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ROHINGYA INFUX 8 years on, repatriation still elusive

PORIMOL PALMA

While all past attempts to repatriate the Rohingyas since 2017 have failed, the Arakan Army's (AA) sweeping control of Rakhine State has further complicated matters for Bangladesh.

Since late 2023, two lakh more Rohingyas have arrived, joining the million-plus already in Cox's Bazar. In January, funding cuts by a major US donor increased the strain on the interim government.

"We are facing challenges on multiple fronts for reasons that aren't our responsibility," Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) Mizanur Rahman told this correspondent.

"If this continues, there will be serious humanitarian and security-related consequences."

Meanwhile, Rohingya leaders said hundreds were gathering in border areas across Teknaf amid clashes between the AA and other armed groups, raising the spectre of another influx.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



The Kutupalong camp in Cox's Bazar's Ukhia has been home to Rohingya refugees since the mass influx of August 2017. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAHMAN

World must confront the root cause

Rohingyas say at int'l conference in Cox's Bazar

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and
MOKAMMEL SHUVO from Cox's Bazar

The world must confront the root cause of the Rohingya crisis and hold Myanmar authorities accountable for decades of atrocities, speakers said on the first day of a three-day international conference at a hotel in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

Rohingya voices — students, activists, and diaspora leaders — spoke with defiance and of hope. They called for justice, accountability, and sustainable solutions.

The conference, titled "Stakeholders' Dialogue: Takeaways to the High-Level Conference on Rohingya Situation", aims to engage global stakeholders in finding solutions to the prolonged crisis. The first day's programme included a special interactive session with Rohingya representatives.

The session brought together government officials, political leaders,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Pak FM claims 1971 issues settled twice; Dhaka disagrees

2 nations decide to boost trade

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Pakistan differed on the unresolved issues of 1971 but expressed willingness to advance bilateral relations, boost trade and commerce, and collaborate in regional and global forums during their first bilateral meeting in 13 years, held in Dhaka yesterday.

Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain and visiting Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar held the meeting at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon.

The issues that remain unresolved between the two countries include a formal apology from Pakistan for the atrocities it committed in 1971 and the repatriation of stranded Pakistanis. Dhaka also claims from Islamabad its share of assets in the pre-1971 Pakistan.

Speaking to journalists after the meeting, Dar, also the deputy prime minister, claimed the issues were resolved once in 1974 and again in the early 2000s.

ABU SAYED MURDER
Cops forced
doctor to alter
autopsy report
five times

DELIMITATION OF CONSTITUENCIES
Brawl, protests
mark EC hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A scuffle broke out on the first day of the hearings on constituency delimitation inside the Election Commission office in Dhaka yesterday while protests were held in several districts.

Supporters of BNP leaders Rumeen Farhana and Khaled Mahbub Hossain Shyamal locked horns inside the hearing room within 15 minutes of the session's start.

Md Attaullah, joint chief organiser (southern region) of the National Citizen Party (NCP), alleged that he was assaulted by BNP men during the scuffle that happened in presence of Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin and other commissioners.

The dispute centred the redrawing of Brahmanbaria-2 and -3 constituencies. Under the EC's draft, three unions of Bijoynagar upazila — Budhanti, Chandura and Harashpur — would be under Brahmanbaria-2 (Sarail-Ashuganj) instead of the current Brahmanbaria-3 (Sadar-Bijoynagar) constituency.

Rumeen, BNP's assistant international affairs secretary, supports the move.

Speaking to reporters about the scuffle, she alleged that Khaled, president of the party's Brahmanbaria district unit, brought 20-25 people who "behaved like thugs".

"They almost pushed me to the ground. If I am pushed, a push in return is inevitable," she said.

"For 15 years I have fought for the leaders and activists of the BNP. And today, they [some BNP men] pushed me," she said.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



FROM BRIDGES TO TUNNELS, HOMES TO THE NATION, BSRM IS THERE FROM A TO Z OF EVERY CONSTRUCTION

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SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



MY DHAKA

The Mughal fort that became A BRITISH PRISON

RIDWAN AKRAM

Walk down the lanes of Old Dhaka today and it is hard to imagine that the city once revolved around a single building -- Dhaka Fort. Back in 1610, when Islam Khan, the Mughal subahdar of Bengal, shifted his capital here, the fort was the nerve centre of Mughal power.

According to historian Dr Abdul Karim, it stood opposite today's Chawk Bazar, on the site where Dhaka Central Jail would later rise.

The fort was no silent spectator. It housed Mughal subahdars, the royal mint, and most ominously, a prison. Unlike the British jail that came later, this one held political detainees. Local zamindars and rebel leaders often ended up there, awaiting orders or verdicts.

The fort's fortunes shifted over the years. Renovated in 1690 by Subahdar Ibrahim Khan the second, it gradually lost importance as new palaces and administrative quarters were built across Dhaka. By 1765, after the East India Company assumed control of Bengal, the fort was in their hands. Two decades later, in 1788, its prison wing expanded, and by the turn of the 19th century it had assumed a new identity -- Dhaka Jail.

Dhaka in the early 1800s was a shadow of its Mughal glory. Once-bustling Ramna had turned into a jungle so dense it was thought to endanger public health. Charles Doss, then magistrate of Dhaka, intervened. With little government



Ruins of Dhaka Fort, Sir Charles D'Oyly (1808-1811).

funding available, he turned to the 'free labour force' at Dhaka Jail. In 1825, prisoners were put to work clearing Ramna. After three months of hard labour, they had cleared an oval-shaped section.

By then, Dhaka Jail had grown into a formidable institution. Reports from 1839 describe 10 wards, each with its own courtyard, and a massive wall enclosing the compound. The jail held around 800 criminals and about 30 civil prisoners, convicted of crimes ranging from murder and robbery to cattle theft, forgery, arson, rape, and adultery. Prisoners frequently fell ill, prompting the construction of a hospital inside. Built in the 1830s, it was a simple structure -- a long hall with arched passages, verandas, and rooms for isolating

the sick.

By the mid 19th century, Dhaka Jail was one of East Bengal's most important prisons. Inmates were put to work producing chairs, tablecloths, curtain fabrics, mustard oil, and even lime paint. Some of these items were sold in the market. Jailers, mostly Europeans, earned a modest 100 rupees a month, but supplemented their income by taking a 5 percent cut from sales. Some even set up private businesses inside the jail.

Arthur Lloyd Clay, joint collector of Dhaka in the 1860s, noted that prisoners often left the jail looking healthier than when they arrived. Adequate food and care made the difference, though treatment was not equal. European inmates received prime mutton and could complain if the quality fell short, while native prisoners had no such privilege.

By the 1860s, Dhaka Jail had become the main facility for "difficult" prisoners across East Bengal. Convicts from Sylhet, Tripura, and Faridpur were sent there, and by 1879 the prison was officially declared the Central Jail for Dhaka and Chattogram divisions. With its new status came new responsibilities.

A superintendent replaced the magistrate as head, and expenses soared. By 1893, the annual cost of running the jail -- food, clothing, hospitals, and staff -- totalled Tk 51,328, a significant sum for the time.

8 years on, repatriation still elusive

FROM PAGE 1

REPATRIATION ATTEMPTS

Since the repatriation deal was signed with Myanmar in November 2017, Bangladesh tried but failed to send Rohingyas back. China then stepped in as mediator.

After the trilateral move slowed during the Covid-19 pandemic, another attempt at the end of 2023 fell through as fighting between the Myanmar military and AA intensified.

"Earlier, the Myanmar military was against the Rohingyas and now the Arakan Army is against us," said Saiful, a Rohingya youth in Cox's Bazar's Kutupalong camp.

With the AA now controlling most of Rakhine State, Myanmar's military has halted supplies, creating shortages and forcing more Rohingyas to flee.

On August 23, Rohingya leader Mohammad Zubair said, "Many Rohingyas have gathered in Laldia ... People are trying to flee before horrors are repeated ... There could be another large scale influx into Bangladesh."

A foreign ministry official said, "Repatriation at this point is impossible due to security concerns in Rakhine. But we're trying to find different ways to do it."

Rohingyas say the situation is not conducive and there is no guarantee of safety or citizenship.

A Chinese embassy official in Dhaka said China tried to mediate but the Myanmar military and AA are now refusing dialogue. "We're waiting for a ceasefire."

DHAKA'S DIPLOMATIC DILEMMA
Since the 2021 military coup, much of Myanmar has fallen under rebel control, including the AA in Rakhine.

Bangladesh must maintain relations with the junta while also keeping ties with the AA for border security, said National Security Adviser Dr Khalilur Rahman.

A UN official said this leaves Dhaka in a dilemma -- needing AA for repatriation but the junta as Myanmar's recognised authority.

Analysts warned that engaging with the AA could be seen as recognising a non-state actor, straining ties with Naypyidaw. They added Bangladesh must also watch how China and India position themselves.

Dr Imtiaz Ahmed, executive director of Center for Alternatives, said one does not need to follow track-1 diplomacy. "If needed, you must follow tracks two and

REPATRIATION ATTEMPTS

Nov '17: Dhaka, Naypyidaw sign bilateral pact

Sep '19: China brokers trilateral mechanism

Jan '21: Myanmar agrees in principle to repatriation

May '23: Rohingya "go-and-see" visit to Rakhine

2023-24: Rakhine conflict halts process

Apr '25: Myanmar clears 180,000 names for return

JUSTICE & ACCOUNTABILITY

Nov '19: The Gambia brings genocide case at ICJ

Nov '19: ICC opens deportation probe

Nov '19: BROUK files case in Argentina

Jan '20: ICJ orders provisional measures

Jan '23: Complaint filed in Germany

Nov '24: ICC prosecutor seeks arrest of Min Aung Hlaing

Feb '25: 25 arrest warrants issued

FROM PAGE 1

funding has been received for 2025-26 amid US cuts.

Several hundred UN and NGO staff and over 1,100 host community teachers have already lost jobs.

Unicef Representative Rana Flowers said education for Rohingya children has been compromised, while health, nutrition and protection will also be affected.

RRRC Mizanur said locals who once welcomed Rohingyas are now agitated as refugees work outside camps, hurting jobs and wages. He warned crimes such as drug and human trafficking, already rampant, will rise if funds keep shrinking.

Meanwhile, with clashes between the AA and junta spilling across the border, Border Guard Bangladesh has stepped up patrols.

JUSTICE ELUSIVE

UN investigators described atrocities against Rohingyas as "genocide", and The Gambia in 2019 filed a case with the International Court of Justice, which ordered Myanmar to prevent further acts.

In November 2024, the International Criminal Court prosecutor requested an arrest warrant against Myanmar's Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing. The request is still pending.

Touhid said both sides emphasised the need to expand trade and investment, but Dhaka highlighted the trade imbalance.

"We sought greater market access in Pakistan, especially under SAFTA, for our textiles, energy, pharmaceuticals, agro-products, and IT sector," he said, adding that there is potential in agriculture, fisheries, and livestock, while Pakistan mentioned initial interest in energy exports.

Bangladesh is meanwhile trying to engage the global community. Ahead of the UN conference in New York in September, it is organising a stakeholder dialogue in Cox's Bazar.

Apart from China, India and Japan, it is also reaching out to ASEAN. During Chief Adviser Prof Yunus's recent visit, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said his government will send an ASEAN peace mission to Myanmar.

At a recent press briefing, National Security Advisor Khalilur had said, "We want an urgent, permanent solution. How long can we keep them with international aid? They have to return home."

Rumeen's supporters blocked the Dhaka-Sylhet highway in the Shahbajpur area of Sarail upazila for over one hour from 6:00pm. They placed tree trunks and set fire to tires on the highway. This led to severe traffic congestion on both sides of the highway.

Local BNP leader Anwar Hossain said they took part in the demonstration in protest against the "attack" on Rumeen in Dhaka.

NCP activists held a rally in front of Brahmanbaria Press Club in protest against the assault on Attaullah. They demanded trial of Rumeen and resignation of the CEC.

Yesterday's hearings at the EC also covered Brahmanbaria 5; Cumilla 1, 2, -6, 9, -10, -11; Noakhali 1, 2, 4, -5; Chandpur 2, -3; Feni 3; and Lakshmpur 2, -3. The hearings will continue until Wednesday.

The EC received 1,760 objections across 83 constituencies by August 10. It will complete hearings by August 27 before publishing the final map.

[Our correspondents in respective districts contributed to this report]

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In Brahmanbaria, BNP and NCP held separate protest programmes over the scuffle.

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Pak FM claims 1971 issues settled

FROM PAGE 1

presented theirs."

Touhid was speaking to journalists at the Foreign Service Academy following the meeting.

"However, we acknowledged that the issues of 1971 cannot be solved in a day and agreed to continue discussions to that end," he added.

Dar's visit, the third ministerial trip since the political changeover in Bangladesh last year, is an effort to boost ties that went frosty after Pakistan condemned the 2013 execution of Jamaat leader Abdul Quader Mollah for 1971 war crimes.

Pakistan's interior minister visited Dhaka in July, after a 15-year hiatus, while its Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan arrived here on August 21 to advance trade relations.

Bilateral trade reached \$865 million in FY 2024-25, with Bangladesh's exports rising 20 percent to \$78 million and Pakistan's exports up 28 percent.

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Yunus, Dar discuss Saarc revitalisation

BSS, Dhaka

Mohammad Ishaq Dar, deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Pakistan, paid a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday.

During the meeting at Yunus' official residence Jamuna, the two leaders discussed strengthening bilateral ties, boosting trade, increasing education and cultural exchanges, and people-to-people connections, particularly among the youth.

They also discussed reviving the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).



Prof Muhammad Yunus showing Pakistan Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar the book "The Art of Triumph".

PHOTO: PID

Highlighting the importance of revitalising all potential avenues of regional and bilateral cooperation, Yunus said, "I encourage SAARC, and I see our relationship with Pakistan and other SAARC countries as one of the highest priorities."

While acknowledging that some sensitive issues remain, the chief

SEE PAGE 5 COL 3

UK vows to speed up asylum claims as hotel protests spread

AFP, London

The UK government vowed on Sunday to overhaul its asylum system after weekend protests broke out across the country at hotels housing migrants, with more planned.

The government said that it will establish a new independent body to hear appeals by failed applicants more quickly as it attempts to end the costly use of so-called asylum hotels, which have become the subject of discontent among a portion of the public.

The Labour government said on Friday it would appeal a court ruling blocking it from housing asylum seekers in a flashpoint hotel in southeast England.

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ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্মী' পুবালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়

8TH ANNIV OF ROHINGYA INFUX Cox's Bazar can't bear further pressure: speakers



DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Local and national organisations, along with humanitarian actors, have called for a clear roadmap for Rohingya repatriation, warning that Cox's Bazar cannot bear further pressure as Bangladesh marks the eighth anniversary of the Rohingya influx.

The appeal came at a webinar on "Rohingya crisis and sustainable solution" organised by COAST Foundation and the Cox's Bazar CSO-NGO Forum (CCNF) yesterday.

The event was moderated by COAST Director Mustafa Kamal Akand and CCNF Member Secretary Jahangir Alam.

Speakers included refugee expert Gawhar Nayeem Wara, Whykong Union Parishad Chairman Noor Ahmad Anwari, Advocate Saki A Kawzar, Palongkhali Union's Mojaffar Ahmed, journalist Imam Khair, Save the Cox's Bazar Chairman Taufiq Belal, AGRAJATRA's Mohammad Helal Uddin, and NGO Platform representatives Amir Hossen and Sukarna Abdullah.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

Dar, Khaleda discuss ways to normalise relations

STAR REPORT

Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar visited BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan residence yesterday evening to enquire about her health.

He arrived there around 7:00pm, said BNP media cell member Shyru Kabir Khan.

Zahid later told reporters that Khaleda and Dar discussed normalising relations between the two countries in the interest of their peoples. They also spoke about working together in the international arena.

The discussion also touched on Bangladesh's move towards an improved political climate, which everyone praised, he said.

Earlier in the afternoon, the Pakistan FM visited ailing Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman at his residence. According to a Jamaat press release, Dar wished him a speedy recovery.

Shafiqur expressed gratitude for the courtesy visit, which the statement said was held in a warm and cordial atmosphere.



Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar visits BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan residence yesterday to enquire about her health. PHOTO COURTESY BNP

Empower youth to shape tomorrow Speakers tell launch of IGCF

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a programme yesterday said the youth have the potential to question the status quo and bring about positive changes in today's interconnected world.

They were speaking at an event, marking the launch of the Institute for Global Cooperation Foundation (IGCF), a youth-based research organisation, at a city hotel.



IGCF has been launched under the theme: "Youth power lies not just in numbers, but in ideas, ideals and their relentless desire to build a better tomorrow."

The IGCF was launched under the theme: "Youth power lies not just in numbers, but in ideas, ideals and their relentless desire to build a better tomorrow."

Shama Obaed, executive director of IGCF, highlighted the role of youth in shaping Bangladesh. "In this process of change, they themselves have also transformed," she said.

"It is our responsibility to support and empower the youth of today, to provide them with the tools, education, and opportunities they need to succeed. By investing

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

Shows ASK data; experts call for stronger laws, protection

NILIMA JAHAN

Child rape cases in Bangladesh have surged by nearly 75 percent in the first seven months of 2025 compared to the same period last year, according to data from Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK).

An analysis of ASK data shows that 306 girls were raped between January and July this year, up from 175 in the same period of 2024. This already surpasses the total of 234 cases reported in the whole of last year.

The ages of the victims make the figures even more harrowing. Forty-nine were toddlers aged between 0 and 6, 94 were between 7 and 12, and 103 were teenagers. In 60 cases, the ages were not specified.

The highest numbers were recorded in March and April this year, with 106 and 64 cases

respectively, compared to 29 and 24 in the same months of 2024.

Cases were filed in 251 incidents, leaving 55 children without justice. During the same period, 129 girls

306 girls raped from Jan to July 2025; up from 175 in same period 2024

Surpasses 234 cases reported in entire 2024

251 Cases filed leaving 55 children without justice

129 girls subjected to attempted rape

49 girls sexually harassed by stalkers; 22 by teachers

were subjected to attempted rape. Of these, 35 were aged between 0 and 6, 53 between 7 and 12, and 12 were teenagers, while in 29 cases

the ages were not specified. Case filings were even lower, with only 85 incidents leading to legal action.

Thirty boys were raped in the first seven months of this year – one aged between 0 and 6, 17 aged 7 to 12, and one between 13 and 18. In 11 cases, ages were not disclosed.

Only 20 of these incidents led to case filings, while three boys were subjected to attempted rape. Alarmingly, the number of male child rape cases in seven months has nearly matched the total of 36 reported in 2024.

Children also faced other forms of harassment. Forty-nine girls were reportedly sexually harassed by stalkers, while 22 were harassed by teachers, raising serious concerns about safety in educational institutions.

Supreme Court lawyer Ayesha

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

JNU CORRESPONDENT

JnU students lock admin building, demand polls

JNU CORRESPONDENT

Jagannath University students yesterday locked the administrative building to press home their demands for the Jagannath University Central Students' Union (JnUCSU) polls.

They also staged a sit-in around noon in front of the vice-chancellor's office.

Protesters said they had been pressing the administration for more than a year for the polls, but repeated delays had stalled the process.

"We demanded a special syndicate to realise our demands, but that did not happen. So, we will stay at the VC building until the demands are met," said AKM Rakib, president of the JnU unit Students' Rights Council.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



RU CORRESPONDENT

After weeks of uncertainty, the distribution of nomination forms for Rucsu and hall union elections have begun, following the withdrawal of work abstention by employees that delayed the process.

According to the schedule, forms were to be distributed from 10:00am yesterday, but activities were delayed and the form collection began around 1:15pm.

The first form was collected by Sajibur Rahman, a student of Islamic History and Culture, who will contest the assistant general secretary (AGS) post as an independent candidate.

Later, Nisha Akter from the Bangla department became the first

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



CUCSU polls schedule likely by Thursday

CU CORRESPONDENT

The schedule for the long awaited Chittagong University Central Students' Union (CUCSU) polls is likely to be announced by Thursday.

"Preparations are almost complete. We are ready to announce the polls schedule by Thursday. Very soon, students will know the exact date of the election," said Pro-Vice Chancellor (administration) Prof Kamal Uddin.

Prof AKM Ariful Haque Siddique, member secretary of the election conducting committee, said, "The draft of the electoral code of conduct has already been prepared. The schedule may be declared by the end of this week."

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



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SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Only elected govt can amend constitution Says BNP leader Rizvi

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday called on the interim government to guarantee a free and fair election, stressing that only an elected government has the mandate to amend the constitution in the nation's interest.

He made the remarks while talking to reporters after distributing raincoats among rickshaw and van pullers in front of BNP's Nayapaltan central office in the capital.

Rizvi said the achievement made on August 5 must be maintained, mentioning that people had endured sixteen years of oppression under a repressive government.

Rizvi said, "There was no rule of law, no justice. The state machinery, including the judiciary and law enforcement, was used to serve the vendetta of Sheikh Hasina."

"A reign had been established where no one but Sheikh Hasina, her children and relatives had the right to speak. It was a rule of bloodshed and vengeance. If we don't want a repeat of that era, a minimum level of political understanding is essential," he added.

He also emphasised that the interim government must remain neutral and live up to public expectations.

He said, "If a change is required for the July charter, then a future elected parliament will decide. One political party says a referendum must be held beforehand. Why? Fundamental principles are indivisible, but even then, the Constitution allows amendments. And only a parliament can do that."

Maritime ports asked to hoist signal 3

UNB, Dhaka

Maritime ports of Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Mongla and Payra have been advised to hoist local cautionary signal no 3 as deep convection continues to form over the North Bay due to active monsoon.

Under its influence, gusty or squally weather may affect the maritime ports, the North Bay and adjoining coastal areas of Bangladesh. All fishing boats and trawlers over North Bay have been advised to remain close to the coast and proceed with caution till further notice.

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU,
Pabna

Travelling to northern and southern districts through the Bonpara-Kushtia highway has become miserable due to the dilapidated condition of the road from Natore's Bonpara to Dashuria in Pabna.

Carpeting on most parts of the 25-kilometre stretch of the highway eroded years ago, creating large potholes.

According to transport workers and passengers, journeys are particularly troublesome on the 7-kilometre stretch from Dashuria to Muladuli point in Ishwardi upazila of Pabna, and another 7-kilometre stretch from Koyenbazar to Rajapur point in Boraigram upazila of Natore.

"We need at least one to one and a half hours to travel the 25-kilometre stretch between Bonpara and Dashuria due to the sorry state of the roads. Sometimes it takes longer if a vehicle gets stuck in a damaged spot," said Md Fardous Hossain, a BRCT bus driver on the Pabna-Chapainawabganj route.

Md Tarek, a driver of Five Star Paribahan travelling from Benapole to Gazipur, said, "A seven to eight-hour journey now takes 10 to 12 hours because of damaged roads in different areas from Jashore to Bonpara of Natore. Of them, the



EPZ, and other industrial areas, but they are forced to suffer as there is no alternative route. Contacted, Md Raihan Imtiaz, sub-divisional engineer of the Department of Roads and Highways in Natore, said repair work is ongoing to fix a 16-kilometre stretch at a cost of Tk 20 crore, which is expected to be completed this year.

However, the RHD in Pabna is yet to start repair work on the Dashuria to Muladuli portion of the highway, failing to engage a contractor in the

past year.

"We called for tenders worth Tk 12 crore several times in the last year for repairing the 5-kilometre damaged stretch, but we could not finalise a bidder due to changes in the political situation," said Md Sadekur Rahman, sub-divisional engineer of RHD, Pabna. He said a tendering process was recently



completed and is awaiting approval.

Meanwhile, travelling through Dashuria has become more difficult as the double-lane road has turned into a single lane due to ongoing construction work, causing long tailbacks. "I have to travel to Veramara in Kushtia every day for work, but I waste at least one hour just to cross a 500-metre stretch at Dashuria because of the construction," said Muslima Khatun, a schoolteacher.

Sadekur Rahman of Pabna RHD said Tk 5 crore worth of construction work in the Dashuria area is ongoing, with more than 50 percent completed, and is expected to be finished this year.

'Now it's our turn' mindset

FROM PAGE 3

influential party members have normalised these politically aggressive activities. Alarmingly, in many cases, even the fallen political forces remain passively involved in such collusive practices.

He said although some high-level warnings and a significant number of organisational measures have been taken within the parties, in practice law enforcement agencies and the administration continue to fail and often play a "supportive or protective role for these actors".

At the same time, the parties have not adopted any clear strategies for prevention or corrective action, he added.

Rather, at the district, upazila, and union levels, many local leaders and activists have engaged in illegal occupation, extortion, and the expansion of political influence immediately following the

fall of the authoritarian government, and the intensity of these activities continues to rise, he said.

Ittekharuzzaman said the resurgence of extortion and illegal occupation of transport terminals, mineral resources, bridges, markets, and waterbodies perpetuates the continuation of misrule reminiscent of past authoritarian regimes.

He said even the new political parties that emerged from the anti-discrimination movement, which promised to represent good governance, transparency, and a corruption-free political culture, have seen some of their activists engage in extortion and irregularities, effectively adopting the existing corrupt political practices as their role model.

Above all, in the aftermath of the fall of authoritarianism, the long-anticipated 'new political arrangement' risks being increasingly and visibly

held hostage by the old, unhealthy political culture," he said.

"Now is the time for political parties to face the mirror," he added, urging political parties to avoid self-defeating practices, learn from the core principles of the anti-discrimination movement, and view themselves as key institutions of democracy.

People's disappointment will deepen if political parties do not ensure internal accountability, ethical practices, and democratic management processes, he said.

Shahin Mia, member secretary of the JNU unit Bangladesh Democratic Students' Council, said, "Our demands are simple; clear instructions on polls and supplementary scholarships. We will not leave until we see visible progress."

In response, VC Prof Rezaul Karim said a

syndicate meeting would be held on Wednesday in this regard where they will

Rucsu nomination

FROM PAGE 3

female candidate to collect a nomination form, for the post of women's affairs secretary. Two other students also collected forms for GS, cultural affairs, and AGS, sports and games, posts.

Rucsu Treasurer and Chief Returning Officer Prof Setaur Rahman said students were collecting

forms enthusiastically.

Returning Officer Mahbubul Islam said four forms had been issued so far, adding that turnout was low due to protests but expected it to rise.

Nomination forms will be available until 5:00pm on August 26 at the Rucsu treasurer's office and respective hall provosts' offices.

JnU students lock

FROM PAGE 3

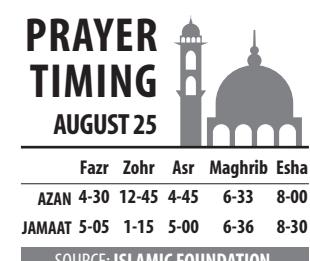
Shahin Mia, member secretary of the JNU unit Bangladesh Democratic Students' Council, said, "Our demands are simple; clear instructions on polls and supplementary scholarships. We will not leave until we see visible progress."

As of filing this report around 9:00pm yesterday, the administrative building remained padlocked. Students said they will continue to protest until their demands are met.

finalise their decision.

On the issue of supplementary scholarships, he said discussions had been held last week and expressed hope that implementation would begin soon.

As of filing this report around 9:00pm yesterday, the administrative building remained padlocked. Students said they will continue to protest until their demands are met.



SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Prothom Alo

Prothom Alo is a daily newspaper in Bangladesh. It is the oldest newspaper in the country, having been founded in 1861. The newspaper is published in Bengali and is read across the country. It is known for its coverage of politics, business, and society.

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D-75

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General Manager

GD-1859

Freeze 191 bank accounts of Summit Group chairman HC upholds lower court order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday upheld a lower court order that directed the Anti-Corruption Commission to freeze 191 bank accounts of Mohammed Aziz Khan, chairman of Summit Group, and his family in connection with corruption allegations against them.

The bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Debasish Roy Chowdhury rejected a petition for default, filed challenging the legality of the lower court order.

The lower court directive will remain in force following the HC order, ACC's lawyer Md Mahmudul Arefin Swapan told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, Karishma Jahan, one of the counsels for the petitioners, told this correspondent, "The order of 'rejected for default' came about due to

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

18km of Dhaka Bypass Expressway opens to public

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Eighteen kilometres of the 48km Dhaka Bypass Expressway were opened to traffic yesterday.

Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, adviser to the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges and Railways, inaugurated the part stretching from the Bogura bypass areas.

CNG vehicles, auto rickshaws, and motorcycles are now completely banned on the expressway. U-turns will also not be allowed in this section, and tolls have been set according to vehicle type.

Adviser Fouzul Kabir said, "Compared to the countries around us, our country's road construction cost is much higher. You know that roads have become a ripe ground for corruption. Our engineers can reduce the cost of road construction by 20 to 30 percent if we can diminish this corruption."



GAZI WIRES LIMITED
(An Enterprise of BSEC under Ministry of Industries)

28-BFIDC Road, Kalurghat, Chattogram-4212, Bangladesh.

Invitation for Local Tender (Works)(OTM)

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Industries
2	Agency	Bangladesh Steel & Engineering Corporation (BSEC).
3	Procuring Entity Name	Managing Director, Gazi Wires Limited (GWL) 28 BFIDC Road, Kalurghat, Chattogram-4212, Bangladesh.
4	Invitation for	Renovation/Modernization of the laboratory of the Quality Control Department to verify the quality of the products manufactured by the organization.
5	Invitation Ref. No.	36.93.1505.556.06.266.2025.285, Date: 24.08.2025.
6	Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (OTM) (Works)
7	Budget and Source of Funds	Gazi Wires Limited's Own Fund.
8	Tender Publication Date	Tender Last Selling Date
		Tender Closing Date & Time
		Tender Opening Date & Time
9	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address
(a)	Selling Tender Document	1) Cash Section, Gazi Wires Limited, 28 BFIDC Road, Kalurghat, Chattogram-4212, Bangladesh.
(b)	Receiving and Opening of Tender Document	1) At the office of Gazi Wires Ltd., 28-BFIDC Road, Kalurghat, Chattogram-4212, Bangladesh.
10	Price of Tender Document (Each)	BDT. 1,000.00
11	Eligibility of Tenderer	Mentioned in the Tender Documents.
	Brief Description of Works	
12	Tender Package No.	36.93.1505.556.06.266.2025
	Description of Works	Renovation/Modernization of the laboratory of the Quality Control Department to verify the quality of the products manufactured by the organization.
	Tender Security Amount (BDT)	TK. 50,000.00 (Fifty Thousand Taka Only)
13	Working Period	Within 180 from the date of Contract Agreement.
14	Name of Official Invitation Tender	Md. Abdul Halim
15	Designation of Official Invitation Tender	Managing Director (In Charge)
16	Address of Official Invitation Tender	Gazi Wires Limited (GWL), 28 BFIDC Road, Kalurghat, Chattogram-4212, Bangladesh. E-mail: gaziwiresltd@gmail.com
17	Special instructions	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without showing any reason.

Head of Administration
For-Managing Director
Hotline: 01711-962280



সামরিক চিকিৎসা সার্টিস মহাপরিদণ্ডন

প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস

জরুরি দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১।	সমস্ত বাহিনীর জন্য দেশীয় মুদ্রার হকে উত্তোলিত ঠার্ডসমূহ অতিরিক্ত জরুরি পরিবর্তনের তালিকা সম্পর্কে প্রতিক্রিয়া করা যাচ্ছে।

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Ukraine drone hits Russian nuclear plant

Nuclear reactor cuts capacity; attack comes on Kyiv's Independence Day

REUTERS, Moscow

Ukraine launched a drone attack on Russia on Sunday, forcing a sharp fall in the capacity of a reactor at one of Russia's biggest nuclear power plants and sparking a huge blaze at the major Ust-Luga fuel export terminal, Russian officials said.

Despite talk of peace by Russia and Ukraine, the deadliest European war since World War Two is continuing along the 2,000 km (1,250 mile) front line accompanied by missile and drone attacks deep into both Russia and Ukraine.

Russia's defence ministry said at least 95 Ukrainian drones had been intercepted across more than a dozen Russian regions on August 24, the day that Ukraine celebrates its declaration of independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

The Kursk nuclear power plant, just 60 km (38 miles) from the border with Ukraine, said that air defences shot down a drone that detonated near the plant just after midnight, damaging an auxiliary transformer and forcing a 50% reduction in the operating capacity at reactor No. 3.

Radiation levels were normal, and there were no injuries from the fire that the drone sparked, the plant said. Two other reactors are operating without power generation, and one is undergoing scheduled repairs.

The United Nations' nuclear agency, the International Atomic Energy Agency, said it was aware of reports that a transformer at the plant caught fire due to military activity and stressed that every nuclear facility should be protected at all times.

A thousand km north, on the Gulf of Finland, at least 10 Ukrainian drones were downed over the port of Ust-Luga in Russia's northern Leningrad region, with debris sparking fire at the Novatek-operated terminal - a huge Baltic Sea fuel export terminal and processing complex, the regional governor said.



A man walks between piles of rubble in Saftawi neighbourhood, west of Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip, on August 24, 2025, amid the ongoing brutal Israeli aggression on the Palestinian territory.

PHOTO: AFP

Moscow, Kyiv each send back 146 POWs

AFP, Moscow

Russia and Ukraine each sent back 146 prisoners of war on Sunday, Moscow's defence ministry said, the latest in a series of exchanges that have seen hundreds of POWs released this year.

Large-scale prisoner exchanges were the only tangible result of three rounds of talks between Russian and Ukrainian delegations in Istanbul between May and July.

They remain one of the few areas of cooperation between the two countries since Russia's offensive began in 2022.

"On August 24, 146 Russian servicemen were returned from the territory controlled" by Kyiv, the Russian defence ministry said on Telegram.

'Far too late'

Palestinians despair after UN declares famine in Gaza

AFP, Gaza City

Desperate Palestinians clutching pots and plastic buckets scrambled for rice at a charity kitchen in Gaza City on Saturday, a day after the United Nations declared a famine in the territory that has been reduced to rubble.

AFP footage from Gaza's largest city, which Israel plans to seize as part of an expanded military offensive, showed women and young children among the chaotic jostle of dozens clamouring and shouting for food.

One young boy used his hands to scrape a few leftover grains from the inside of a cooking vat. Another young girl sat on the edge of a tent and scooped rice from a plastic bag on the ground.

"We have no home left, no food, no income... so we are forced to turn to charity kitchens, but they do not satisfy our hunger," said Yousef Hamad, 58, who was displaced from the northern city of Beit Hanoun.

Further south at a charity kitchen

in Deir el-Balah, 34-year-old Umm Mohammad said the UN's declaration of a famine had come "far too late".

The children are "staggering from dizziness, unable to wake up because of the lack of food and water," she said.

The UN officially declared a famine in Gaza on Friday, blaming the "systematic obstruction" of aid by Israel during more than 22 months of its aggression.

The Rome-based Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Initiative (IPC) said famine was affecting 500,000 people in Gaza governorate, which covers about a fifth of the Palestinian territory including Gaza City.

'MORAL DUTY'

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected the report as "an outright lie".

On Saturday, the head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees said it was "time for the government of Israel to stop denying the famine it has created in Gaza".

Trump plans to deploy National Guard in Chicago

AFP, Washington

The Trump administration has been planning for weeks to deploy National Guard troops in Chicago as part of an expanded crackdown on crime and immigration, according to reports in US media.



The Pentagon has been sketching out plans that could mobilise several thousand National Guard members to the nation's third-largest city as early as September, The Washington Post reported, quoting unidentified officials familiar with the matter.

The Pentagon refused to confirm the reports. "We won't speculate on further operations," a defence official said.

"The Department is a planning organisation and is continuously working with other agency partners on plans to protect federal assets and personnel," the official said on condition of anonymity.

Cops forced doctor to alter autopsy report

FROM PAGE 1

The doctor said that after he prepared the report on July 16, 2024, the day Abu Sayed was killed during last year's uprising, the investigation officer of the case filed with Tajhat Police Station over his death refused to accept it. Police then put pressure on him to rewrite it. "I mentioned the original findings in the reports, making some changes in language, but police refused to accept any of them."

Rajibul said that on July 30 last year, he was called to the office of RMC vice principal Mahfuzur Rahman. There, the vice-principal, city Special Branch superintendent of police Siddiq, Rangpur Metropolitan Police deputy commissioner Maruf, and RMC's Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad chapter president Sarwar Hossain Chandan pressured him to state that Sayed had died from a "head injury and neurogenic shock".

Officials of the DGFI, NSI, and police were present outside the office, he added.

At one point, Chandan told him, "Netri [leader] is concerned over the issue. Submit the report as the police want it. We will look into your matter," Rajibul said, adding that netri is related to Hasina.

"They threatened me with criminal cases, warned of dire consequences and even offered foreign trips to Singapore and Thailand. As I said I don't have a passport, they offered me a two-week holiday in Cox's Bazar to convince me," Rajibul told the court.

He stated that he declined to falsify the findings, pointing out that media worldwide had broadcast footage of Sayed being shot dead on July 16. "If I write otherwise, people of the whole world will hate us."

Rajibul also presented an Al Jazeera video featuring his interview and a recorded phone call between Hasina's adviser Salman F Rahman and then IGP Maman, where Salman enquired why police had not yet collected the autopsy report. It suggests involvement of government

injuries, which were ante-mortem and homicidal in nature. Please consider the circumstantial evidence."

They accepted that report. "I submitted a true report at the risk of my life, despite repeated threats," he said, his voice trembling with emotion. He added that had the government not changed, he would have faced serious consequences.

Amir Hossain, state-defence counsel for Hasina and Kalam, argued that his opinion should not be recorded as a statement.

However, tribunal Chairman Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder rejected his plea, saying, "Whatever the witness says, without twisting anything, will be taken."

Rajibul also presented an Al Jazeera video featuring his interview and a recorded phone call between Hasina's adviser Salman F Rahman and then IGP Maman, where Salman enquired why police had not yet collected the autopsy report. It suggests involvement of government

high-ups in the matter, he added.

Gias Uddin, an office assistant of RMC's forensic medicine department, and journalist Shariful Islam, who was shot on August 5 last year in Kushtia, also testified yesterday. Shariful said a police sub-inspector and helmeted men fired at him. Over 500 pellets remain in his body.

The ICTC yesterday set October 26 for submission of the investigation report against Hasina and others in a case filed over enforced disappearances.

The tribunal also allowed investigators to interrogate four co-accused of Hasina in a case lodged over the May 5, 2013, "mass killings" during Hefajat-e-Islam protest at Motijheel's Shapla Chatter.

Besides, Farhad Hossain, ex-public administration minister, was sent to jail after being shown arrested in a case filed over the killing of Islami Chhatri Shibir leader Tarik Mohammad Saiful Islam in Meherpur.

Yunus, Dar discuss

FROM PAGE 2

Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz on Sunday vowed to press on with the offensive on the city where famine has been declared, which has raised alarm abroad and objections at home.

Katz has said that Gaza City will be razed unless Hamas agrees to release all hostages.

Hamas said in a statement on Sunday that Israel's plan to take over Gaza City showed it wasn't serious about a ceasefire.

It said a ceasefire agreement was "the only way to return the hostages", holding Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responsible for their lives.

The proposal on the

exchange, and regional cooperation would contribute to a more stable and prosperous South Asia.

Dar conveyed greetings from Pakistan's Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. Yunus warmly reciprocated, saying, "Every time Prime Minister Sharif and I met, we spoke about SAARC. Our visions are aligned, and SAARC remains a top priority for both of us."

Dar also praised Yunus's contributions to poverty alleviation and community empowerment.

"Bangladesh is fortunate to have a Head of Government like you - a leader who inspires the world," he said.

Both leaders expressed optimism that enhanced trade, deepening cultural

ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

Dhaka South City Corporation



নগর ভবন, ঢাকা

ফোনঃ ৯৫৫৭১৮০-৮১, ৯৫৫৭১৮৪, ৯৫৫৭১৮৬-৮৯, ৯৫৫৮২৫৫-৫৯, ৯৫৫৮৩৫৭-৬০, www.dscc.gov.bd

স্মারকঃ ৪৬.২০৭.০০০.১২.০০.৫৫.২০২৫

আপনার পরিশেখ সুন্দর ও পরিষ্কৃত বাস্তু
আপনার শিখনকে তিক দিন
হিয়জনকে বই উপরের

তারিখঃ ২৪/০৮/২০২৫

সংশোধিত নোটিশ

ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন এর আওতাধীন এলাকায় নিয়োজিত ৭৫টি ওয়ার্টের প্রাথমিক বর্জ্য সংগ্রহ সেবা প্রদানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের (প্রাবসেপ্তে) মেয়াদকাল প্রত্যেক প্রতিষ্ঠানের সেপ্টেম্বর/২০২৫ হতে অক্টোবর/২০২৫ এর মধ্যে সমাপ্ত হবে। বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা কাজের গতিশীলতা ও মানোন্নয়নের লক্ষ্যে নতুন নিবন্ধন কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে। সে লক্ষ্যে আয়োজী প্রয়োজন সমূহকে নিম্নলিখিত শর্ত অনুসরণপূর্বক আবেদনপত্র ত্রুট্য ও জমা প্রদানের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

ক) প্রযোজ্য শর্তবলীঃ

১. আবেদনপত্র ত্রুট্য ও জমা প্রদান কর্তৃত হলে ত্রুট্য ও জমা প্রদান করা যাবে না।
২. আবেদনপত্র ত্রুট্য ও জমা প্রদান কর্তৃত হলে ত্রুট্য ও জমা প্রদান করে ব্যাংক রশিদ সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।
৩. ওয়েবসাইট <https://dscc.gov.bd> হতে নিবন্ধন আবেদনপত্র ও প্রযোজ্য শর্তবলী/ TOR (Terms of Reference) ডাউনলোড পূর্বে উল্লেখ নথিপত্রে অনুকূলে প্রযোজ্য সকল ডকুমেন্টস দাখিল করতে হবে।
৪. নিবন্ধনের জন্য আর্থিক প্রস্তাবে উল্লেখ সম্পর্কিত অর্থ মেয়াদ/প্রশাসক, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের অনুকূলে পে-আর্ডারটি হিসাব নং-২০০০১৮৩০৯, সোনালী ব্যাংক, নগর ভবন শাখায় ১০,০০০/- (ঢাকা দশ হাজার মাত্র) জমা প্রদান করে ব্যাংক রশিদ সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।
৫. কারিগরি প্রস্তাব তথা ফরম-ই এর সাথে কারিগরি প্রস্তাব অনুকূলে প্রযোজ্য সকল ডকুমেন্টস দাখিল করতে হবে।
৬. স্বাক্ষরিত আর্থিক প্রস্তাব তথা ফরম-ই এর সাথে আবেদনপত্র ত্রুট্য ও জমা প্রদান করতে হবে।
৭. কারিগরি প্রস্তাব ও আর্থিক প্রস্তাব প্রযোজন প্রস্তাব করে ব্যাংক রশিদ সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।

খ) আবেদনপত্র ত্রুট্য ও জমা প্রদানের সময় নিম্নে উল্লেখ করা হলোঃ

আবেদনপত্র ত্রুট্য ও জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	আবেদনপত্র ত্রুট্য ও জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়
তারিখঃ ০১/০৮/২০২৫ খ্রিঃ (বৰ্দিৎ)	তারিখঃ ০১/০৯/২০২৫ খ্রিঃ (বৰ্দিৎ)

সময়ঃ দুপুর ২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত

বিশেষ দ্রষ্টব্যঃ নোটিশে উল্ল

Stop another fresh Rohingya influx

This crisis must not be allowed to drag on indefinitely

We are alarmed by the situation in Myanmar as fresh clashes erupted between the Arakan Army and Rohingya armed groups on the opposite side of the Whykong border from August 22 until the early hours of August 23. Reportedly, this was the fourth such clash over the past month, amid indications that Myanmar junta troops are preparing to retake parts of Rakhine. According to community leaders (Majhis) at the Teknaf Rohingya camps, who cited their relatives in Myanmar, between 400 and 700 Rohingyas have already fled their homes in Laldia, located across Teknaf's Jalia Island. Many have attempted to cross into Bangladesh but were unsuccessful due to heightened border patrols. In addition to the ongoing military clashes, the Arakan Army's extortion and harassment are also forcing many Rohingyas to flee to Bangladesh. If the fighting persists, there is a risk of another large-scale Rohingya influx.

For over eight years, Bangladesh has generously hosted 1.2 million Rohingya refugees despite the significant socio-economic and environmental strain this has placed on us. The crisis has deepened in recent months with approximately 150,000 more Rohingyas crossing into Bangladesh to escape intensifying conflict between the Arakan Army and the military junta. With repeated failed repatriation efforts, Bangladesh is already struggling to support the existing Rohingyas. If more arrive, it will be even harder for us to provide for them, especially with global aid shrinking significantly. The recent US funding cuts have already strained the conditions in the camps, limiting the Rohingyas' access to vital services like healthcare and education. Numerous projects, including those related to health, family planning, nutrition, and education, have been affected. According to a recent report by this daily, around 400,000 Rohingya children face an uncertain future as fund cuts force nearly 6,400 NGO run schools in Cox's Bazar to shut down or cut back classes.

Humanitarian organisations have repeatedly warned that the situation will further deteriorate unless funds are urgently released. A recent RMMRU study revealed poor living standards, rising gender-based violence, including physical violence, sexual exploitation, coerced marriages, and deep psychological distress, as well as serious safety issues inside the camps. Given the current instability and conflict in Myanmar, if more Rohingyas arrive, the situation in Bangladesh will further deteriorate.

Against this backdrop, a three-day international seminar on the Rohingya crisis commenced yesterday, bringing together experts from both home and abroad, and this will hopefully generate concrete proposals for alternative funding mechanisms and a sustainable resolution to the crisis. These proposals could be presented at the upcoming High Level Conference on the Rohingya Crisis, scheduled to take place in New York next month on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. We would urge the international community not to shirk its responsibility in this regard. It must play its role in resolving this protracted crisis through meaningful engagement with Myanmar. Without an urgent and sustainable solution, the Rohingya crisis risks escalating into a serious threat to regional stability.

Protect the rights of domestic workers

Include them in the labour law

Accurate estimates of domestic workers are hard to find as they remain outside the formal workforce in Bangladesh. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), there are approximately 2.5 million domestic workers, 80 percent of whom are women. As poverty rises, these numbers also rise. But despite providing essential services to countless households, these individuals remain largely "invisible" to both the state and society, leaving them exposed to widespread exploitation. There is currently no standardisation in their pay or working hours, resulting in many being underpaid and overworked. Many also face verbal and physical abuse, with little legal recourse due to the absence of representative organisations. Live-in workers, particularly young girls, are especially at risk, with numerous cases of sexual abuse and torture.

So, how can we protect their rights? At a recent dialogue jointly organised by Shobujer Ovijan Foundation, Oxfam in Bangladesh, The Daily Star, and co-funded by the European Union, participants offered several key recommendations. First, domestic workers must be formally recognised under existing legal frameworks. A crucial step would be for Bangladesh to ratify ILO Convention No. 189, which promotes protections and decent working conditions for domestic workers. Meanwhile, the 2015 Domestic Workers' Protection and Welfare Policy, which includes a code of conduct to safeguard their rights, must be enacted into law. Despite repeated proposals from the Domestic Workers Rights Network (DWRN), this has yet to happen.

An ordinance followed by parliamentary ratification is essential, supported by nationwide awareness campaigns targeting both employers and workers. Since the policy's publication, some police stations have begun registering complaints from domestic workers, but without a binding legal framework, justice has remained elusive in most cases.

It is, however, encouraging that the Labour Reform Commission has proposed including domestic workers in the labour law. Other important recommendations include written employment contracts, skills training opportunities, and a workers' welfare fund. Given Bangladesh's ratification of ILO Conventions on the Minimum Age and Worst Forms of Child Labour, the government should also move to end the employment of minors in domestic work. Ultimately, only a binding law, and its proper enforcement, can protect the rights of domestic workers and hold employers accountable. Legal recognition is essential to ensuring these vital workers receive the support and dignity they deserve.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Mass exodus of Rohingya

On this day in 2017, hundreds of thousands of Rohingya fled brutal military attacks in Myanmar and sought refuge in Bangladesh. Within a week, the number reached half a million. Today, around 860,000 Rohingya live in camps in Cox's Bazar.

EDITORIAL

Why the Bangladesh-US deal demands public scrutiny



Kamal Ahmed is head of the Media Reform Commission in Bangladesh and an independent journalist. His X handle is @ahmedkal.

KAMAL AHMED

The hastily struck tariff deal with the Trump administration has brought a measure of relief to Bangladesh, both economically and politically. But if the early signs are any indication, the story is far from over. Reports in the media have mostly focused on the positives—most notably, a surge in orders for readymade garments, in some cases rerouted from neighbouring countries facing higher tariffs. In the short term, this has led to a boost in apparel exports. Encouraging as this may be for the apparel sector, the bigger picture is still unfolding, and the long-term impact remains uncertain.

Commerce Adviser Sheikh Bashir Uddin stated that the government is working to reduce the US imposed reciprocal tariff from 20 percent to 15 percent. Speaking to reporters on August 12, he said talks with Washington were ongoing and that a reduction could come before the final agreement. "We hope that the steps we have taken to reduce the US-Bangladesh trade deficit will reduce the duty," Bashir said. He

India has also sparred with Washington over agriculture, though for different reasons. There, the fight is less about safety and more about protecting farmers from price collapses that could devastate rural livelihoods. For Bangladesh, both sides of the issue—safety standards and farmer protections—carry weight.

also promised that the government would disclose the much-debated Non Disclosure Agreement (NDA) once approval comes through from the US. That NDA has been at the heart of a storm, fuelling controversy and criticism of the government for months.

NDAs are nothing unusual in bilateral trade negotiations. Confidentiality often gives negotiators an edge, especially when global



VISUAL: MAHIYA TABASSUM

competitors are watching. However, secrecy makes little sense once a deal has been signed. The expectation now is that the government will publish the NDA sooner rather than later. Other countries are already doing so, allowing their businesses to plan ahead and strategise, while giving the public space for debate. Bangladesh risks falling behind if it does not follow suit.

One of the biggest sticking points in the talks remains agriculture. Here, the debate echoes far beyond Bangladesh. In Europe, the issue is particularly charged. Last month, the US and EU narrowly avoided a tariff war with a last-minute deal. Yet, agriculture remains unresolved. A joint statement released on August 21 confirmed that Washington would keep high tariffs on European vehicles until Brussels lowered duties on US industrial and agricultural goods. It was described as only a "first step," leaving the toughest questions for later.

For Washington, those questions involve securing broader access for

until proven safe—a sharp contrast to the US approach, where products are assumed safe until proven otherwise.

India has also sparred with Washington over agriculture, though for different reasons. There, the fight is less about safety and more about protecting farmers from price collapses that could devastate rural livelihoods. For Bangladesh, both sides of the issue—safety standards and farmer protections—carry weight.

That point has been underlined by Fisheries and Livestock Adviser Farida Akhter, a long-time campaigner for farmers' rights and indigenous agriculture. She has gone public with her concerns that Bangladesh is under mounting pressure to open its markets to beef, genetically modified (GM) crops and seeds, and to ease restrictions on chemical and pesticide giants.

In fact, US agribusiness influence in Bangladesh runs deeper than many realise. Monsanto has lobbied for years to introduce GM seeds here. The company even managed to persuade former agriculture minister Matia

and aircraft in hopes of narrowing the trade deficit. But those gestures fell short. In the end, it was Bangladesh's powerful apparel lobby that pushed hardest for the deal, arguing that access to the US market had to be protected at any cost—even though the US accounts for only 18 percent of Bangladesh's exports. Their clout created an impression of urgency that overshadowed other risks. That urgency may yet come with a price, opening the door to GM foods, hormone-treated beef, and chlorine-washed poultry.

There is also the climate cost. Before Trump's re-election, momentum was building worldwide around localising food systems as a way to cut carbon emissions—the biggest driver of global warming. Trump's trade agenda has rolled back much of that progress, rewriting the rules to suit short-term US interests. Adapting to this new reality does not mean Bangladesh should embrace policies that risk long-term harm to its people, farmers, and environment.

Rainwater can be an irrigation lifeline



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MAKHAN LAL DUTTA

Every monsoon, Bangladesh receives around 2,500 mm of rainfall, but much of this rainwater flows into rivers and drains without being captured. Meanwhile, farmers face water scarcity during the dry season and groundwater levels in cities, including Dhaka, have declined sharply due to over extraction for irrigation. Amidst climate change threats and increasing salinity, rainwater harvesting is emerging as a practical solution to support irrigation, safeguard food security, and build resilience.

Groundwater extraction in Bangladesh is among the world's highest, with over 90 percent of groundwater used for irrigation. In Dhaka, water tables have dropped by 60-75 metres, while in the north, depletion threatens agriculture and drinking water supplies. Without intervention, groundwater scarcity will intensify by 2030, risking land subsidence and a decline in crop productivity.

However, rainwater harvesting, a centuries-old practice, can offer a solution if modernised to collect, store, and use rainwater for irrigation during the dry season. In coastal districts like Satkhira and Khulna, where salinity restricts freshwater access, many households use storage tanks to collect rainwater. This allows them to cultivate vegetables and grow backyard gardens, thus improving

nutrition and livelihoods. These low-cost systems have empowered women, who maintain water systems in their communities and earn additional income.

Rainwater harvesting also aligns well with water-saving irrigation methods. The Alternate Wetting and Drying (AWD) technique, promoted by the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI), International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), and Asian

Development Bank (ADB), reduces water use while maintaining rice yields.

Field trials in Naogaon and Sirajganj have shown that AWD can reduce water usage by up to 20 percent, lower irrigation costs, and cut greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent without harming yields. Farmers have reported stable or even increased production while using fewer irrigation cycles, demonstrating how rainwater storage

and water-efficient practices can complement each other for maximum impact.

Despite its clear benefits, the adoption of rainwater harvesting for irrigation remains limited. The Bangladesh Water Act, 2013 encourages water conservation but lacks clear incentives or subsidy mechanisms for farmers to install rainwater systems. Although the Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) mandates rainwater harvesting for all new buildings constructed on plots larger than 300 square metres, enforcement is weak, and retrofitting remains rare. There is also a lack of clear guidelines on how to implement farm-scale rainwater harvesting systems, making it harder for rural communities to adopt the practice systematically.

A 10,000 litre tank connected to a 150-square-metre rooftop can

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provide sufficient water for household and small-scale irrigation needs throughout the dry season. In rural areas, bunds and ponds can capture monsoon runoff for later use in fields, reducing dependence on groundwater. In urban industrial zones, factories are beginning to explore rooftop rainwater harvesting for non-potable industrial processes, which could significantly reduce their groundwater dependence

while building climate resilience. A clear, integrated policy approach to harness the full benefits of rainwater harvesting is needed. Subsidy programmes, tax incentives, and low-interest financing for rainwater systems would encourage farmers and industries to invest in them. Public-private partnerships can help scale up local tank production, and trained community-based maintenance teams can ensure that the systems remain operational and effective for years. Local governments can integrate rainwater harvesting with broader climate adaptation strategies to build resilient water systems at the community level.

Affordable modular tanks, gutter systems, basic filtration units, and low-pressure pumps can be assembled locally at manageable costs. Community-driven initiatives led by women's groups have shown how collective action can sustain rainwater systems, while private sector engagement can drive innovation in design and maintenance services.

Rainwater harvesting for irrigation also aligns with Bangladesh's climate commitments. By reducing groundwater extraction, rainwater harvesting helps conserve aquifers, while water-efficient farming methods like AWD reduce emissions. Consequently, smallholder farmers can lower production costs while improving productivity and resilience to weather shocks. As the climate crisis deepens, traditional reliance on groundwater will become increasingly unsustainable. In contrast, rainwater harvesting is a nature-based, practical, scalable, and equitable solution. With supportive policies, investments, and community engagement, Bangladesh can transform its monsoon rains into a year-round resource for agriculture, livelihoods, and climate resilience.

The return of 'No Vote' option is long overdue



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KAZI ASM NURUL HUDA

With the country set on the path to a national election in February, the Election Commission has reportedly proposed major changes in the draft Representation of the People Order (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025, including a "No Vote" option to prevent uncontested elections. As per the draft, if only one candidate remains following the process of scrutiny or withdrawal of candidature, that candidate will have to "contest" against a No Vote option in their constituency. Should No Vote receive more ballots than the candidate, a fresh election schedule will be announced, but if the candidate secures more votes, they will be declared elected.

It may be recalled that the No Vote provision, first introduced ahead of the 2008 election, was scrapped shortly after Awami League came to power in early 2009. On the surface, its likely reintroduction may seem technical or procedural, reflecting the changing times that we are in. In truth, it speaks to something greater—the power of refusal in democracy. Few words are as short yet as powerful as *no*. It is the word of protest, of resistance, of freedom. Jean-Paul Sartre saw in negation the essence of human choice, while Friedrich Hegel treated it as the motor of history. To say *no* is not merely to refuse. It is to claim space, to open the door to change.

Bangladesh's own history shows the power of refusal. In fact, the nation was born out of a collective *no*—no to cultural erasure, no to economic exploitation, no to the theft of a democratic mandate in 1970. At every turning point in our political history, progress has come not from passive acceptance but from active rejection of what was unjust. To deny that right, inside the voting booth no less, would be a betrayal to that democratic spirit.

Unfortunately, elections in our country have often left citizens without choice. Voters are asked to choose among candidates imposed by political parties that often nominate them for reasons other than public service. Voter abstention is also seen as apathy, and spoiled ballots as mischief. But the real problem here is not the voters'; it is that of the parties who are unwilling to honour the public's demand for something better.

The No Vote option gives dissenting voters a voice. It turns frustration into a measurable verdict. A citizen who marks No Vote is not abandoning democracy but affirming it. They are saying: *we believe in this system, but we do not accept these choices*. It is a demand for politics worthy of the people it seeks to represent.

Critics argue that No Vote could be symbolic. After all, the leading candidate still wins. But politics has never been about arithmetic alone. It runs on legitimacy, on the perception that leaders truly embody the people's will. Imagine an election where a quarter of ballots are cast for No Vote. Could any winner then stand before the nation and claim with confidence to speak for the majority? Such a result would be a referendum within the election itself, a mirror held up to a political culture that has too often relied on inertia and entitlement.

Symbols matter because they shape action. A flag is only cloth, yet it can unite a nation. A slogan is only words, yet it can unseat a regime. In the same way, No Vote can unsettle complacency. A significant rejection on the ballot could force parties to rethink how they select candidates, how they write manifestos, and how they connect with



'To say No to the available candidates is not to disrupt the electoral process, but to demand better candidates.' ILLUSTRATION: ANWAR SOHEL

citizens. It could remind them that consent must be earned, not assumed.

At its heart, No Vote is also about dignity. Voting is not merely an act of choice but a declaration of identity. Without the option of refusal, that identity is incomplete. A ballot without No Vote is not a conversation between the rulers and the ruled but a monologue imposed from above. To restore it is to affirm that citizens are sovereign, not ornamental. This recognition is particularly urgent in Bangladesh where voter dignity has too often been compromised. Violence at polling stations, boycotted contests, and doubts about neutrality have frequently eroded public trust. Restoring No Vote will not solve these structural flaws, but it will

reassert that dissent counts as much as consent.

The general public mood as represented in several recent surveys shows a sense of uncertainty, even scepticism, about our democratic transition. Nearly half the respondents in one survey said they were undecided about whom to support in the upcoming polls. These citizens are not indifferent; they are waiting, weighing, searching. For them, No Vote provides a way to remain engaged without pretending that poor choices are acceptable. To ignore this right of refusal is to invite cynicism. Dissent can be debated, engaged, even persuaded. Cynicism cannot. The greatest danger to Bangladesh's democracy is not too much

argument but too little faith. No Vote offers a way to bring the disillusioned back into the democratic fold, to let them express dissatisfaction without abandoning the process itself.

The Election Commission's broader reform package is not insignificant. Abolishing the provision for electronic voting machines (EVMs), expanding the definition of law enforcement agencies to include the armed forces, and expanding the commission's authority are all crucial measures. But none carries the moral and symbolic weight of reviving the No Vote. To say *no* to the available candidates is not to disrupt the electoral process, but to demand better candidates. It is to insist that another politics is possible.

Ukraine's peace lies in compromise



AN OPEN
DIALOGUE

Dr Abdullah Shibli
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ABDULLAH SHIBLI

Peace remains elusive in Ukraine. The recent round of meetings between world leaders in Washington, DC, has not moved the needle significantly. Russia's President Vladimir Putin offered potential concessions at a summit with his US counterpart Donald Trump, but Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has yet to indicate any willingness to relinquish the commitments he sought from the

major breakthroughs in the coming days. It is possible that Trump, who calls himself a dealmaker, might manage to pull a rabbit out of the hat and broker a deal. The final outcome depends on bilateral discussions between Putin and Zelenskyy, with Trump present there. One outlandish scenario imagines Trump escorting them to the Hall of Mirrors (Galerie des Glaces) at the Palace of Versailles,

Ukraine needs to forgo NATO membership. European countries can provide security guarantees with or without US involvement. Trump has repeatedly expressed his reservations about further entanglement in European politics. When European leaders rushed to Washington after Zelenskyy's invitation following the Alaska summit, they were briefed on what Ukraine's allies needed to do to reassure Zelenskyy and avert World War III.

When we were in high school,

one of the most common questions in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination was: "What are the causes of World War II?" If you asked American high school graduates, most would profess ignorance. But my cohort in the 1970s would unanimously reply,

have adamantly opposed NATO enlargement. Yeltsin, Putin, and Medvedev never hesitated to convey Russia's resolve to keep Ukraine out of NATO and its long-term intentions regarding potential conflicts. Ukraine's leaders have also vacillated in their determination to join NATO.

Trump has indicated a preference for Europe to take the lead in providing security guarantees for Ukraine, with US assistance and coordination, rather than extending NATO's collective defence umbrella (Article 5) to Ukraine.

According to Article 5 of NATO, an armed attack against one member is considered an attack against all. This means that if one NATO member is attacked, all others are obligated to assist, taking necessary action, including armed force, to restore

and maintain security in the North Atlantic area. Russia allowed the Warsaw Pact (NATO's counterpart) to lapse on the assurance that Ukraine would not become a Western military bastion.

More than a decade ago, John J

Mearsheimer, the R Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago, wrote a prescient analysis of the Ukrainian crisis in *Foreign Affairs*. In his article, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault," he foreshadowed every major mistake the Western alliance would make after the Soviet collapse.

Many in the West now recognise that NATO expansion was "the central element of a larger strategy to move Ukraine out of Russia's orbit and integrate it into the West," as Mearsheimer wrote. This move

clearly provoked Russian opposition. For Putin, the overthrow of Ukraine's democratically elected, pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovych in 2014 was the last straw. The Orange Revolution was the red flag that pushed Russia to initiate its do-or-die plan to forestall NATO expansion.

Where do we stand now? An optimistic assessment suggests a deal could freeze the current front line Donbas—stretching roughly 620 miles from northeastern Ukraine to its Black Sea coast—without Ukraine officially ceding the land on the other side. After that, a bilateral or trilateral summit could work towards a permanent truce, withdrawal of forces, security guarantees for Ukraine, and, akin to the Korean model, a demilitarised zone along a yet-to-be-determined front line.



Ukrainian President Zelenskyy, US President Trump, and other European leaders at the White House on August 18, 2025.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

West before the war began.

To sum up the current stalemate: despite repeated attempts at negotiation, a lasting and comprehensive peace agreement remains difficult to achieve because of the conflicting goals of the warring parties—Russia and Ukraine—as well as those of the US and European countries supporting Ukraine. The next few weeks will reveal whether all these efforts have been in vain.

For readers who have not followed recent developments, a flurry of activity has taken place to bring about a ceasefire, but it is too early to predict the outcome. War, negotiations, and deals are all still on the table. The first step was a meeting in Alaska's Anchorage between Putin and Trump, followed by a gathering of European leaders in Washington, DC.

Unfortunately, we cannot expect

locking the doors, and throwing away the key.

Many questions arise: who is to blame for this protracted war? Why did the latest peace initiative fail? What must the key players concede to achieve lasting peace? The shortest answer to all these questions is: it depends on whom you ask. Tens of thousands of people have died since Putin sent in the troops in 2022 and started the war, but others share the blame for goading him into invading Ukraine.

Before Biden, various US presidents had respected an unwritten understanding between Russia and the West that Ukraine would not be invited to join NATO. Some analysts argue that the Barack Obama administration underestimated Russia's determination to prevent NATO's further eastward expansion. Since the mid-1990s, Russian leaders

"There are many causes..." and then list all the warring countries. The situation in Europe now feels no different.

By all accounts, the historic meeting between Putin and Trump was a positive initiative. The war in Europe might have been averted had former US President Joe Biden not been incapacitated during the final two years of his ill-fated presidency. His advisers kept him away from major negotiations with China and Russia.

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Memo No: 37.07.4400.001.34.001.25-223

Dated: 24-08-2025

e-TENDER NOTICE NO. 05/2025-2026

(Limited Tendering Method)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following Packages Tender:

Sl No.	Tender ID	Name of Work	Last Selling Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
01.	1012584	Package No. EED/JHE/REV/FURNITURE/SHED/2024-25/GD-01: Manufacturing and Supplying of Classroom Furnitures at Elangi Mofiz Uddin Secondary School in Kotchandpur Upazila under Jhenaidah District.	08.09.2025 17:00	09.09.2025 12:00
02.	1012585	Package No. EED/JHE/REV/FURNITURE/SHED/2024-25/GD-02: Manufacturing and Supplying of Classroom Furnitures at Bir Mukti Joddha Abdul Hai College in Shailkupa Upazila under Jhenaidah District.	08.09.2025 17:00	09.09.2025 12:00
03.	1137248	Package No. EED/JHE/REV/SHED/6821/2025-26/PG-01: Manufacturing and Supplying of Classroom Furnitures at Dhawra High School in Shailkupa Upazila under Jhenaidah District.	08.09.2025 17:00	09.09.2025 12:00
04.	1137249	Package No. EED/JHE/REV/SHED/6821/2025-26/PG-02: Manufacturing and Supplying of Classroom Furniture at Katlagari Secondary School in Shailkupa Upazila under Jhenaidah District.	08.09.2025 17:00	09.09.2025 12:00
05.	1137250	Package No. EED/JHE/REV/SHED/6821/2025-26/PG-03: Manufacturing and Supplying of Classroom Furniture at Benipur High School in Shailkupa Upazila under Jhenaidah District.	08.09.2025 17:00	09.09.2025 12:00
06.	1141889	Package No. EED/JHE/REV/SHED/6821/2025-26/PG-06: Manufacturing and Supplying of Classroom Furniture at Khalishpur Secondary School in Moheshpur Upazila under Jhenaidah District.	08.09.2025 17:00	09.09.2025 12:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/Hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fee for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National System portal have to be deposited, online through any registered Bank's branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Subroto Kumar Poul
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department, Jhenaidah.
Phone: 02-477746133

GD-1856



Eminent guests at the programme.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF HSBC

'SHOTOBORSHE SULTAN'

Witness Nasir Ali Mamun's homage to Bengal's greatest

AISHWARYA RAIHAN

Bengal Shilpalay inaugurated *Shotoborshe Sultan* last Friday, a solo photography exhibition by Nasir Ali Mamun, held as a tribute to legendary Bangladeshi artist SM Sultan on his birth centenary. The exhibition has been organised by Bengal Foundation, in collaboration with HSBC Bangladesh.

The ceremony, hosted by the director general of Bengal Foundation, Luva Nahid Chowdhury, was attended by HSBC CEO Mahbubur Rahman; eminent Bangladeshi Spanish artist Monirul Islam, as a special guest; Prothom Alo's Editor Matiur Rahman; and Bangladesh Bank (BB) Governor Ahsan H Mansur, as the chief guest.

Two books on SM Sultan were also launched to give us the chance to dive into the artist's life. In his speech, Monirul

Islam mentioned how chaotic SM Sultan's art style was, and yet everything he put on his canvases came together in harmony. All the guests spoke in celebration of SM Sultan's 100th birthday and praised Mamun for his brilliant work.

Born in 1953, Nasir Ali Mamun is an Islamhey Padak-winning photographer. He had also bagged the Shilpkala Padak and a fellowship from the Bangla Academy thanks to his photography skills. Moreover, he received lifetime achievement awards from Drik, Standard Chartered Bank, and The Daily Star.

Since 1978, he has been the personal photographer of Bangladeshi Nobel laureate and Chief Adviser Dr Mohammad Yunus. In the mid-to-late '70s, he was spellbound by Sultan's artwork when seeing them for the first time. The universe granted his wish, and he was able to photograph his "man of soil, from the

forest."

Sheikh Mohammad Sultan is one of the most celebrated artists of Bangladesh, who established his own unique art style that did not align with a typical realistic portrayal of human figures. He glorified the strength of our rural people, men and women alike, and painted them with a muscular appearance. He explained to Mamun that the farmers are the backbone of our country, and even though people can't see their strength, he can, as they carry this country on their shoulders despite being exploited by the upper classes.

The photos taken by Mamun capture the old Renaissance residence of SM Sultan in Narail, the women in his family, the surrounding greenery, and the rural population who were close to his heart. There are images of Sultan playing musical instruments, his signature flute,

and painting his masterpieces. However, the most beautiful are the photos of him with his beloved cats and the parrot. Sultan once told Mamun that a person cannot love anyone deeply unless they love animals.

Mamun shot the photographs with no artificial light and a slow shutter speed. The images are mostly black and white. Fascinatingly, the single photos are taken in a manner where the background often disappears into nothingness, and only Sultan's existence with his long curly hair comes as a ray of light.

Shotoborshe Sultan not only showcases veteran photographer Nasir Ali Mamun's mastery in using lenses, but it is also a window to the past where one of the legendary figures of our art and culture exists in all his glory. Bengal Shilpalay will run this exhibition until September 27, 2025.

'Agantuk' to close Toronto Multicultural Film Festival this year



Bangladeshi film *Agantuk* has officially been selected as the closing film of the five-day Toronto Multicultural Film Festival, which began in Canada yesterday (August 24). The film, directed by Biplab Sarkar, also has the English title *The Stranger*.

The ensemble cast of *Agantuk* includes Ferdousi Majumdar, Sahan Rahman Sumi, Ratan Dey, Mahmud Alam, Ehan, Rafsan, Hridoy, Hasimun, and Naima Tasnim.

The ongoing eighth edition of the Toronto Multicultural Film Festival will conclude on August 28 with the screening of *Agantuk*. This year's festival will showcase 47 films from 28 countries. The opening film was the Canadian production *Universal Language*.

Saif Sarwar's 'Go Beyond' nominated at Int'l Motor Film Awards

Saif Sarwar, Bangladesh's first automotive content creator, made history as his short film *Go Beyond* earned a Best Independent Film nomination at the International Motor Film Awards (IMFA) — the first Bangladeshi automotive film on a global stage.

Go Beyond was selected from 242 entries across



12 categories at IMFA 2025, competing alongside Hollywood releases such as *FI: Mission Impossible: The Final Reckoning*, *Den of Thieves 2: Pantera*, *Heads of State*, and *Weekend in Taipei*.

The film features high-octane off-road action with a modified Ford Ranger Wildtrak, capturing the thrill of adventure in cinematic detail.

Dubbed the Oscars of motoring, the IMFA honours excellence in automotive film and TV. The ceremony this year will be held on October 2 at London's restored Victorian Theatre, Alexandra Palace.

Bruce Springsteen's shelved track finally surfaces as 'Born to Run' turns 50



Bruce Springsteen's *Born to Run* studio album marks its 50th anniversary today (August 25). To commemorate the occasion, a long-shelved 1975 studio outtake, *Lonely Night in the Park* — a song once strongly considered for the album but never released — will finally make its official debut.

Originally recorded during the Record Plant sessions for *Born to Run*, *Lonely Night in the Park* has circulated as a bootleg for decades, but never in such high quality until now.

The release is accompanied by a collection of rare photographs taken by Eric Meola during the *Born to Run* album cover shoot.

NEWS

No closure yet for the families

FROM PAGE 12

grief, and I'm dying a slow death," she said.

Over the past year, the relatives of the missing people have approached the district administration many times to get answers, but to no avail.

The last search inside the charred six-storey factory building was conducted on August 29 last year, a day before firefighters finally doused the flames. Since then, neither the police nor the fire service has conducted any further searches of the premises.

In September last year, a government probe body recommended conducting a search operation after removing the damaged structure. However, the authorities have yet to take any action.

Contacted on August 21, Mohammad Zahidul Islam Miah, who took charge as the deputy commissioner of Narayanganj this January, said, "I cannot say anything about the probe report ... The families of the missing ones have approached us multiple times. They also submitted a petition, which I forwarded to the police for action.

"We asked police to investigate. Hopefully, there will be an update soon."

Mehedi Islam, senior assistant superintendent of police in Narayanganj, said police are acting on the list of 182 missing people provided by the district administration.

"We have been tracking their last locations based on mobile phone numbers," he told The Daily Star on August 19, adding that police will come up with a report as soon as possible.

Talking to this correspondent on Saturday, Mohammad Osman Gani, deputy assistant director of Narayanganj Fire Service and Civil Defence (Zone 2), said, "No further search operations have been conducted there [after August 29 last year]. We have not received any instructions regarding this."

Seeking anonymity, a senior official of Gazi Group said, "Our own security personnel are guarding the factory premises. The six-storey building, which lies in ruins, has been off limits to all since a BUET expert team declared it risky on August 29 last year."

"Nothing can be done there without clearance from all the authorities concerned, including the district administration and the fire service,"

added the official.

According to the probe body's findings, Gazi Tyres factory housing multiple structures on a 26.72-acre area saw the first phase of looting and arson attacks on August 5, the day the Awami League regime fell following a mass uprising.

The looting continued till August 8 amid a fragile law and order situation. No casualties were reported during that period.

Following the arrest of factory owner and ex-minister Golam Dastagir Gazi on August 25, the establishment saw a second wave of looting and arson attacks. At least 182 people went missing as a blaze engulfed the six-storey building. The flames raged for five days before firefighters managed to put it out.

STILL LOOKING FOR ANSWERS

This correspondent visited the homes of 22 missing people and spoke to their relatives, who expressed dismay at the authorities' indifference to tracing their loved ones.

One of them is Rashida Begum whose only child, 21-year-old Aman Ullah, a worker at a battery factory, was last seen entering the premises of Gazi Tyres on August 25 last year.

"My husband has been bedridden for 10 years after suffering a stroke. It was my son who ran the household."

"Will I never get the chance to see my boy one last time?" she asked.

Like her, Farzana, wife of a missing 27-year-old textile mill worker, is looking for answers.

"I approached whoever I could -- the SP, the DC, and even army members. But no one could say whether my husband Arif is still alive or dead," said Farzana who now has to care for their two sons -- seven-year-old Ayan and 18-month-old Naim Hasan -- entirely on her own.

Truck driver Nur Hossain went missing on August 25 night after he, along with his brother-in-law Russell, entered the factory compound.

Nur's wife Parveen Begum, a mother of three, now struggles to make ends meet.

"After waiting for a year, I now only want a death certificate so that I can get a widow allowance," she said.

Among the missing people are two brothers, Sabbir and Shahadat Shikder, who used to work as electricians.

Their mother, Nurunnahar, now desperately seeks closure. "For the past year, everyone asked me to be patient. But my patience has run out," she said.

GOVERNMENT PROBE

The local administration formed an eight-member probe committee on August 27, two days after the blaze.

In its report submitted to the deputy commissioner on September 12, the probe body said several structures inside the factory compound were set afire on August 5 last year and looting continued for four days.

The report noted that if law enforcement and intelligence agencies had taken steps to ensure security at the factory after the August 5 incident, it would have been possible to avert the devastating fire about three weeks later.

I mentioned that when a group of intruders went to the fourth and fifth floors of the six-storey building to loot copper and chemicals stored there, another group of intruders locked the gate on the ground floor, started a fire and left. The fire spread quickly as flammable substances were stored in the building.

On September 1, the committee held a public hearing, attended by family members of around 80 missing people, in front of the factory. At one point of the hearing, they forcefully entered the factory, defying restrictions, and recovered some bones and skulls that were later handed over to police.

Asked, Superintendent of Police Protish Kumar Majumder said the bones and skulls were sent to CID's forensic division for tests.

"So we have not yet received any updates from the CID," he said.

Referendum on July Charter

FROM PAGE 12

constitutional questions related to the July Charter.

It was noted that issues not requiring constitutional amendments could be implemented through ordinances. The law ministry is currently working to identify the recommendations within the charter that are "immediately implementable."

The National Consensus Commission finalised the draft of the July Charter after two rounds of dialogue with political parties.

The draft includes 84 issues on which consensus was reached, with notes of dissent recorded on at least 11 points.

"After waiting for a year, I now only want a death certificate so that I can get a widow allowance," she said.

Among the missing people are two brothers, Sabbir and Shahadat Shikder, who used to work as electricians.

Their mother, Nurunnahar, now desperately seeks closure. "For the past year, everyone asked me to be patient. But my patience has run out," she said.

FROM PAGE 12

He said the commissions were given no terms of reference. "So, there was really no coordination or cohesion in that reform, nor an underlying set of priorities or even an ideological premise to what you want to carry on."

Each commission worked out its own ideas in its own sector, he said.

The small group of civil society members was then handed the major task of bringing together the political parties to reach a settlement on what reforms they would commit to, he added.

"We are now operating in a very specific context of a caretaker government, which has probably another six months left before they are committed to holding elections and transferring power to an elected government."

"So, the discussion should relate to what they are going to do and what outcomes may emerge over the next six months."

The consensus commission is headed by Yunus himself but its task on so many reform proposals is actually being carried out by Prof Ali Riaz and a few others, Sobhan said.

"The problem over there is that Ali Riaz and his colleagues have been entrusted with the responsibility of bringing in a settlement amongst a collection of political parties, where the representative status is highly uneven and where major political parties have

"been initially excluded from the process.

"Are they going to simply make deals that 'you kindly put your signature to the proposals and then we will show that this has become a Sanad [July Charter] and we will then be able to move on after that?'" he said.

In that case, Sobhan said, "We will have to depend now exclusively on the elected government to determine which reforms can be carried out. We will see what happens when an elected government comes into office, if they are drawn to tradition -- their problem will be that they've been hungry for 16 years."

"Whether they will be inclined to look after their deprivations in the initial period before they begin reforms is to be seen."

Regarding financial sector reforms, he said those being talked about are "governance reforms" in reality.

Sobhan said a list of 2,000 defaulters seeking loan rescheduling has been made and a panel has been formed to find out whose applications are acceptable on "very easy terms".

"This is exactly a process which was twice initiated under the Hasina regime by successive governors of the Bangladesh Bank."

"Now this essentially means that this culture, which was put in place in the first BNP government under Ziaur Rahman and was perpetuated under successive regimes throughout, and reached its apotheosis under Hasina

convener of the Provost Standing Committee, told The Daily Star they were called to the meeting by the election commission to discuss the overall situation at the halls.

"Collectively, they [the provosts] highlighted the current environment and discussed how the election could be conducted fairly. They also described the present conditions in the halls and put forward suggestions on what steps should be taken to ensure a free and fair DSC election going forward."

DU Vice Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmed told The Daily Star that ensuring a level playing field always requires active efforts.

"We've been working on this for over nine months. After multiple discussions, we've reached a position to hold the election. If there're specific problems, we'll look into them."

He added that at the meeting, issues were noted and some actions had already been taken as per the provosts' suggestions.

"There was discussion regarding a specific student organisation... We're working on it."

Contacted, Dr Abdullah Al Mamun,

when she was in power for 16 years, has created a major structural problem for the banking system," he said.

Prof Selim Raifan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), presented a paper at the event.

He said two important reports -- the white paper and the task force committee report -- highlighted gross anomalies in past governance and laid out detailed recommendations on reform.

However, these efforts have not translated into a coherent reform drive, Raifan said.

"Reform remains piecemeal. There has been no clear drive or mobilisation in terms of reforms. Whatever the government has done is fragmented," he said.

Prof Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the CPD, said reforms cannot be done at a time, but since peoples' expectation is huge, it may be embedded in the political system in future if democracy and progressive political system are ensured.

Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), Birupaksha Paul, a former chief economist of Bangladesh Bank, Prof Rounaq Jahan, a CPD trustee, also spoke at the discussion. Economists Prof Nazrul Islam, Prof MM Akash, Syed Akhtar Mahmood and Rushidan Islam also participated in the event.

NEWS



Children play a spirited game of football in the waterlogged field in front of Paharpur Government Primary School in Khulna yesterday. Despite the monsoon leaving most school grounds soaked and muddy, the students enjoy their favourite sport and make the most of the challenging conditions.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

One more dies of dengue; 430 get hospitalised

UNB, Dhaka



One more death was reported from dengue in 24 hours till yesterday morning, raising the fatalities from the mosquito-borne disease in Bangladesh to 115 this year.

During the period, 430 more patients were hospitalised with the viral fever, raising the number of confirmed cases to 28,632 this year, according to the DGHS.

The death has been reported in Chattogram.

Currently, 1,281 patients are receiving treatment in various hospitals across the country.

Last year, dengue claimed the lives of 575 people.

Cucusu polls schedule

FROM PAGE 3
Cucusu Chief Election Commissioner Prof Monir Uddin said, "The electoral code of conduct will also be published shortly. We expect to finalise the voter list soon."

The last election took place on February 8, 1990.

The first Cucusu election was held in 1970. Though the polls were supposed to take place annually, CU authorities have managed to hold them only six times.

"Our education system has to be dismantled to some extent, to remove outdated practices and rebuild it with meaningful changes," he said.

Empower youth

FROM PAGE 3

Writer and journalist Ashraf Kaiser noted in youth, we are not just investing in the future, we are investing in the present. The transformation of youth is the transformation of the globe," she added.

Mahmudur Rahman, chairman of IGCF, said the foundation was established with a clear mission to provide a platform for young people to share their ideas and opinions for a better future.

Economist Dr Mahbub Ullah said, "We must create an environment, facilities, and opportunities that will automatically make the youth empowered."

Prof Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, vice chancellor of North South University and chairman of Grameen Bank, called for a major overhaul of the education system.

"Our education system has to be dismantled to some extent, to remove outdated practices and rebuild it with meaningful changes," he said.

The programme was presided over by Abdullah SM Asif, COO of IGCF.

National University Vice Chancellor Prof ASM Amanullah and Dhaka University's Dr Sukumar Barua also spoke.

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Towards an Agricultural Price Commission: Safeguarding Farmers' Livelihoods

Bangladesh Food Security Network-KHANI and Participatory Research and Action Network – PRAAN in collaboration with The Daily Star, organised a policy cafe titled "Protecting the Farmers: The Case for an Agricultural Price Commission" on July 17, 2025. Below is a summary of the discussion.

Nurul Alam Masud
Chief Executive, Participatory Research & Action Network – PRAAN



Statistics reveal that agriculture's contribution to the nation's GDP is steadily declining. A distressing trend emerged this year: between January and April, 12 farmers took their own lives. In response, a fact-finding team was assembled to investigate these incidents. The team focused on two recent cases, visiting the bereaved families alongside local officials, and speaking with family members, neighbours, and relevant authorities.

A recent report by the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC), surveying four districts and 20 markets, confirmed that farmers are not receiving fair prices for their produce, while middlemen continue to capture the profits. These findings underscore the urgent need for institutional intervention to protect farmers and ensure equitable returns.

Umme Salma
(Keynote Presenter), Programme Coordinator, Participatory Research & Action Network – PRAAN



In the 2023–24 fiscal year, the government projected potato consumption at 9 million tonnes, but the actual harvest surged to 10.6 million tonnes. Such a surplus should have lowered prices, yet potato prices remained high, highlighting inefficiencies in the market. Unchecked profiteering persists, and the more middlemen involved, the less benefit reaches farmers.

Following 12 recent farmer suicides, the Bangladesh Food Security Network – KHANI investigated two tragic cases. In Meherpur, 55-year-old Saiful Sheikh ingested pesticide after suffering catastrophic losses on his onion crop. He had invested 150,000 BDT but earned only 58,000 BDT, of which 26,000 BDT went to labourers. The investigation revealed soaring input costs, unaffordable seeds and pesticides, unreliable markets, and zero bargaining power. Small farmers rarely qualify for bank loans, forcing them into microfinance schemes with punishing weekly repayments, impossible to meet when crops take months to yield returns. Weeks before his death, farmers protested, demanding storage solutions and restrictions on cheap Indian onion imports.

In Rajshahi, Mir Ruhul Amin took his own life by jumping from a train after borrowing from three microfinance lenders. His story mirrored Saiful's: crushing debt, predatory lending, and no safety net.

Rezaul Karim Siddiqui
Vice-Chair, Bangladesh Food Security Network (KHANI)



In our society, middle-class priorities often dominate, leading the government to focus more on urban citizens than



RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Set up an Agricultural Price Commission to ensure fair crop pricing, curb middlemen exploitation, and bring transparency to markets.
- » Guarantee Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for key crops, protecting farmers from price volatility and securing reasonable profits.
- » Boost storage and post-harvest facilities to reduce losses, stabilise prices, and manage crop surpluses efficiently.
- » Expand affordable credit and regulate lending, shielding farmers from debt traps and predatory finance practices.
- » Deliver real-time market data via mobile apps or SMS, empowering farmers to make informed sales decisions.
- » Promote agro-processing and value addition to turn surplus crops into products, diversify incomes, and reduce waste.
- » Ensure farmer participation and gender equity in policymaking, giving smallholders and women farmers a voice and access to resources.

on farmers working in the fields. Whenever prices of essentials rise, authorities respond with imports, open market sales, or subsidies. But farmers remain trapped in a cycle of exploitation: they buy inputs at high prices and then sell their harvest at unfairly low rates. Traders, not farmers, control market prices, leaving cultivators with almost no bargaining power. Weak monitoring only worsens the problem. For example, farmers widely use Shukh-Sagor seeds, but these are often sold through informal, unregulated channels. The government is reportedly considering reforms to ensure a fair balance-keeping food affordable for consumers while also guaranteeing farmers a sustainable profit.

Ayesha Khatun
Female Farmer



In Koyra Upazila, most people depend on fishing for their livelihood, since paddy and vegetable farming are less common in the coastal areas near the Sundarbans. Locally, prawns are sold for 600 to 700 BDT per kilogram, while the same product sells for about 1,200 BDT in Dhaka. Despite this huge price gap, fishermen often fail to make a profit because local buyers pay so little. To continue farming and trading, they frequently take loans from grocery shops, fish feed suppliers, or microfinance NGOs. As a result, their income rarely covers the cost of production. Platforms like this are essential to share such struggles and explore solutions.

Professor Dr. Mihir Kumar Roy
Ex-Dean, Faculty of Business & Economics & Syndicate Member, City University Bangladesh



In Bangladesh, the government sets prices for staples like rice and paddy, leaving farmers without a voice in the process. While the country is often celebrated as a top global producer of various crops, this recognition rarely translates into benefits for farmers or society at large. Official statistics are frequently politicised, offering little reflection of real challenges. The core issue lies in systemic neglect. Two solutions stand out: genuine political commitment and a truly democratic government

that places farmers at the centre of policymaking. Only such leadership can drive meaningful reforms through strong policies, informed debates, and a firm pro-farmer stance.

Dr. Md Abdul Muyeed
Former Director General, Department of Agricultural Extension



In the industry, when gas, electricity, or raw material costs rise, producers adjust their prices to sustain profit margins. Farmers, however, lack such flexibility. Once their crops are harvested, they cannot reset prices; rising input costs often leave them in debt – a burden so severe that it has, tragically, led some to despair and even suicide.

The proposed Agricultural Price Commission, discussed today, offers a potential remedy. If the Department of Agricultural Marketing could provide farmers with real-time market price data, it would empower them to make informed decisions, ensuring fairer returns. Equally vital is addressing market access. Government-supported transportation, along with crop collection through cooperatives and direct delivery to wholesale markets, could reduce the stranglehold of middlemen. Such measures would not only stabilise farm incomes but also create a more equitable balance between producer and consumer prices.

Professor Sharmin Neeleomi
Department of Economics, Jahangirnagar University



Onion cultivation, a profitable cash crop, is one area where farmers carefully calculate returns. In contrast, paddy farmers face diverse challenges depending on the type of crop. Boro rice requires irrigation and significant upfront investment, while Aman rice is labour-intensive. Losses in these harvests vary greatly, just as they do for onion growers. Agricultural policy must therefore recognise these disparities in costs and crop patterns.

The Department of Agricultural Marketing offers onion farmers loans of 4.5–5 lakh BDT, with an equity requirement of 1–1.5 lakh BDT. Building an onion silo costs about 2–2.2 lakh BDT, which demands government support. However, loans that begin at

70,000 BDT can rise to 3 lacs BDT with interest, turning well-meaning schemes into financial burdens.

Agriculture's share of GDP has fallen from 60% in the mid-1960s to around 13–14% today, despite steady production – a typical structural shift in a developing economy. Women's participation in farming increased from 2000 to 2016 but later declined, likely due to mechanisation. Still, young women (ages 15–29) are entering the sector, a contribution often overlooked. Finally, when political pledges promise rice at 10–20 BDT per kilo, policymakers must clarify who ultimately bears the cost.

Anwar Faruque
Former Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture



The keynote highlighted a major concern: Bangladesh lacks reliable agricultural data, which complicates policy decisions. Regarding a price commission, the critical question is whether government agencies would follow its recommendations. A major gap lies in the lack of coordination between the Ministries of Agriculture and Food. For example, even when Ministry of Agriculture reports a rice surplus, the Food Ministry often fails to procure, undermining price stability. A comparison is telling: West Bengal procures around 20% of its rice and wheat, while Bangladesh struggles to reach even 1%. Without stronger procurement, stability is impossible. Farmers also need financial support for storage facilities. Above all, firm procurement policies and strong political will must come before other reforms.

Dr. Jahangir Alam Khan
Former Director General, Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute



A pragmatic, forward-looking pricing policy anchored by a dedicated price commission – is essential. Currently, Bangladesh sets procurement prices only for rice, wheat, and tobacco. These are determined by the Agriculture Ministry, considering production data, the previous year's rates, market trends, import-export parity, inflation, and living costs, with a 6–7% profit margin for farmers.

However, the absence of "incentive pricing," used internationally to

onion blower services are being trialled to reduce losses.

Ultimately, the government's role is to balance the interests of farmers and consumers, while strengthening growers' bargaining power – an inherently complex challenge.

Dr Mohammad Emdad Ullah Mian
Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture



The Ministry of Agriculture has identified six critical challenges facing the sector, prompting the formulation of nine thematic areas for targeted government intervention. These, in turn, have been broken down into 25 sub-sectors to enable precise and actionable strategies. The long-term vision is guided by the Agricultural Strategic Plan, with key milestones set for achievement by 2050, aimed at ensuring a sustainable supply of safe and nutritious food for both human and livestock consumption.

Among recent innovations is the Khamari Mobile App, designed to offer data-driven agricultural guidance. It draws on soil sample analyses collected from every village and union. The ministry is also strengthening seed quality assurance and distribution systems, while future plans include AI-based crop disease diagnostics and real-time weather updates to support farmers' decision-making.

To address data gaps, drone technology will be introduced in collaboration with the Space Research and Remote Sensing Organisation, alongside coordination with the national statistics division to improve data accuracy. Reliable production estimates will, in turn, support incentives for crop diversification and help mitigate price volatility arising from surpluses.

Government intervention in market pricing remains limited; regulatory measures are triggered only when product prices fall below production costs plus a 10 per cent profit margin.

The ministry is keen to enhance collaboration with the private sector and sees NGOs as a vital bridge between farmers and government support mechanisms. An engagement with NGOs is planned, while discussions with Bangladesh Bank have explored agricultural loans, collateral-free lending, and an emergency fund to cover collateral requirements.

Tanjim Ferdous
(Moderator), In-Charge, NGOs & Foreign Missions, The Daily Star



This dialogue has been a call for fairness in economic, systemic, and moral values. We have gathered not just as professionals,

but as people who depend daily on farmers' undervalued labour. Bangladesh is a global leader in rice, jute, and fish production, yet its farmers struggle to survive. The rise in farms suicides is not just tragic but a warning. An Agricultural Price Commission could ensure fair prices, stabilise markets, and bring justice to agriculture sector.

The Ministry of Agriculture is developing a broader reform framework, encompassing price forecasting, production planning, and farmer welfare. Fair pricing is addressed across three stages: before, during, and after production. At the outset, input costs are monitored, although fertiliser prices are the only inputs under direct state control. Post-harvest, initiatives such as free

Rinky brings long-distance running into focus

SPORTS REPORTER

Rinky Biswas capped a remarkable campaign at the 17th Summer Athletics Championships by setting a third consecutive national record on the final day at the National Stadium yesterday, urging the Bangladesh Athletics Federation (BAF) to put more focus on the country's long-distance runners.

Bangladesh Navy's Rinky clinched her fourth gold medal of the meet with a record-breaking performance in the 10,000m run, clocking 39:14.73.

Running barefoot for comfort, Rinky dominated the three-day competition, rewriting the record books in every long distance event she entered. On the first two days, she set national records in the 5000m (18:20) and 3000m (10:27.6) events. She also claimed her maiden senior-level gold in the 1500m on the opening day, eventually winning the best female athlete of the championships.

In total, seven national records were set during the meet, with three coming on the final day alone.

Rinky does not want to stop here, as she aims to represent the country at international meets. BAF hardly ever sends long distance runners to international events, but Rinky wants to change the narrative.

"The federation should consider sending long distance runners to international meets. With proper training, diet, facilities, we can also deliver good results," she said.

Interestingly, Rinky was once on track to become a footballer. However, her endurance caught the eye of coach Dilip Chakrabarti, who introduced her to athletics at the Junior Championships in 2018. That same year, at



Exhausted yet relieved, Rinky Biswas drags herself across the finish line to set a women's 10,000m record -- her third in four events -- on the concluding day of the 17th Summer Athletics Championships at the National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday. (Inset) Country's fastest sprinter Imranur Rahman is stretchered off the field following a hamstring injury during the men's 200m event.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Uncertainty grows over BCB polls amid conspiracy claims

SPORTS REPORTER

just 11 years old, the Narail native broke national record in 1500m. Her exploits attracted the attention of Bangladesh Navy, who brought her in as a contractual runner.

Since then, she has become one of the country's most dominant long distance athletes. Though she has lost count of her gold medals over the past eight years, she vividly remembers when she set records in the 3000m (in 2019), 5000m (2021), and 10,000m (2022).

"With four golds this time, I think my medal tally has crossed 10," Rinky said after her latest triumph. "But what makes this special is that I managed to break [all my] records in all three long distance events in a single competition while also winning every race I entered."

The Grade 11 student said her confidence stemmed from strong performances in training, where she had already broken national records. "I was confident I could achieve something big this time. I believed in myself, and I'm happy to have done it. Now, I hope Bangladesh Navy rewards me with a permanent job," she said.

Despite her success, Rinky believes she can go faster if given proper support. "I think I can improve my timing, but I need better training facilities from the federation and Bangladesh Navy," she added.

In the 200m events, Tareq Rahman and Sharifa Khatun emerged champions. Tareq won gold on his 200m debut, clocking 22.04 seconds after UK-based sprinter Imranur Rahman pulled out midway with a hamstring injury. His coach said Imranur will need two weeks to recover.

Sharifa edged veteran Shirin Akhter by a whisker, taking gold in 25.24 seconds. Shirin, a 16-time fastest woman, clocked 25.27 to settle for silver -- her second after losing the 100m crown to Sumiya Akhter on day one.

Bangladesh Army topped the medal tally with 26 gold, 21 silver, and 15 bronze medals. Bangladesh Navy followed with 13 gold, 16 silver, and 12 bronze, while Bangladesh Police finished third with one gold and two bronze medals.

"We have come to know that there is a conspiracy to run the board through an ad-hoc committee. The BCB constitution does not have provision for running the board through an ad-hoc committee. The current situation doesn't warrant an ad-hoc committee. We want elections."

Rafiqul Islam
President of Dhaka Cricket Club Organisers' Association

September 7.

With so little time left, the board officials should be busy in election-related tasks. But when this newspaper reached out to a top board official, he was unwilling to say whether there was any development and said many rumours were swirling around.

Another top official was yet to hear from the BCB honcho when the polls will take place, saying, "I have heard that the elections will be held

materialised yesterday as 76 Dhaka clubs under the banner of Dhaka Cricket Club Organisers' Association held a press conference, alleging conspiracy to sabotage the upcoming BCB elections.

"We have come to know that there is a conspiracy to run the board through an ad-hoc committee. The BCB constitution does not have provision for running the board through an ad-hoc committee. The current situation doesn't warrant an ad-hoc committee. We want elections," said the organisation's president Rafiqul Islam.

However, the organisers did not provide any evidence to support their allegations.

The club organisers also expressed concerns over the ad-hoc committees that are currently running the 60 district and five divisional cricket bodies.

"Many capable names have been removed from the ad-hoc committees. But there is no set rule that BCB councillors will have to be picked from the ad-hoc committee. We are hoping that capable people will become BCB councillors," Rafiqul added.

According to the current make-up of the BCB board of directors, 12 councillors come from Dhaka-based clubs, 10 from district and divisional bodies, two are nominated by the NSC, one comes from organisations.

four years from the date of its first meeting. The incumbent board held its first meeting on October 7, 2021, hence, the election would have to be held by October 7 this year.

In accordance with sections 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 of the constitution, the BCB CEO has to notify the concerned parties for the nomination of councillors to form the next general assembly, and according to the timeline, it has to be done by

in the first week [of October] from board members but I have not heard it from the BCB president."

Another BCB director claimed that 'dirty games' are taking place, making him reconsider his participation in the polls. Recently, long serving director Mahbub Anam had told a national daily that he will not participate in the polls.

With such insinuations going around, another development

Afghanistan name spin-heavy Asia Cup squad

AFP, Kabul

Fast rising Afghanistan announced a spin-heavy squad on Sunday, led by Rashid Khan, for the upcoming T20 tri-series and Asia Cup to be played in UAE.

Along with Rashid, Afghanistan will have Noor Ahmad, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Mohammad Nabi and uncapped AM Ghazanfar in the spin department as they play their first T20Is this year.

The tri-series, also involving Pakistan and the hosts UAE, starts in Sharjah on Friday, while the six-nation Asia Cup begins on September 9.

Fazlhaq Farooqi, Naveen ul-Haq, Azmatullah Omarzai, and Gulbadin Naib are the fast-bowling options.

Afghanistan face Pakistan in the opening match of the tri-series on Friday.

For the Asia Cup, Afghanistan are drawn in Group B with Bangladesh, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka.

Afghanistan face Hong Kong in the opening match of the Asia Cup in Abu Dhabi on September 9.

Afghanistan also announced a series of three one-day internationals and three T20Is with Bangladesh after the Asia Cup, also in the UAE.

The T20Is are on October 2, 3 and 5 in Sharjah, while the ODIs will be played from 8-14 in Abu Dhabi.

'All good things must come to an end'

AFP, Mumbai

Batter Cheteshwar Pujara announced his retirement from all forms of Indian cricket on Sunday, bringing an end to an international sporting career that spanned over a decade.

Pujara has played 103 Tests and five ODIs, last featuring for India in the World Test Championship 2023 final against Australia.

The batter made his Test debut for India in 2010 and throughout his playing journey racked up 7,195 Test runs at an average of 43.60.

On Sunday, the 37-year-old said he was hanging up his boots, noting that "all good things must come to an end".

"Wearing the Indian jersey, singing the anthem, and trying my best each time I stepped on the field -- it's impossible to put into words what it truly meant," Pujara said in a social media post.

"But as they say, all good things must come to an end, and with immense gratitude, I have decided to retire from all forms of Indian cricket."

"As a little boy from the small town of Rajkot, along with my parents, I set out to aim for the stars; and dream to be a part of the Indian cricket team," the cricketer continued.

"Little did I know that this game would give me so much -- invaluable opportunities, experiences, purpose, love, and above all a chance to represent my state and this great nation."

Pujara, a rare five-day specialist in the age of T20 and white-ball performers, has in the past attributed his staying power to discipline.

"I have certain routines, fitness, little bit of meditation," he told reporters in 2023.

SAFF U-17 WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP Bangladesh keep title hopes alive

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh kept their SAFF Women's U-17 Championship title hopes alive with a 3-0 victory over Nepal in their third group match on Sunday at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu. While the performance wasn't particularly dominant, Mahbubur Rahman Litu's side secured a comfortable win courtesy of goals from Thuinuye Marma, Saurav Akanda Prity, and Reya.

The result sees Bangladesh remain second in the four-team table with six points from three matches. India, who had previously beaten Bangladesh 2-0, lead the standings with a perfect record of nine points. Earlier in the day, India demolished Bhutan 8-0 and now boast a goal difference of +17, compared to Bangladesh's +3.

All four teams face each other twice in the tournament, with the return fixtures set for Tuesday -- Bangladesh will again take on Nepal, while India meet Bhutan.

Bangladesh could have in fact finished with a much bigger margin of victory had Prity, last year's U-16 top scorer, converted



more of her chances. She missed several opportunities, including a golden chance in the 35th minute after powering past multiple defenders, only to shoot wide from inside the box.

The breakthrough came six minutes later when Thuinuye fired into the top left corner from just inside the box, capitalising on Nepal's failure to clear a cross from Mamoni Chakma. Four minutes after that,

Prity doubled the lead with a strike from outside the area, punishing Nepal goalkeeper Laxmi Oli for rushing out to clear a long ball intended for Alpi Akter.

Bangladesh, however, struggled to maintain momentum in the second half. Nepal created more chances, with Sahara Limbu striking the post in the 55th minute before failing to beat goalkeeper Yearzan Bagum in a one-on-one just minutes later.

Prity came close again late in the match, hitting the near post twice, while Thuinuye also rattled the woodwork with a long-range effort. Eventually, substitute forward Reya sealed the win a minute before full-time, rounding the keeper and finishing confidently.



AUSSIES SALVAGE PRIDE IN STYLE

For the first time, the top three of Australia smashed tons as Cameron Green, Travis Head, and Mitchell Marsh all reached three figures in their record-breaking 276-run win over South Africa in the third and final ODI on Sunday in Mackay. Playing for pride after already conceding the series 2-0, Australia posted an ominous 431-2 before bundling the visitors out for 155 in 24.5 overs.

431-2 is Australia's second-highest ODI total, behind only the 434-4 scored against South Africa in 2006.

The 276-run win was Australia's second-biggest ODI victory (by runs) after their 309-run victory over the Netherlands in the 2023 World Cup.

It was also South Africa's heaviest ODI defeat, surpassing the 243-run loss to India in the 2023 World Cup.

Despite the heavy defeat, South Africa have now won more ODI series against Australia (9) than against any other opponent.

Cameron Green, unbeaten on 118 off 55, raced to his maiden ODI ton in just 47 balls -- scoring the second-fastest ton by an Australian after Glenn Maxwell's 40-ball ton against the Netherlands in the 2023 World Cup.

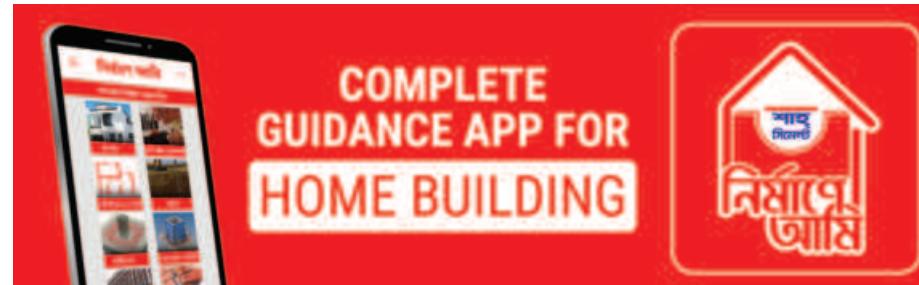
Mitchell Marsh's 100 off 106 helped him reach exactly 3000 runs in the format. This was also his maiden ton as ODI skipper.

Cooper Connolly (5-22) recorded the best figures by an Australian spinner in ODIs. At 22 years, 2 days, he became the youngest Australian to claim a five-for in the format.

PHOTO: AFP



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ONE YEAR OF GAZI TYRES TRAGEDY No closure yet for the families

'At least 182 remain traceless'



Family members of some of those missing.

PHOTO: STAR

SAURAV HOSSAIN SIAM, Narayanganj

One year after the devastating fire at Gazi Tyres factory in Narayanganj, the fate of at least 182 missing people remains unknown, while their families still await answers from the authorities.

Among them is 55-year-old Hormuza Begum, whose 22-year-old son, Abdur Rahman, is still missing.

Rahman, a power-loom worker, ventured into the factory in Rupganj area on

August 25 last year when it was set ablaze after looting.

"My son went to the factory with some of our neighbours. Not a single one returned home," said Hormuza, who is now grappling with yet another tragedy – the death of her rickshaw puller husband five months ago.

"I think my son died in the fire. I don't blame anyone. My only regret is that I never saw his body. His father died from

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Israel pounds Gaza suburbs, vows to press on
Launches attacks on Yemen's Sanaa, killing two

REUTERS

Israeli planes and tanks pounded the eastern and northern outskirts of Gaza City overnight Saturday to Sunday, destroying buildings and homes, residents said, as Israeli leaders vowed to press on with a planned offensive on the city.

Witnesses reported the sound of explosions non-stop overnight in the areas of Zeitoun and Shejaija, while tanks shelled houses and roads in the nearby Sabra neighbourhood and several buildings were blown up in the northern town of Jabalia.

Fire lit the skies from the direction of the explosions, causing panic, prompting some families to stream out of the city. Others said they would prefer to die and not leave.

Meanwhile, Israeli strikes also hit the Yemeni capital Sanaa on Sunday in retaliation for Houthi missiles fired towards Israel, with Houthi media saying the attack killed at least two people and injured five.

The strikes are the latest in over a year of direct attacks and counterstrikes between Israel and Houthi rebels in Yemen, part of a spillover from the onslaught in Gaza.

The Israeli military said the targets included a military compound housing the presidential palace, two power plants and a fuel storage site.

The Houthi-controlled Saba news agency said the strikes killed at least two people and injured five.

The strikes were conducted in response to repeated attacks by the Houthi terrorist regime against the State of Israel and its civilians, including the launching of surface-to-surface missiles and UAVs toward Israeli

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

One killed in mob beating in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Patuakhali

One person was killed and another injured after being beaten by locals on allegations of robbery in Bauphal upazila of Patuakhali early yesterday.

The incident occurred around 3:30am at Kashipur Bazar area under Adabaria union, police and locals said.

A gang of robbers allegedly broke into the houses of Khalil Hawlader and Azhar Jamaddar, held the families hostage at knife point, and looted Tk 10 lakh in cash and gold jewellery.

Hearing screams, locals rushed to the spot, caught two suspected robbers, and beat them while the others fled with the looted values.

Police rescued the injured and took them to a hospital where one died during treatment. The body was sent to Patuakhali Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Bauphal Police Station OC Akhtaruzzaman Sarker said the identities of the deceased and the injured could not be confirmed immediately. Police are conducting drives to arrest others involved.

Referendum on July Charter, polls could be held same day

Experts suggest at meet with commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A referendum on the implementation of the July Charter could be held on the same day as the next general election, a group of legal experts suggested at a meeting with the National Consensus Commission yesterday.

They also opined that issues requiring constitutional amendments should not be enacted through ordinances.

"There was a discussion on the pros and cons of holding a referendum regarding the proposed reforms. This topic will be placed for further discussion with the political parties," said a legal expert, wishing anonymity.

"If the referendum and the national election are held on the same day, political parties may be less likely to object. But if the referendum is held before the election, many may claim that the election is being deliberately delayed," the expert added.

"The results of the referendum could be highly unpredictable. But if the referendum results favour the reforms, political parties will face both political and moral compulsion to accept them," the expert also said.

Speaking on the issue, a commission

member confirmed that the matter was discussed but said "nothing was finalised".

The consensus commission yesterday held its second meeting with experts to discuss the methods and procedures for implementing the July Charter.

Experts also opined that issues requiring constitutional amendments should not be enacted through ordinances.

Law Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul, Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman, former Justice MA Matin and Moinul Islam Chowdhury, Supreme Court Advocate Sharif Bhuiyan, and Barrister Imran Siddique, along with others, attended the meeting at the Foreign Service Academy.

At the meeting, participants discussed the possibility of seeking an official opinion from the Supreme Court under Article 106 to resolve key

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3



REFORMS IMPLEMENTATION

Yunus should have invested his authority
Says Prof Rehman Sobhan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent economist Prof Rehman Sobhan has said reforms not yet initiated and operationalised may remain unimplemented in the end.

"If they are going to be put into process even in the course of the next week or the next 10 days or the next 10 weeks, possibilities of these reforms being legislated and operationalised are not very high," he said.

He was speaking at an online discussion titled "Political Economy of Economic Reforms in Bangladesh: Promises, Obstacles and Realities". Shomaj Gobeshona Kendro organised the discussion that started on Saturday night and continued for four hours till 1:00am yesterday.

Sobhan, chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus is recognised in the global community as a Nobel laureate, which gives him significant authority to carry out reforms.

He said Yunus should have invested his authority behind a set of reforms that he could realistically initiate and bequeath to the next government.

But Yunus and his government have not done that, the economist said. The task has instead been left to a small group of civil society members, who have been given the extraordinary challenge of distilling reform proposals coming from 10 commissions, said Sobhan.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Extremely rare bright orange shark with white eyes discovered

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A shark with a striking orange appearance caused by a rare skin condition has been caught off the coast of Costa Rica.

The nurse shark, which measured more than six feet long, stood out from the species' usual brown colouring. The shark was captured on a sport fishing trip near Tortuguero National Park, at a depth of 37 metres. Researchers believe the unusual appearance was caused by xanthism – also known as xanthochroism – a pigmentation condition that creates excessive yellow or golden colours in the animal's skin due to a lack of red pigmentation.

The rare condition has never been seen in cartilaginous fish, a group that includes sharks, rays, and skates, in the Caribbean before, according to Federal University of Rio Grande research.

The shark also showed traits of albinism, including a pair of striking white eyes.



A displaced Palestinian man and his family warm up chickpeas as they sit amid the destruction in Saftawi neighbourhood, west of Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Hall provosts flag uneven field ahead of Ducsu polls

MAHATHIR MOHAMMED

Most of the provosts of Dhaka University's dormitories have expressed concerns over whether the environment at the halls is conducive enough for the upcoming Ducsu and hall union elections.

At a meeting with the election commission on Friday, attended by DU Vice Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan and Proctor Saifuddin Ahmed, they alleged that both partisan and independent candidates face an uneven playing field because of the rise of "covert politics".

This correspondent approached seven meeting attendees, three of whom agreed to speak anonymously.

They said that after the university reopened following the political changeover on August 5 last year, a "Sringhola Committee" was informally set up in each hall.

Each hall has different clubs, many headed by student leaders engaged in covert politics, who were then appointed to these committees, though university authorities had no role in their formation, they added.

"Some of those members are now contesting in the hall union and Ducsu polls," a meeting source said, adding that some groups linked to the covert student bodies are also spreading propaganda on social media through different Facebook groups.

"The 'Sringhola Committees' engaged with other hall residents through various activities, giving them an advantage in the election," one provost, preferring

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4