda will also include measures to build confidence between the border forces, protect riverbanks along the frontier and ensure equitable sharing of waters from common rivers.

The DG-level conference between BGB and BSF dates back nearly five decades and has evolved into one of the most important bilateral forums for resolving border disputes.

The first such meeting was held in Kolkata on December 2, 1975, with the Indian side led by Ashwani Kumar, then BSF DG, and the Bangladesh side headed by Quazi Golam Dastgir, then DG of Bangladesh Rifles (now BGB).

From 1975 to 1993, the conferences were held annually, alternating between the two countries.

In October 1993, following discussions between the home secretaries of India and Bangladesh in Dhaka, it was agreed that the DG-level meetings would become biannual.

The idea was that problems in areas of mutual interest could be progressively resolved through close contact and continuing dialogue at different levels.

Since then, the DG-level conference has become a regular mechanism where the two sides discuss contentious issues, exchange data and review progress on earlier commitments.

**PRAYER TIMING**  
AUGUST 24

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-25	12-45	4-45	6-38	8-00
JAMAAT 5-00	1-15	5-00	6-41	8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## Scorched at work: Global report revealed dire heat risks for workers

A joint report released by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) exposed the growing dangers of extreme heat on workers' health and productivity worldwide. Titled Climate Change and Workplace Heat Stress, the guidance underscored how climate change had already intensified heatwaves, putting billions—particularly manual labourers in sectors like agriculture, construction, and fisheries—at serious risk.

Drawing from five decades of research, the report revealed that worker productivity dropped by 2-3% for every degree above 20°C. It also linked rising temperatures to serious health problems, including heatstroke, kidney damage, and neurological disorders. Vulnerable populations, such as older adults, children, and low-income workers, were shown to suffer the most.

The year 2024 marked the hottest on record, with some regions experiencing temperatures beyond 50°C. In response, the WHO and WMO urged urgent global action. Their recommendations included developing local heat health action plans, training health professionals to recognise heat stress, and incorporating affordable, sustainable



technologies to protect workers.

The report echoed findings from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which estimated that 2.4 billion workers were exposed to excessive heat, contributing to over 22 million heat-related injuries annually.

By calling for immediate implementation of policies and cross-sector collaboration, the WHO, WMO, and ILO aimed to protect workers, promote economic stability, and advance climate resilience—emphasising that safeguarding worker health in a warming world was no longer optional, but essential.

Source: World Health Organisation



TAHMINA AHMED

Life today is full of stress, anger, work pressure, and career demands. We all face these challenges, and that is why it is so important that we learn how to take care of our mental health. Simple daily habits can really help calm our minds and improve how we feel overall.

One thing that helps a lot is meditation. It cools down our brain and clears our mind, giving us a chance to breathe and find some peace during hectic days. Along with that, doing breathing exercises helps get enough oxygen to our brain so we can focus better and feel more relaxed.

Writing in a journal every day about how things are going can be surprisingly healing. It lets us get our feelings out and makes our thoughts less messy.

Getting at least 15 minutes of sunlight and a 30-minute walk daily

can boost both our body and mind. Drinking enough water and getting good sleep are just as important for keeping us mentally and physically strong.

Talking to ourselves positively is powerful too. Writing down good things about ourselves or things we have done well each day helps us build confidence and appreciate who we are.

And let us never forget our hobbies, like spending 20 to 30 minutes a day doing what we love, like gardening, painting, singing, or cooking. Our hobbies are like extra fuel for our soul, giving us a reason to keep going when times are tough.

Sharing how we feel is very important. We should try to be open to family or friends whenever we can. If that is not possible, spending time with pets like cats, dogs, or birds can help lighten the emotional load. We are social beings, and sharing our emotions, whether with people or

animals, is key to feeling better.

If things feel overwhelming, we should not hesitate to get professional help. Seeing a psychologist at the right time can truly change our lives and help us live better.

Mental health problems in Bangladesh are increasing rapidly. The World Health Organisation reports that over 6 million people here suffer from depression and nearly 7 million from anxiety. Sadly, more than 10,000 people take their own lives each year, and among teenagers, many have thought about suicide.

Taking the right step at the right time can make a huge difference and lead to a happier life.

So, let us find the courage to care for ourselves and support each other. Our mental health is the foundation of a happier, healthier life.

The writer is the Lead Clinical Psychologist at SoulCare Counselling. E-mail: ahmed.dheug@gmail.com

## Structured exercise improves outcomes after colon cancer treatment

Emerging evidence has long suggested that regular physical activity may positively impact cancer recovery, but definitive clinical proof has been limited. A large phase 3 randomised trial published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* now provides strong evidence that structured exercise can significantly improve outcomes for colon cancer patients.

In this multicentre study, individuals with resected colon cancer who had completed chemotherapy were assigned to either a structured exercise programme or a standard health-education plan over three years. The goal was to determine whether exercise could extend the time patients remained cancer-free.

The findings were clear: those who engaged in regular, guided physical activity experienced better disease-free survival than those who received only general health information. Furthermore, data indicated that overall survival was also likely improved in the exercise group, suggesting not only delayed recurrence but also a possible reduction in cancer-related mortality.

While the exercise group did report a higher rate of musculoskeletal issues, these were manageable and outweighed by the survival benefits observed.

This trial marks a significant step forward in cancer care by providing high level evidence that structured, long-term exercise following chemotherapy can enhance both recovery and long-term health outcomes in colon cancer survivors. These results highlight the importance of integrating physical activity into survivorship plans and suggest that exercise is more than just supportive care—it can be a vital component of treatment strategy.



## Treatments for thinning hair: What works and what does not

STAR HEALTH DESK

Thinning hair can be frustrating and emotionally challenging, but several treatments are available that can help slow the process and, in some cases, even regrow lost hair. While there is no complete cure for baldness, a variety of medical and non-medical options can be effective in managing hair loss.

Minoxidil is the only over-the-counter medication approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use by both men and women. It is available in liquid, foam, and oral forms. Minoxidil works best for individuals under the age of 40 who have only recently started losing their hair. Although the exact way it works is still unclear, it has been shown to promote hair growth in about two-thirds of users. Minoxidil must be applied to the scalp twice a day, and visible results may take several months. It is important to note that minoxidil does not cure baldness—once treatment is stopped, hair loss resumes. Some users may experience mild scalp irritation, especially with the stronger 5 per cent formula.

Finasteride, sold under the brand name Propecia, is a prescription medication that works by blocking dihydrotestosterone (DHT), a hormone responsible for male pattern baldness. Finasteride is highly effective, slowing or stopping hair loss in nearly 90 per cent of men and helping two-thirds regrow some hair. It is taken as a daily pill and can be used alone or in combination with minoxidil. Like minoxidil, its benefits stop when treatment is discontinued. A small number of men may experience sexual side effects, such as erectile dysfunction, although

these effects usually reverse after stopping the medication.

Biotin, a B vitamin, is essential for healthy hair. A deficiency in biotin can lead to hair loss, but taking high doses does not necessarily result in additional hair growth. Despite this, hair supplements such as Viviscal and Nutrafol, which contain biotin and other ingredients, have shown some success in promoting hair growth in clinical studies.

Low-Level Laser Therapy (LLLT) is another option that involves using devices like laser combs, caps, or helmets. The theory is that laser light stimulates hair follicles, encouraging growth. Although some people have reported positive results, there is still not enough scientific evidence to fully support the effectiveness of LLLT in treating hair loss.

It is important to understand that not all hair loss is caused by genetics. Sudden or severe hair loss can be a sign of underlying health problems, such as hormonal imbalances, illness, medication side effects, or deficiencies in iron or vitamin D. In such cases, it is essential to consult a healthcare provider to identify the underlying cause.

Early treatment offers the best chance of slowing hair loss and encouraging regrowth. Combining therapies such as minoxidil and finasteride may improve results. However, success requires consistent use and patience, as visible improvements can take several months.

If you are unsure about the cause of your hair loss or which treatment is right for you, it is best to consult a dermatologist for a full evaluation and a personalised treatment plan.



## BREAST CANCER:

### A global threat requiring early action

Breast cancer is a disease in which abnormal breast cells grow uncontrollably, often forming tumours. These cells typically originate in the milk ducts or lobules of the breast. In its earliest stages (in situ), breast cancer is not life-threatening and can be detected and treated early. However, once the cancer becomes invasive, it can spread to surrounding tissues and distant organs (metastasis), making it potentially fatal.

Breast cancer affects women in every country and at any age after puberty, though rates increase with age. Men can also develop breast cancer, although it is rare. Early detection—through awareness of symptoms and regular screening—combined with timely treatment is key to improving survival and reducing mortality.

A number of risk factors contribute to the development of breast cancer, including age, obesity, alcohol use, family history, certain genetic mutations (e.g., BRCA1, BRCA2), and hormonal factors. However, around half of breast cancer cases occur in women with no specific risk factors beyond being female and over the age of 40.

Key facts:

- Breast cancer caused an estimated 670,000 deaths globally in 2022.
- Around 50% of breast cancers occur in women with



no specific risk factors beyond age and gender.

- Breast cancer was the most common cancer in women in 157 out of 185 countries in 2022.
- Breast cancer occurs worldwide, affecting women across all regions.
- About 0.5–1% of breast cancers occur in men.
- Early diagnosis and access to comprehensive treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care are essential to reduce the global burden of breast cancer.

Source: World Health Organisation

## Bridging Gaps Through Social Enterprise

**The Daily Star (TDS):** How do Grameen Danone's nutrition products improve health outcomes for vulnerable populations, and what evidence supports these claims?

**Dipesh Nag (DN):** Our mission is to combat malnutrition, particularly among children in low-income communities. Our flagship product, Shokti Doi, is a fortified yogurt enriched with essential micronutrients like Iron, Zinc, Vitamin A, and Iodine. For instance, in our 'School Feeding Program' at Ullapara, we observed an increase in student attendance from 76% to 94%, even accounting for absenteeism due to sickness. After introducing regular yogurt distribution, teachers and parents reported noticeable improvements in children's energy levels, concentration and overall health. These outcomes align with global evidence that fortified dairy products can significantly enhance cognitive and physical development in malnourished children.

**TDS:** What pricing, packaging, and distribution innovations have made your products both affordable and accessible for low-income families?

**DN:** Affordability and accessibility are at the heart of our model. We offer Shokti Doi in small, single-serve cups priced to align with the purchasing power of rural households. To balance social impact with commercial sustainability, we employ a tiered packaging strategy: smaller, low-cost units for rural areas and larger, premium variants for urban markets. This cross-subsidy approach allows us to reinvest profits from urban sales into expanding rural outreach. Our plastic spoon recycling initiative collects used yogurt cups and converts them into food-grade spoons, prioritising sustainability.

**TDS:** How has community engagement shaped your product design and delivery strategies to ensure cultural appropriateness and long-term adoption?

**DN:** Community feedback is integral to our process. We conduct regular interactions with mothers to refine flavors, packaging, and messaging. For example, we learned that children prefer mildly sweetened yogurt, leading us to adjust our



recipe while maintaining the right nutritional value. To drive adoption, we organise puppet shows, hygiene workshops, and school events that educate families about nutrition. These efforts have fostered trust and ensured our products align with local tastes and lifestyles, enabling long-term behavioral change.

**TDS:** In what ways has collaboration with iDE enhanced your ability to scale operations and improve nutrition outreach in rural areas?

**DN:** Partnering with iDE has been transformative. Their market-led approach complements our mission, helping us penetrate remote areas where distribution was previously challenging. Through iDE's network, we have trained and empowered local nutrition entrepreneurs who distribute Shokti Doi while educating communities about

its benefits. This collaboration has not only expanded our reach but also strengthened last-mile delivery.

**TDS:** What lessons have you learned about balancing commercial viability with social impact in the nutrition sector?

**DN:** The key lesson is that purpose and profit can and must coexist. As a social enterprise, we embed impact into every business decision—from sourcing local ingredients to designing inclusive pricing. Community-based sourcing and local value chain is not a compromise rather

it is a competitive advantage. By working directly with dairy farmers, we reduce costs while ensuring quality and creating shared value. This approach allows us to deliver affordable nutrition without compromising on sustainability.

We measure success not just in financial terms, but in the lives we improve. This dual focus has enabled us to scale our impact while maintaining a viable business model—demonstrating that doing good and doing well can, and must, go hand in hand.

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

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

## Blockbuster 'Sincaraz' rivalry ready to light up US Open

AGENCIES

World number one Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz will renew their blockbuster rivalry when the US Open begins on Sunday, as the Italian also races against time to be fully fit for the defense of his crown.

The 23-year-old Sinner, who retired ill during the Cincinnati Open final against Alcaraz earlier this week, admitted Friday that he is "not 100% yet" but expects to be ready when he opens against Czech qualifier Vit Kopřiva on Monday.

"It was a virus, also some other players had," Sinner said at Flushing Meadows. "Just sleeping and recovering. Nothing crazy. I feel good, mostly recovered. We are aiming to be there in a couple of days."

Despite concerns, the motivation could not be higher. Sinner is looking to become the first man to repeat as US Open champion since Roger Federer won five in a row from 2004-2008. "It's the last Grand Slam of the season, so motivations are very high," he said.

Sinner's rivalry with Alcaraz, dubbed "Sincaraz", has become the defining duel of the post-Big Three era following the retirements of Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal and the declining Novak Djokovic.

Their battles have already reached iconic status, from Alcaraz's epic five-set



win over Sinner in the 2022 quarterfinals at Flushing Meadows to this year's Grand Slam finals, where Alcaraz triumphed at Roland Garros before Sinner answered at Wimbledon.

"Every time we play, our level is really high," Alcaraz said. "I don't see any players reaching that level when they face each other."

Australian legend Rod Laver praised their budding rivalry, calling it "a gift to our sport".

Beyond bragging rights, the world number one ranking is also at stake.

Alcaraz closed to within 2,000 points of Sinner after Cincinnati, meaning the Spaniard can reclaim the top spot if he advances one round further than the Italian in New York.

For Sinner, the road has not been without turbulence. His breakthrough title here last year came amid a doping controversy, when an accidental exposure saw him test positive for clostebol. After serving a three-month suspension following his Australian Open win in January, Sinner has rebuilt his team, reuniting with fitness coach Umberto Ferrara.

"I feel like it's over. We are focusing on hard work again and trying to get better as an athlete," Sinner said.

Meanwhile, Alcaraz opens against big-serving American Reilly Opelka, with a possible showdown against 38-year-old Novak Djokovic looming later in the draw. Djokovic, still chasing a record 25th Grand Slam, insists he remains a threat. "Those are the tournaments I care about the most," the Serb said.

As the new generation takes center stage, the US Open promises another thrilling chapter in tennis's shifting era.

## Clearing hurdles, on and off the track

SPORTS REPORTER

Hurdles don't just exist on the track. For some athletes, the barriers begin long before the starting gun is fired.

On the second day of the 17th National Summer Athletics Championships on Saturday, Roksana Begum sprinted through the finish line in the women's 100m hurdles with a time of 15 seconds -- a performance that crowned her champion yet again. It's the second time this year she has taken the national title in this event, having won earlier in February. But the track is only a small part of Roksana's story.

She grew up in Sonapur, a quiet corner of Noakhali, where dreams don't often stretch as far as national stadiums. Her father drove a microbus, and with three brothers and a sister depending on her, Roksana became the family's main source of income. Since 2020, she has served in the Bangladesh Army -- a job that not only allows her to support her loved ones but also keeps her athletic ambitions alive.

"My salary from the army helps me take care of my family," she said after winning her race at the National Stadium's athletics track.

Her journey into sports began with long jump, guided by coach Rafiqullah Milon. He later encouraged her to take up hurdles -- a suggestion that would shape her career. But getting to this point wasn't just about athletic training. She had to overcome the questions thrown at her in her village. "People didn't understand. They questioned what I was doing, where I was going," Roksana recalled. "They didn't know I was training."



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Across the men's field, Tanvir Faisal, also representing the Bangladesh Army, claimed his third straight title in the men's 110m hurdles. It's a feat few can match, yet Tanvir knows his discipline doesn't always get the recognition it deserves. "We're athletes too, just like the 100m sprinters. But the spotlight rarely falls on us," he exclaimed.

For Tanvir, hurdles are more than an event. "Athletics is about struggle. You can see that just by looking at me," he joked. "But I love it. Hurdles are where I belong."

His latest win added another gold to his name, but it's the first title that still lights up his memory. "Nothing beats the first time. That joy -- you don't forget it."

As the championships come to a conclusion on Sunday, names will fade from the headlines. But for Roksana and Tanvir, the real stories aren't written on leaderboards. They're found in early-morning training runs, in overcoming doubts, in chasing a future that once seemed out of reach.

## Realistic Lipu plays it safe for Asia Cup squad

SPORTS REPORTER

On Friday, chief selector Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu achieved what many of his predecessors couldn't do -- announce a Bangladesh squad for a tournament without much uproar.

The Bangladesh team selection committee named a 16-member squad for the upcoming Asia Cup, scheduled to be staged at the UAE from September 9. The same squad will also compete in the three-match T20I series against Netherlands at home, starting on August 30.

**"There is always a chance to qualify for the final as we have played in the Asia Cup final thrice. But I think we need to think step by step."**

Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu  
Bangladesh chief selector

2-1 at home last month -- wicketkeeper-batter Nurul Hasan Sohan and batter Saif Hassan came in at the expense of all-rounder Mehidy Hasan Miraz and opener Mohammad Naim.

The omissions of Miraz and Naim wasn't a surprise as both players failed to cement their places despite getting several opportunities in recent months.

Miraz, who had opted out of the Netherlands series due to family reasons, had featured in five of Bangladesh's last nine T20Is, making mere 64 runs and taking only four wickets.



A key reason behind this mellow response was perhaps that the selectors didn't deviate much from the squads that won them bilateral T20 series over Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Only two changes were made from the Bangladesh squad which beat Pakistan

Meanwhile, Naim, who returned to the side in the Sri Lanka series in July after three years, could not replicate his domestic dominance, making only 45 runs in three matches.

Their poor performances prompted the selectors to bring in Sohan and Saif after

a long hiatus even though both of them have not been consistent in this format in recent times.

When asked to explain their inclusions, the chief selector said, "We had extensive discussions about Sohan during the Sri Lanka tour. At that time, we thought and realised that given our team's formation, his chances of making the playing XI were very slim."

"What we felt then was that if he played in the Global Super League as preparation -- since we knew he would also be playing for the 'A' team in Darwin -- it would serve as additional preparation... Facing such big challenges before joining the Asia Cup squad was important."

"In Saif's case, if there's a gap in the top or middle-order -- let's say if Tawhid Hridoy gets injured -- we believe he can cover both positions," he added.

When it came to talking about the Tigers' chances of winning the upcoming show-piece event, Lipu gave a realist answer.

"Emotionally, I'm also hopeful that the team will go there with the target of becoming champions. But when you think analytically and logically, you have to consider where you actually stand and what kind of challenges lie ahead."

"There is always a chance to qualify for the final as we have played in the Asia Cup final thrice. But I think we need to think step by step."

## Uncapped Jhelik in Tigresses' World Cup squad

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday named uncapped wicketkeeper-batter Rubya Haider Jhelik in their 15-member squad for the upcoming ICC Women's World Cup, to be held in India and Sri Lanka from September 30 to November 2.

The selectors also named off-spinner Nishita Akter and top-order batter Sumaiya Akter, while excluding Dilara Akter, Jannatul Ferdous Sumona, and Ishma Tanjim, who were part of the squad in the qualifiers in Pakistan in April.

"Rubya has earned a place through sheer hard work. We see her as a valuable option both as a reserve keeper and a backup opener," Sazzad

### SQUAD

Nigar Sultana Joty (captain),  
Nahida Akter (vice-captain),  
Farzana Haque, Rubya Haider  
Jhelik, Sharmin Supta, Sobhana  
Mostary, Ritu Moni, Shorna  
Akter, Fahima Khatun, Rabeya  
Khan, Marufa Akter, Fariha Islam,  
Shanjida Akther, Nishita Akter,  
Sumaiya Akter

Ahmed Shipon, BCB women's wing chief selector, was quoted in a press release.

"Nishita is consistent, calm under pressure, and her ability to contain left-handers gave her an edge.

"Sumaiya brings the ability to occupy the crease and accelerate when needed. With her skill set and fielding standards, she gives us an all-round option," he added.

The team, which is currently taking part in the Challenge Cup -- scheduled until August 28 -- at the BKSP, will move to Sylhet for a preparation camp earlier next month. They are expected to leave for Colombo on September 23, where they will play two official warm-up matches against Sri Lanka 'A' and Sri Lanka on September 25 and 27 ahead of the showpiece event.

The Tigresses will begin their World Cup campaign against Pakistan in Colombo on October 2.

The team will then travel to Guwahati for their next two games against England and New Zealand on October 7 and 10, before moving to Visakhapatnam to face South Africa and Australia on October 13 and 16.

Bangladesh's last two league games will be held in Navi Mumbai against Sri Lanka and India on October 20 and 26.

This will only be Tigresses' second appearance in the 50-over World Cup, having qualified for the first time in the 2022 edition, in which they finished seventh among eight teams with just a solitary win.



## SPURS STUN CITY AT ETIHAD

Tottenham forward Brennan Johnson celebrates after netting the opener in their 2-0 Premier League win over hosts Manchester City, whose troubles from last season were exposed once more on Saturday, raising questions over their quest to regain the Premier League title. Goals from Johnson and Joao Palhinha, who capitalised on a blunder by City goalkeeper James Trafford, saw the Europa League go 2-0 up in the first half as Spurs went top of the table, making it a perfect start for Thomas Frank after two league games in charge. In the last 13 Premier League meetings between the sides, City have won just four despite several changes of management at Spurs in that time.

PHOTO: AFP

## 'Bangladeshis have six-hitting power'

SPORTS REPORTER

Power hitting coach Julian Wood dismissed the wide-spread belief that Bangladeshi cricketers don't have the power to clear the ropes and said that he is trying to improve the ball-striking consistency of the power-hitters in his brief stint with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

Wood, who has previously worked for different Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) franchises, arrived in the country earlier this month.

The English coach first worked with the national women's team for five days at the BKSP and then began working with the Tigers in their preparation camp in Dhaka ahead of the upcoming three-match T20I series against Netherlands and Asia Cup.

The preparation camp has now shifted to Sylhet and the 56-year-old coach is accompanying the side in there as well.

On Saturday, Wood spoke with the media about his methods and divulged his observations on the players based on the last two weeks.

"I was aware of the myth that Bangladeshis don't have power. West Indians are big. They are big and they are built differently. English are Australians

are strong. These guys [from Bangladesh] are slightly smaller but they have power," Wood told reporters in Sylhet.

"They have to know how to use and access the power. Developing the power through their body and out through their hands. They rely heavily on rhythm and timing of the movements. If those are right, and the sequencing is right, then exit velocity will go up."

"My job is to give them the tools and mindset to make them think that they can. Having the belief and mindset is a massive part," he added.

According to Wood, there are a few natural big-hitters in the mix but most of the players depend on timing.

"We have two or three power players, which is great. I am trying to ensure more consistency in their ball striking."

"For guys who are timers [of the ball], it is about moving their body to a slightly better position with better sequencing... It is basically movement over techniques and mechanics," Wood said.

Out of all the players he has worked with in the camp, wicketkeeper-batter Jaker Ali has impressed him the most.

"If I have to pick one then it is Jaker. Jaker is dangerous. The ice man."





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## 'Entire system has become one of occupation'

Alleges Fakhru

STAR REPORT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday cited rampant corruption as one of the main reasons behind the country's political crisis.



"The entire state system has become one of occupation," he said during a seminar at the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka.

Fakhru alleged that bureaucrats are controlling everything. He said in some cases even the advisers have become helpless.

"A teacher from a small town has to come to Dhaka to solve a problem, which should not have been necessary. The system is responsible for this. If the teacher

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Amid the drizzle, she stood on wet pavement, clutching a red bucket brimming with flowers -- her small frame against a crowd under umbrellas. The little flower seller, curious and calm, watched as a group of young activists gathered at Central Shaheed Minar, demanding immediate amendments to the tobacco control law yesterday afternoon. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## BGB-BSF CONFERENCE Push-ins, border killings to figure high

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

The continuous push-ins by Indian authorities from different border points despite repeated protests by Bangladesh will top the agenda of the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in the upcoming 56th director general-level conference.

Border killings, drug and arms smuggling, and other cross-border crimes will also feature in the discussions by Bangladesh.

A high-level delegation of the Border Security Force (BSF) led by its Director General Daljit Singh Chawdhary will arrive in Dhaka tomorrow to attend the four-day conference.



BGB will be represented by its DG Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui.

According to a BSF statement, India's priorities will include curbing trans-border crimes, preventing attacks on its personnel allegedly by Bangladeshis and constructing a single-row fence along the frontier.

The talks come at a time of strained diplomatic ties following Bangladesh's political changeover in August last year.

The last round of DG-level talks was held in New Delhi from February 17 to 20 this year.

Representatives of various border-related agencies would also join the delegations, said Home Affairs Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury.

"BGB will give priority to the interest of the country and its people in this conference," he told reporters at the secretariat recently.

Between May 7 and August 15, India pushed in 2,196 people through different border points, according to government data.

The push-ins took place in 24 border districts, with Sylhet seeing the highest numbers: 575 people from Moulvibazar and 254 from Sylhet.

India maintains those pushed in are Bangladeshis but

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## 'Will step down if asked to follow govt orders'

Says CEC AMM Nasir Uddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the Election Commission prepares for the next general elections, Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin yesterday said he would step down from his position if he's asked to act under government orders.

He made the remarks at a time when there's barely six months left ahead of the upcoming 13th national

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

## Hunger in Gaza 'beyond imagination'

Says doctor on the ground a day after UN declares famine; Israeli strikes kill 37 more

AGENCIES

Not long after US surgeon Mohammed Adeel Khaleel arrived at a Gaza City hospital in early August, a 17-year-old was brought in with gunshot wounds to both legs and one hand, sustained when he went to collect food at an aid site.

In the emergency room, Khaleel said he noted the ribs protruding from the teen's emaciated torso, an indication of

severe malnutrition. When doctors at Al-Ahli Hospital stabilised the patient, he raised his heavily bandaged hand and pointed to his empty mouth, Khaleel said.

"The level of hunger is really what's heartbreaking. You know, we saw malnutrition before, back in November, already starting to happen. But now the level is just, it's beyond imagination,"

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## Four bodies recovered from Buriganga

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

River police recovered four bodies, including that of a woman and a child, from the Buriganga river in Old Dhaka yesterday.

The victims are one child, aged between 4-5, two females, one aged around 25 and other 30, and a male, about 40, said police.

The identities of the deceased are yet to be confirmed, said police adding that two of the bodies -- a

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An outdoor exhibition organised by Mayer Daak titled "Memories of Disappearance" at the capital's Manik Mia Avenue showcases works of photographer Mosfiqur Rahman Johan that highlight the pain and suffering of families of victims of enforced disappearance. This photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Star INTERVIEW

## Education for Rohingyas in peril as global aid dries up

Warns UNICEF representative Rana Flowers

PORIMOL PALMA

Shrinking international aid has cast uncertainty over schooling for thousands of Rohingya children in refugee camps, jeopardising years of progress, warns Rana Flowers, UNICEF representative to Bangladesh.

She has also expressed grave concerns over recent violent protests by a section of teaching volunteers over their dismissal, describing them as a "direct risk to education and safety of children" at the camps.

"We are witnessing a dangerous convergence of challenges... Both factors threaten to undo years of progress made in bringing learning and hope to Rohingya boys and girls," Flowers said in an interview with The Daily Star recently.

The Trump administration has already significantly reduced aid, while other donors have been slow to fund programmes for Rohingyas. The total funding requirement is \$934 million for this year but only \$338 million has been received so far.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, \$72

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## 'I too might be pushed into Bangladesh'

Amartya Sen jibes amid language row in India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Nobel laureate economist Amartya Sen has voiced concern over "linguistic intolerance" in various states of India, especially against Bangla speakers who are suspected of being undocumented Bangladeshi immigrants.

Referring to Indian media reports that Bangla-speaking individuals were being pushed into Bangladesh, he quipped, saying there is a possibility that he might be sent back to Dhaka, where his family has roots.

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