

## Touhid-Dar meeting

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Kamal Khan arrived on August 21 and held a series of meetings with ministers and trade bodies in Dhaka and Chattogram. He will also be in the delegation-level meeting today.

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

The MoUs to be signed include establishing a joint working group on trade and commerce, as well as cooperation between the Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha 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.

Dar will call on Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, meet BNP Chairperson Khaleida Zia and senior Jamaat leaders tomorrow.

Earlier in July, Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited Dhaka following a foreign secretary-level consultation on April 17, after a 15-year hiatus.

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

The Dhaka-Islamabad relationship soured after Pakistan condemned the execution of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdul Quader Mollah in

2013 for crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War in 1971.

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

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

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

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

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

The two countries are likely to hold the Joint Economic Commission meeting in September or October, 20 years after it was last held.

Pakistan Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb may visit Bangladesh then, foreign ministry officials said.

## Journo Alamgir

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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.

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 will be 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, one of its 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.

"We pray to Almighty Allah to grant the grieving family the strength to bear this irreparable loss," the statement read.

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 message of condolence yesterday, the adviser said Alamgir Mohiuddin did objective journalism with courage. His contribution to the country's mass media will be remembered forever.

Mahfuz said his death is an irreparable loss for the country's media sector.

The adviser prayed for eternal peace for the departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy to the bereaved family.

## Threat of fresh

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clash in the past month amid reports of Myanmar junta troops preparing to retake parts of Rakhine.

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 that 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.

## Youth

**FROM PAGE 3**  
first runner-up for presenting the idea of a solar-powered filtration machine to mitigate freshwater scarcity in coastal areas affected by salinity, and Ecohydra became second runner-up with their idea of a portable water purifier.

In the Energy Transition category, team Enermical 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.

## Education for Rohingyas

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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."

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."

## July Charter

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Consensus Commission does not announce a new constitutional proposal through a Constituent Assembly election to incorporate the July Charter into the constitution, it's a failure."

The press conference was organised to share NCP's observations on the draft of the July Charter.

Akhter said there was no point for the NCP to sign a "failed charter".

He also said the Commission had retracted from the proposals of the National Constitutional Council (NCC). For the sake of consensus, the NCP agreed with the modified proposals, he noted.

Highlighting the necessity of a new constitution, the NCP member secretary said, "No court can challenge the new constitution. That is why, if we enact a new constitution and include the reform proposals in it, only then the court will not be able to challenge it."

## I too might be pushed

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"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

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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 Sahebabad village; and Sweety 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.

## Man beaten to death

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village for selling those.

On Thursday evening, when Lokman and Mostafizur returned to the shop to confirm the weight, local electrician Md Tarek Aziz, 35, along with two accomplices, accused them of theft, the OC said.

The suspects then tied up Lokman and Mostafizur, verbally abused them, and beat them indiscriminately. Lokman died on the spot, the police official said.

The injured Mostafizur filed a case against the three people with Hatiya Police Station last night.

The OC confirmed the arrest of the main accused, Tarek.

"The arrested individual has confessed to the murder. Efforts are

underway to arrest the remaining two accused," he told The Daily Star.

Following an autopsy at the 250-bed Noakhali General Hospital, Lokman's body was handed over to his family yesterday afternoon and taken to Sherpur.

Speaking from the hospital bed, Mostafizur said, "After we sold the leftover materials, Tarek claimed the goods were stolen. He tied our hands and beat us mercilessly. Lokman was hit on his back and body with an iron rod until he collapsed. More than two hundred people were standing there, watching the spectacle, but no one came forward to save us."

Police said the investigation is ongoing.

## Four months

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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

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"For those who plan to seize polling centres or snatch ballot boxes, there is bad news. Their dreams will be shattered. This time, there is no scope to win the election through violence or capturing centres," he said.

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 retained. "I have 5,700 officials - where will I send them? Those who were directly and willingly involved in vote rigging will not be given the responsibility this time," he added.

He said preparations are underway to hold the next parliamentary 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," he warned.

The CEC also said the commission is working to include the army as part of law-enforcing agencies during the polls.

Commenting on the Awami League, Nasir said the party currently has no political activities. "Awami League leaders cannot participate in elections, as their trials are ongoing. Let's see what happens in the verdicts."

"All their activities are banned at present, so they can't engage in political activities," he said.

Regarding holding

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

"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 (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said all necessary preparations are being undertaken for the upcoming election, in line with the timeline announced by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

"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," 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 through a mobile application during the election. "If any attempt at sabotage occurs, immediate action will be taken," he added.

## Will form

**FROM PAGE 3**  
between media management and journalists." He also said democracy cannot flourish without political democracy, economic democracy, and freedom of expression.

Referring to a cartoon of Tarique Rahman drawn after August 5, Khosru said, "Instead of being angry or critical, Tarique himself shared it and praised the cartoonist. This is what respect for free media and freedom of expression looks like."

Khosru advised journalists to remain objective in their reporting regardless of their personal political ideals.

**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