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WORK PLAN FOR POLLS

EC aims to wrap up key preps by November

AHMED DEEPTO

The Election Commission yesterday unveiled its work plan for the next general election and set November as the deadline for wrapping up all major preparations.

The plan lays out at least 24 time-bound tasks, including updating voter rolls, finalising constituency delimitation, registering new parties and local observers, preparing polling logistics, and holding talks with political parties.

Asked about the election schedule, EC Secretary Akhtar Ahmed told reporters that the commission will announce it 60 days before polling day.

"The Chief Adviser's Office has advised the commission to arrange the election before the upcoming Ramadan, which is expected to begin on February 17 or 18. So, you can calculate the [polling] date in line with that," he said.

In his August 5 televised address, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus said he would request the Election Commission to hold the national polls before next Ramadan in February 2026. The following day, his office sent the formal directive to the EC to complete all necessary preparations by that time.

WHAT'S IN THE WORK PLAN

According to the work plan, dialogues with registered political parties and other stakeholders will begin in the last week of September and

- Draft amendments to RPO, Code of Conduct to be sent to govt by Sunday
- Dialogues with political parties, others to start in late September
- First meeting with home ministry, law enforcement on September 25
- Revised voter list to be published on Saturday, final by November 30

continue for at least one to one-and-a-half months.

Participants will include civil society members, academics, women's groups, newspaper and TV editors, election observers and experts, as well as injured protesters from the July uprising.

The EC has already started working to finalise constituency delimitation, update the voter list, and register new parties. It is also preparing amendments to the Representation of the People Order 1972, the Political Parties and Candidates' Code of Conduct, the Election Conduct Rules, the Election Officers (Special Provisions) Act 1991, and the Election Commission Secretariat Act 2009.

The draft amendments to the RPO and the electoral code of conduct will be sent to the government by Sunday, the work plan says.

Guidelines and management framework for polling centres, as well as policies for domestic and international observers and journalists, have already been finalised.

On law and order, the EC will hold several consultations. The first is scheduled for September 25 with the home ministry and law enforcement agencies to plan security measures at polling centres and within constituencies. A second meeting will take place 15 days before the election schedule is announced, followed by further discussions after the schedule is made public.

"The commission will hold additional law and order meetings as needed," said EC Secretary Akhtar.

The voter list update is also nearing completion. A revised voter roll will be published on Saturday, with the final list due on November 30.

To ensure expatriate Bangladeshis can vote, the EC plans to introduce

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

A child bursts into tears as he jostles with others to get rice from a charity kitchen in the west of Gaza City yesterday. Story on page 16.

PHOTO: AFP

BNP, CPB welcome EC work plan
Announcement breach of govt's commitment: NCP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP and Communist Party of Bangladesh welcomed the Election Commission work plan for the next parliamentary polls, while the National Citizen Party and Islami Andolan Bangladesh criticised it.

The EC yesterday revealed its work plan and set November as the deadline for wrapping up all major preparations.

BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed told The Daily Star that the announcement fulfilled people's expectations.

"Everything has been done according to public expectations. I hope there will be no more irrelevant questions about the election now."

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Capital punishment for disappearance leading to death

Draft ordinance, okayed by govt, spells out penalties for those complicit; NHRC may investigate all cases

BAHARAM KHAN

The interim government yesterday approved in principle the draft of the "Enforced Disappearance Prevention and Redress Ordinance 2025", which proposes the death penalty as the maximum punishment in certain cases of enforced disappearances.

The draft stipulates the death penalty in cases where enforced disappearance leads to the victim's death, the recovery of their body, or when the victim remains untraced -- alive or dead -- even after seven years of the incident.

In cases where punishments other than the death penalty are imposed, offenders may also be liable to pay a fine of Tk 1 crore.

Members of all state forces -- including the armed forces, police, Rab and Ansar -- may be held accountable

if they are proven guilty in such cases.

The draft ordinance was approved at yesterday's weekly meeting of the Advisory Council at the Chief Adviser's Office with Chief Adviser Prof Mohammad Yunus in the chair.

There will be further discussions on the proposed ordinance before it gets final approval, CA's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam told journalists at the Foreign Service Academy.

The draft states that instead of law enforcement agencies, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) will investigate the cases related to enforced disappearances.

The draft also includes a provision for a financial penalty and two years' imprisonment for anyone found guilty in court of filing a false case related to enforced disappearance.

The draft ordinance states

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'I want to see justice before my death'

Abu Sayed's father tells ICT-2

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

The father of Abu Sayed, a student of Begum Rokeya University (BRU) in Rangpur who was killed in police firing on July 16 last year, yesterday appealed to the International Crimes Tribunal 2 to ensure justice for his son before his own death.



"My hope was that my son would secure a job during my lifetime. But that has been shattered. Now, my only wish is to see justice for my son's murder before I die," said Mokbul Hossain, breaking into tears as he gave his deposition as the first prosecution witness in the crimes against humanity case over Sayed's killing during the July 2024 uprising.

As Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam informed the tribunal that Mokbul would testify, the elderly man slowly approached the witness stand, visibly trembling with age and grief. Introducing himself, he said, "I am 85-year-old Mokbul Hossain, the father of martyr Abu Sayed."

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'We will ensure healthy politics on DU campus'

VP candidate Sheikh Tasnim Afroz tells Star

SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK

Sheikh Tasnim Afroz (Emi), vice-president (VP) candidate of the "Protirodh Porshod" panel in the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) elections, has pledged to resolve the accommodation crisis for female students and to ensure healthy political practices on campus if elected.

Speaking to The Daily Star, the VP candidate backed by the Left Democratic Students' Alliance said, "All of my panel members, including myself, have a long history of fight and struggle. Our position is clear, and we have no hidden agenda. We don't seek to depoliticise the campus while holding posts in political parties, nor do we want to deprive others of political rights. Everyone should have the right to do politics with dignity, and we've long been fighting for that."

"Sometimes we win, sometimes we lost, but we never gave up. I believe, by electing us, students will join in this ongoing struggle."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A campaigner distributing Ducusu election leaflets among students in front of the Dhaka University library yesterday. Electioneering is in full swing for the polls scheduled for September 9.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'Want to build modern, safe, liveable campus'

JCD-backed panel unveils manifesto for Ducusu polls

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal-backed panel has announced its manifesto for the Ducusu election, consisting of 10 key commitments and 65 specific pledges.

The panel -- led by vice president (VP) candidate Abidul Islam Khan and general secretary candidate Shaikh Tanvir Barie Hamim -- has pledged to build a modern, joyful, liveable, and safe campus by prioritising education and research.

The announcement was made in front of the Faculty of Arts building yesterday. The Dhaka University Central Students' Union election is scheduled for September 9.

The JCD manifesto includes commitments to ensure a safe campus for female students, health protection and empowerment for women, quality healthcare and health insurance for all students, and better facilities for students with special needs.

Other pledges cover modernising the curriculum, infrastructure, and examination system; improving research opportunities; introducing battery-run shuttle services; and providing harassment-free administrative services, student loans, and campus-based employment.

The panel also promised to promote RELATED STORIES ON PAGE 3, 16 SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

All countries to finally hit 2% spending Goal: Nato

AFP, Brussels

Nato yesterday said all its members were finally set this year to hit the alliance's previous defence spending target of two percent of GDP -- as they gear up for a far more ambitious goal.

The 32-nation military alliance agreed at a June summit in The Hague to massively hike defence spending over the next decade under pressure from US President Donald Trump.

The mercurial US leader rammed through a commitment from allies to cough up five percent of their GDPs on security-related spending in a move seen as key to keeping him engaged with Nato.

That headline figure breaks down as 3.5 percent on core defence spending and 1.5 percent on a looser range of areas such as infrastructure and cyber security.

The new target replaces the alliance's former military spending goal of two percent that was first set back in 2014.

Nato said in a statement that all allies were now expected to reach that goal in 2025 and that overall defence spending across the alliance would top \$1.5 trillion for the year.

That comes after a group of stragglers -- including Spain, Belgium and Italy -- hastily announced plans to reach two percent ahead of The Hague gathering.

The struggle to reach that figure highlights how difficult it will be for Nato countries in Europe to achieve Trump's far higher new target set this year.

But officials insist European countries must make good on their pledge if they are to have the capabilities needed to ward off Russia.

Numerous Western militaries and intelligence services have warned that Moscow could be ready to attack a Nato country within three to five years if the war in Ukraine ends.

Washington -- which has underpinned European security since World War II -- meanwhile insists it wants to shift more of the responsibility for the continent's defences onto European countries.

The Pentagon is currently conducting a review of its worldwide deployments and has warned it could look to scale back its footprint in Europe to focus more on China.

'We will ensure healthy politics on campus'

FROM PAGE 1

If elected, Emi said her top priority would be addressing the inadequate number of seats at residential halls. "Though half of Dhaka University's students are female, the number of halls for them is less than half of those for male students. Many female students come from remote areas without relatives in Dhaka. I'll ensure the administration acts swiftly to resolve their accommodation crisis."

She also vowed to break the deadlock around the Jucsu polls to ensure annual elections and to promote a peaceful campus environment free from violence. "The quality of accommodation, food, and education here is disappointing. Our global ranking is not up to the mark. These are issues I will also work on."

On teacher politics, Emi remarked, "While much is said about student politics, no one talks about teacher politics. Administrative positions often go to those with political identities, and they go on to implement party agendas. Students remain neglected regardless of who is in power. Recruitment and postings must be freed from party influence. Teachers should also be evaluated, with students' confidentiality ensured, and clear measures must be outlined for consistently poor performance."

She stressed that party subservience in student or teacher politics was unwanted. "Whatever politics happens here must be university centric. We also want to ensure proper grooming and skill development for students from their very first day."

On the election environment, the former VP of Shamsunnahar Hall Union criticised the administration for announcing army deployment without consulting students. "I think this is insulting. We're neither thieves nor criminals. There is no need for the military during the Jucsu elections."

Expressing optimism about a win, Emi added, "We've long struggled for the rights of all students, including female and indigenous students. We value diversity. For these reasons, I believe students will choose us."



The Talukdana Government Primary School, established in 1982 at Singerswar in Phulpur upazila of Mymensingh, is on the verge of being gobbled up by the Kongsho river. This photo was taken yesterday. Story on page 4.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Russia pounds Ukraine with missiles, drones

18 killed, including 4 children; EU, British Council buildings hit

REUTERS, Kyiv

Russia pounded Ukraine with deadly missiles and drone strikes early yesterday in a sweeping attack that President Volodymyr Zelensky said was Moscow's answer to diplomatic efforts to end its war.

At least 18 people, including four children, were killed in the capital, officials from the city administration said. As the sun rose, rescuers dug through a wrecked block on Kyiv's left bank and pulled at least two bodies from the rubble.

The strikes damaged the European Union's mission and British Council offices in the city, officials said. The European Union and London summoned Russian envoys to protest. There were no reports of casualties at either site.

"Russia chooses ballistics instead of the negotiating table," Zelensky said on X, calling for new sanctions on Russia. "I choose to continue killing instead of ending the war."

Russia said its attack had hit military industrial facilities and air bases, and that Ukraine had also attacked Russian targets.



The Kremlin said it was still interested in pursuing peace talks.

Moscow has regularly denied targeting civilians. Ukrainian officials say scores of civilians have died in Russian strikes on densely populated areas over the recent months, and thousands since the start of the war.

During the attack on Kyiv, explosions rang out as clouds of smoke rose into the night sky. Drones whirred overhead.

Mayor Vitali Klitschko described it as one of the biggest attacks on the city in recent months. At least 38 people were

wounded in the hours-long assault which damaged buildings in all city districts, officials said.

Across the country, Ukraine's military said Russian attacks struck 13 locations. National grid operator Ukrenergo said energy facilities were hit, causing power cuts.

A push by Kyiv and its allies to end the invasion that Moscow launched in February 2022 has yielded little, despite meetings between US President Donald Trump and his Ukrainian and Russian counterparts.

Russia has stepped up air strikes on Ukrainian towns and cities far behind the front line and pushed a grinding offensive across much of the east in a bid to pressure Ukraine into giving up territory.

"This is another grim reminder of what is at stake. It shows that the Kremlin will stop at nothing to terrorize Ukraine, blindly killing civilians and even targeting the European Union," EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told reporters in Brussels.

She said two missiles had struck near the office within 20 seconds of each other.

Sadi, Boishakhi to lead JCD panel in Jucsu polls

JU CORRESPONDENT

Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal yesterday nominated Sheikh Sadi Hasan as vice-president candidate and Tanzila Hossain Boishakhi as general secretary candidate for the Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union election, scheduled for September 11.

At a press briefing at Adamya 24, the monument honouring martyrs of the July mass uprising, JCD central Senior Vice-President Abu Alsan Mohammad Yahya announced the 25-member panel.

Anjuman Ara Ikra and Mohammad Sazzadul Islam were nominated for the female and male assistant general secretary posts.

"All four of them are July uprising frontliners," said Jahir Uddin Mohammad Babor, convenor of JCD's JU unit.

Sadi, a master's student of Bangla and former theatre activist, previously served as assistant education affairs secretary of his departmental council. He is now vice-president of JU's Gaibandha District Student Welfare Association.

He said JCD is committed to democracy, freedom of expression, quality education, better accommodation and food facilities, student-friendly politics, a safe campus for women, and the promotion of cultural and intellectual activities.

"This election is an opportunity to create a diverse and safe campus. We are committed to building that together with the students," he added.

Boishakhi, a master's student of government and politics, is president of JCD's Female Hall No. 13 unit. Injured by rubber bullets during the July uprising, she described herself as one of the female mobilisers of the movement. She now works as a research executive at The Bangladesh Dialogue think tank and has previously worked with NGOs, including Brac.

"If elected, I will work for the welfare of JU students, rising above political divisions," she said.

Ikra, the AGS (female) candidate, is an undergraduate student of computer science and engineering, and has volunteered with UNICEF and served in the Bangladesh National Cadet Corps.

The JU unit also asked its members, not in the panel, to withdraw. Even so, Syeda Ananna Fariba, a member of the JCD convening committee, said she would run as an independent for general secretary.

"The JCD panel is not student-friendly and full of bias. That's why I want to run independently," she told a press conference yesterday.

The panel also includes Hamidullah Salman, accused in a case over the murder of former Chhatra League leader Shamim Molla, as an executive member candidate.

JCD yesterday also announced panels for 11 male halls but none for female halls.

The official campaign for the Jucsu election begins today.

'I want to see justice before my death'

FROM PAGE 1

Besides Mokbul, NTV's Rangpur correspondent AKM Moinul Haque, who broadcast live footage of the police firing, also testified.

Later, the tribunal adjourned the proceedings until September 7.

This marks the beginning of the third trial over crimes against humanity committed during the July uprising.

Abu Sayed's killing intensified the anti-quota protest, transforming it into a mass uprising that led to the ouster of Sheikh Hasina's regime on August 5.

Mokbul described his son as "meritorious," noting his achievements: a talent pool scholarship in both Class V and Class VIII, a golden GPA in SSC, and later admission to the English department at BRU.

"He bore all his educational expenses through tuition," Mokbul, a farmer in Rangpur's Pirganj, recalled. "That afternoon, when I returned from the field, I saw my family members crying. They told me that Abu Sayed had been shot. Later, I heard he had passed away," said a visibly emotional Mokbul.

His two sons and two sons-in-law rushed to the university, only to learn that Sayed's body had been taken to the hospital. As they reached there, they found the body had been moved

for post-mortem. Initially, police refused to let them see the body, relenting only after sustained pressure from the family.

The body was finally taken home around 3:30am the next day, but local police, along with the then assistant commissioner (land) and upazila nirbahi officer, pressured the family to bury him before dawn. The burial took place later in the morning following his namaz-e-janaza, Mokbul said.

During the ritual bath, Mokbul said he saw blood still oozing from a wound in the back of his son's head and gunshot marks on his chest and abdomen.

During his deposition, he accused two policemen -- Amir Hossain and Sujan Chandra Roy -- of firing the fatal shots. He also said that Chhatra League leader Pomel Barua had grabbed his son by the throat and slapped him a few days earlier.

"I demand the toughest punishment for those who brutally murdered my son," he told the court.

Following Mokbul's deposition, two of the four state defence counsels for the 24 absconding accused, along with lawyers representing six accused in custody, cross-examined him.

The absconding accused include former BRU vice-chancellor Hasibur Rashid and former Rangpur Metropolitan Police commissioner Md

Moniruzzaman.

A disagreement erupted when defence counsel Md Aminul Ghani, representing former BRU proctor Shariful Islam, wanted to cross-examine Mokbul about a separate murder case filed over the same incident by Sayed's brother Ramzan Ali on August 18 last year.

However, the prosecution objected, arguing that since Mokbul did not file that case, he could not be questioned.

The tribunal chairman, Justice Nozrul Islam Chowdhury, also intervened, saying that the current law does not allow such a move.

Citing an Appellate Division judgement, he said, "This law has created a boundary with an iron fence; you cannot go beyond it."

Aminul also accused the prosecution of dictating the testimony of Mokbul by leading questions aimed at desirable answers.

"I have not seen a deposition more leading than this in my life. But I did not object, as the witness was the victim's father," Aminul told the court.

Meanwhile, a tribunal judge expressed dissatisfaction with a state defence lawyer's line of questioning and advised him to appear in court better prepared.

"Questions will be raised that efficient state defence lawyers were not appointed."

The panel also adjourned the proceedings until September 7.

EC aims to wrap up

FROM PAGE 1

an IT-supported postal voting system. As outlined in the work plan, a phone app will be developed by September 30 and tested throughout October. Expatriate voter registration and enrolment will take place between November 11 and 30.

The roadmap does not mention any challenges. Asked about this, Secretary Akhtar said, "Everything is a challenge. The commission

is not student-friendly and full of bias. That's why I want to run independently," she told a press conference yesterday.

The panel also includes Hamidullah Salman, accused in a case over the murder of former Chhatra League leader Shamim Molla, as an executive member candidate.

JCD yesterday also announced panels for 11 male halls but none for female halls.

The official campaign for the Jucsu election begins today.

possesses the necessary resilience to tackle each of them."

Regarding concerns about law and order, Akhtar clarified that these matters fall under the home ministry's jurisdiction.

"The commission's responsibility is to advance election-related activities. We will engage in discussions with the home ministry and proceed based on the evolving situation," he added.

Capital punishment

FROM PAGE 1

that if a government employee, law enforcement member, or any individual -- acting on their own or with official approval or even consent -- forcibly disappears someone, it will be considered a criminal offence.

Any person or persons found guilty of such an offence may be sentenced to life imprisonment or imprisonment of up to 10 years, along with a fine of up to Tk 50 lakh.

Concealing, destroying, distorting, or altering evidence of disappearance may be punishable with up to seven years' imprisonment and a fine of up to Tk 20 lakh.

Anyone involved in building or operating secret detention centres may face up to seven years' imprisonment and a fine of up to Tk 10 lakh.

According to Section 4(6) of the draft, anyone who visibly attempts, orders, instructs, assists, incites, or conspires to forcibly disappear someone will be punished with the same penalty as the principal offence.

Section 4(7)(a) states that if any subordinate, under control or authority, is involved in a disappearance or conspiracy to forcibly disappear someone, and the superior consciously ignores the information despite being aware, he will also face the same punishment as the principal offence.

The draft in section 4(7)(c) stipulates that failure to take necessary steps to provide relevant information under one's jurisdiction to the competent authority for the prevention, investigation, and trial of enforced disappearance will result in the same punishment as the principal offence.

Section 6 makes it explicit that enforced disappearances cannot be justified under any circumstances, including war, threat of war, internal political unrest, or any similar pretext.

If an employee fails to cooperate or neglects to carry out the commission's or tribunal's orders or recommendations, it will be considered misconduct and incompetence, and disciplinary action may be taken under service rules.

trigger a future political crisis, for which the government would be held responsible.

A statement was read out by NCP Senior Joint Convener Ariful Islam.

While discussions on the July Charter were ongoing, the chief adviser's "unilateral" announcement of the election left the NCP "shocked", said Ariful.

"For the greater interest, we accepted it. The chief adviser announced that the election would be held in the week before Ramadan in 2026. In that case, sufficient progress on reform and justice must be achieved by that time."

Ariful added that they are by no means against elections. From that perspective, announcing the roadmap is positive. However, they believe that the sooner the July Charter receives a legal basis, the sooner the election can be held.

Speaking at a press conference at the party's central office in Banglamotor, NCP leaders said preparing for polls without completing the implementation process of the July Charter could

lead to a future political crisis, for which the government would be held responsible.

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Participants at a roundtable titled 'Climate-smart Entrepreneurship: Pathways for Youth-led Change', organised by ActionAid Bangladesh and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

It's a national CRISIS

Rights groups express alarm over surge in child rape cases; urge urgent govt action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Calling the sharp rise in child sexual abuse across Bangladesh a "national crisis", rights groups have urged the government to take urgent and coordinated action.

They expressed deep concern over the situation following new data from rights body Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), which shows that cases of child rape increased by nearly 75 percent in the first seven months of 2025 compared to the same period last year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthen law enforcement, ensure accountability

Complete probes within 15 days, trials within 90

Establish child-friendly courts, legal procedures

Formulate national child protection strategy

Strengthen services like Helpline 1098 and Child Protection Units

Launch awareness campaigns to fight stigma, promote abuse reporting

Enforce zero tolerance for harassment in schools, madrasas

Alarmed by the surge, three child rights organisations -- Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), Save the Children in Bangladesh, and Plan International Bangladesh -- made the call in a joint statement yesterday.

They made several recommendations, which include strengthening law enforcement and accountability, creating a child sensitive justice system, promoting prevention and protection in communities, ensuring

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Dhaka city getting semi-automatic traffic signals

Pilot programme covering 7 out of 22 intersections starts tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

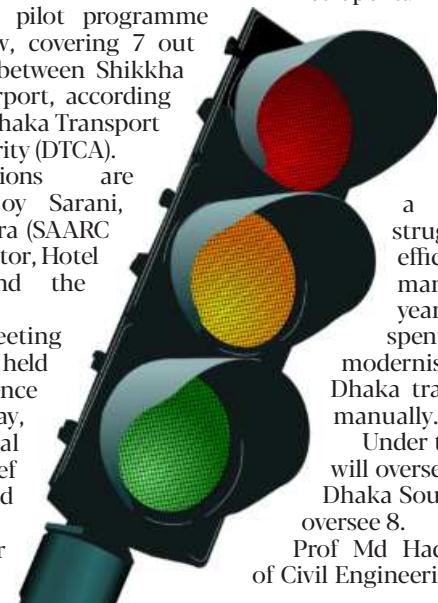
After missing previous deadlines, the government is finally preparing to launch seven semi-automatic traffic signals on a pilot basis to help habituate commuters with traffic signal systems.

A two week-long pilot programme will begin tomorrow, covering 7 out of 22 intersections between Shikhab Bhaban and the Airport, according to an official at the Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA).

The intersections are Jahangir Gate, Bijoy Sarani, Farmgate, Saarc Foara (SAARC Fountain), Banglamotor, Hotel Intercontinental and the Chief Advisers office.

A preparatory meeting on the project was held at the DTCA conference room yesterday, chaired by the Special Assistant to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

The broader project involves



traffic signals at 22 intersections -- stretching from the High Court to the Airport -- coordinated by DTCA, funded by Dhaka North and South City Corporations, and technically implemented by Buet. The pilot phase will be managed by Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

The system will cost between Tk 10 crore and Tk 12 crore, according to officials at Dhaka North City Corporation.

The move follows a two decade-long struggle to implement an efficient system of traffic management. Over the years, the authorities spent over Tk 119 crore on modernising the equipment, but Dhaka traffic is mostly managed manually.

Under the new initiative, DNCC will oversee 14 intersections, while Dhaka South City Corporation will oversee 8.

Prof Md Hadizuzzaman, department of Civil Engineering at Buet, said the new

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SUNBATH IN STYLE

Crocodiles rest atop one another while soaking in the sun at one of the country's largest breeding centres in Naikongchhari, Bandarban. Established in 2000 on a 15-acre farm, the centre exports crocodile skin and has also become a tourist attraction. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Service barriers, financing gaps stifle young entrepreneurs

Speakers tell roundtable organised by ActionAid Bangladesh, Star

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tangles in government services remain a major challenge for turning ideas into reality and becoming successful entrepreneurs, said young innovators at a roundtable yesterday.

They also pointed out other barriers, including the absence of suitable platforms to promote products, consumers' reluctance to accept new items, a busy academic calendar, and safety concerns raised by families.

The roundtable, titled "Climate-smart Entrepreneurship: Pathways for Youth-led Change", was jointly organised by ActionAid Bangladesh and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

The event was part of the recently concluded "Climate Justice Idea Competition 2025", an initiative of ActionAid and The

Daily Star.

The discussion was attended by the winners of the competition, as well as the winners of ActionAid's "Youth-led Action Research on Green and Digital Transformation" competition,

They pointed out other barriers, including the absence of suitable platforms to promote products, consumers' reluctance to accept new items, a busy academic calendar, and safety concerns by families.

young entrepreneurs, and development practitioners.

The young innovators won the competitions for generating ideas and solutions to different problems.

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KARNAPHULI TUNNEL ACC sues Obaidul Quader for graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti Corruption Commission yesterday filed a case against former road transport and bridges minister and Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, along with three former top officials of the Bangladesh Bridge Authority, over alleged corruption and irregularities in the Karnaphuli Tunnel project.

ACC Director General Akhter Hossain confirmed the filing, saying that the case was lodged under Section 19(1) of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004, and Section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947.

The other accused are former secretary and executive director of the Bridge Authority Khandaker Anwarul Islam, former chief engineer Kabir Ahmed, and former director and permanent

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PURBACHAL PLOT SCAM 3 witnesses testify in three cases against Hasina, Tulip

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Three prosecution witnesses yesterday testified in three graft cases against 23 people, including deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, her sister Sheikh Rehana and niece British MP Tulip Siddiq.

The witnesses are Rajuk officials Mahbubar Rahman, Ashim Shil and Ullas Chowdhury.

Judge Md Rabiu Alam of the Special Judge's Court 4 in Dhaka recorded their statements, said ACC Public Prosecutor Mir Ahmed Ali Salam.

Hasina and Tulip have been made the common accused in the three cases.

After recording statements, the court also set September 4 for next hearings in three cases.

On August 13, the complainants of three cases --

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ACC sues Obaidul

FROM PAGE 3
member Ali Ullah Ahmed.

According to the case statement, the accused abused their authority and bypassed several critical stages of the project. Recommendations from foreign experts were ignored, while the environmental impact assessment, feasibility study and an independent tunnel board were skipped.

As a result, the project's cost rose abnormally, causing an estimated Tk 585.29 crore loss to the state exchequer, the ACC said.

The commission has also formed a three-member investigation team led by ACC Deputy Director Mohammad Sirajul Haque, with Assistant Director Abdul Malek and Assistant Deputy Director Anisur Rahman as members.

SAIFUL ALAM, 8

OTHERS SUED OVER

MONEY LAUNDERING

Mohammad Saiful Alam, chairman of S Alam Group, and eight others have been sued over allegations of embezzlement and money laundering involving Tk 548 crore.

Akther Hossain, director general of the Anti-Corruption Commission, yesterday confirmed that the anti-graft body filed the case after primary investigation.

The other accused include Miftah Uddin, former EVP of Islami Bank Bangladesh; Mohammad Monirul Mawla, former managing director of the bank; Akij Uddin, former

deputy managing director; Md Moshiur Rahman, managing director of Shob Meher Spinning Mills Ltd; Mohammad Shawkat Usman, director of Shob Meher Spinning Mills Ltd; Md Alomash Ali, proprietor of Top Ten Trading House; Bedarul Islam, proprietor of Gold Star Trading House; and Nurul Alam, proprietor of Alam Trading and Business House.

According to the ACC, the accused allegedly conspired to abuse their authority and breach trust to commit large-scale financial fraud.

The accused allegedly embezzled a total of Tk 548 crore and transferred or converted it into S Alam Group affiliated companies, committing punishable offences under Sections 409, 109, and 420 of the Penal Code 1860, Section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act 1947, and Sections 4(2) and 4(3) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act 2012.

The documents obtained by the ACC show that on October 1, 2024, Tk 521.52 crore was withdrawn from Top Ten Trading House's account via debit vouchers and deposited into the accounts of several S Alam Group affiliated companies, including S Alam Super Edible Oil Ltd and Sonali Traders. The ACC alleged that these transactions constitute a clear case of money laundering.

Dhaka city getting

signals will have a dual-mode system. Manual mode: traffic police can control signals via lights instead of hand gestures. Automatic Mode: where the lights will operate on pre-set timers, adjusted for peak and off-peak hours.

A control box will be placed inside nearby police boxes. Where police boxes are absent, alternative arrangements will be made, he said.

Officials stressed that traffic signals alone will

not solve congestion unless certain preconditions are met. These include strict control of jaywalking through fencing, zebra crossings, footbridges, closing of unauthorised medians except at designated pedestrian crossings, and removal of illegal and unregistered vehicles from primary roads.

Disciplined bus operations -- stopping in queues at designated bays, not side by side -- is also necessary for reducing traffic congestions, they said.

Freeze 120 bank

FROM PAGE 5
Moshirul Rahman, who is leading the investigation team, submitted an application in this regard.

In the application, the ACC official said that Saifuzzaman and others might attempt to transfer the money from the accounts at any time and from anywhere. If they do so, it could hinder the investigation into the allegations brought against

them. Therefore, an order was required to prevent such transfers.

On July 9, the same court directed the ACC to freeze 26 Beneficiary Owner's (BO) accounts owned by Saifuzzaman, his family members, and their beneficiaries over similar corruption allegations.

The former land minister and others deposited Tk 576,08,77,730 in these accounts.

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

A large crowd gathers behind a TCB truck in Mohammadpur's Ring Road area yesterday, hoping to buy essential items at subsidised prices. For many, this is the only way to provide basic necessities for their families.

PHULPUR UPAZILA IN MYMENSINGH Erosion leaves school on the brink of collapse

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A primary school in Mymensingh's Phulpur upazila has been at risk of river erosion for years.

Talukdara Government Primary School, established in 1982 in a remote area, has faced serious threat from erosion over the last couple of years. This year, however, the situation has reached its peak and the school could be washed away at any moment, feared locals.

The school serves several villages. Tofazzol Hossain, a member of Singerswar union, said erosion began some 15 years ago but no proper steps have yet been taken. Almost all of the school's 35 decimals of land has already been devoured.

Headteacher Arjuman Ara Begum said due to erosion by the Kongsho and Bhogai rivers in recent

years, the school has become a victim. This year, it is on the verge of collapse if the ongoing erosion continues with the monsoon rains, she said.

She said Water Development Board officials have visited the site on several occasions, but to no avail. The road leading to the school has already

broken down, forcing teachers and students to use an alternate route.

Once the school had around 400 students from Talukdara and Dhanbarhita villages, but due to

erosion the number has dropped to about 100 over the years, she said. Only a few students attend classes now.

Saima Akter, a fourth grader, said they feel unsafe continuing classes as the school has no protection.

Fifth grader Mohammad Al Amin echoed her.

Phulpur Upazila Education Officer Shanewaz Begum said high officials of the department have been informed about the matter.

UNO Sadia Islam Shima said they had informed WDB officials through a letter two months ago. Quoting WDB officials, she said protection work for the school will begin soon.

SM Abid Hossain, sub-divisional engineer of WDB in Mymensingh, said an assessment will be made to start protection as soon as possible.

It's a national crisis

FROM PAGE 3

safe learning environments, formulating a national child protection strategy, raising awareness of child helplines, and encouraging responsible media reporting.

"The rising number of child rape and sexual abuse cases is a national crisis and must be addressed through a multi-sectoral response. Behind every number is a child whose life has been irreparably harmed and a family struggling with trauma, stigma, and the pursuit of justice. Many incidents remain unreported or unresolved, reflecting systemic failures in protecting children," the statement said.

"The future of Bangladesh depends on the safety and well-being of its children. The trauma of an unsafe environment hinders development and leaves lasting impacts. Protecting them from violence is not optional; it is our moral, legal, and national duty," it added.

The organisations called for urgent measures to ensure all reported cases are promptly investigated and perpetrators brought to justice without delay.

They stressed the need for strict monitoring systems to track the progress of the

cases, expansion of child protection social workers, and stronger services to provide support to survivors, such as the Child Helpline 1098 and Child Protection Units (CPU).

They also demanded full implementation of recent legal amendments, including completing investigations within 15 days and trials within 90 days.

They also emphasised the need for stronger oversight of child welfare boards at national, district, and upazila levels to ensure all relevant child protection authorities are functioning effectively.

For a child-sensitive justice system, they urged the establishment of child-friendly courts and legal procedures, as well as legal aid and comprehensive psychosocial support for survivors and families.

The groups also called for nationwide awareness campaigns to challenge social stigma, promote children's rights, and encourage prompt reporting of abuse.

Community-based child protection committees should be strengthened to detect risks early, respond effectively, and intervene before abuse escalates, they said.

They further demanded zero tolerance for harassment in educational institutions, including schools and madrasas, as well as confidential reporting systems and strict disciplinary measures against abusive staff.

A national child protection strategy should integrate law enforcement, education, healthcare, and social services to safeguard children's safety and dignity, the organisations emphasised.

They urged raising awareness of helplines such as 999 and 1098 for immediate reporting of abuse and called on the media to report responsibly to avoid victim stigmatisation while highlighting trials and convictions to ensure justice and accountability.

ASK data shows that from January to July this year, 306 girls were reportedly raped, up from 175 cases during the same period in 2024. Among them, 49 victims were between 0 and 6 years old, while the rest were between 7 and 17.

Cases were not filed in 152 instances, leaving many victims outside the justice system. The statement warned that the actual number of cases is likely

much higher, as many cases remain unreported.

Citing Bangladesh Mahila Parishad data, it noted that 60 percent of all rape cases involve children under 18.

Boys are also victims, with ASK recording 30 cases during this period, though the true figure is believed to be much higher, the statement also said.

The statement was signed by Shaheen Anam, executive director of MJF; Suman Sengupta, country director of Save the Children in Bangladesh; and Kabita Bose, country director of Plan International Bangladesh.

Transport, safety to shape

FROM PAGE 3

turnout of non-residents may be low. I myself am in two minds about voting."

Several candidates have demanded more buses on election day to boost turnout. But DU authorities have not made a decision in this regard.

Naushin Arshi, a statistics student, said, "None of our friends are contesting, which makes me even less interested. Female students living far from campus are less likely to vote."

Rumia Rumman of fine arts, added, "We struggle with food, rest areas, pharmacies and hygienic washrooms. There is also no control over transport pricing or traffic around campus. I'll vouch for candidates who commit to solve these problems."

Some students, however, are more optimistic. "Candidates are trying

to reach us, and we are reviewing their manifestos," he claimed, while accusing DU authorities of apathy.

"Shutting down the TSC metro station on polling day is a deliberate act to discourage non-residential students."

Thanbir Al Hadi Mayed, assistant general secretary candidate from the Jatiyatobadi Chhatri Dal-backed panel, said they are reaching non-residents through JCD activists in Dhaka city.

He said JCD urged the Election Commission to increase polling booths and buses on election day.

Chief Returning Officer Prof Mohammad Zashim Uddin yesterday said voting would take about eight minutes per student.

"Everyone will be able to vote. There is no reason to worry about irregularities. We expect a high turnout this time," he said.

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of Goods/Works of RHD, Ferry Division, Shiromony, Khulna(Tender ID No: 1137590, 1137591, 1137592,

1137593, 1137594, 1137595, 1137596, 1137597, 1137598, 1137599, 1137601, 1137602, 1137603, 1137604, 1137605, 1137606, 1137607, 1137608, 1137609, 1137610, 1137611, 1137612, 1137613, 1137614, 1137615, 1137616, 1137617, 1137618, 1137619, 1137620, 1137623, 1137624, 1137625, 1137626, 1137627, 1137628, 1137629, 1137630, 1137631, 1137632, 1137633, 1137634, 1137635, 1137636, 1137637 & 1137638). This is an on line tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

Executive Engineer, RHD,
Ferry Division, Khulna.

3 witnesses testify

FROM PAGE 3

Deputy Director of Anti-Corruption Commission Md. Salahuddin and Assistant Directors Afan Jannat Keya and SM Rashadul Hasan -- testified before the court.

The anti graft body -- between January 12 and 14 -- lodged six cases with its Dhaka Integrated District Office-1 over alleged irregularities in the allocation of plots under the Purbachal New Town

project.

The ACC alleged that Hasina, in collusion with senior Rajuk officials, unlawfully secured six plots -- each measuring 10 kathas, in the diplomatic zone of Sector 27 of the Purbachal New Town project for herself, her daughter Saima Wazed Putul and son Sajeeb Wazed Joy; Rehana and her son Radwan and daughter Azmina despite their ineligibility under existing regulations.

Service barriers

FROM PAGE 3

Sharing his experience, Mahmudul Hasan, a winner from last year's Climate Justice Idea Competition, said under existing government regulations, an individual under 18 cannot obtain a trade licence or open a bank account.

"These are big problems for the country's young aspiring entrepreneurs to sustain," he said, adding that while ideas come easily, existing systems make it complicated to turn them into action.

Jahra Nanziba, a winner of this year's Youth led Action Research on Green and Digital Transformation, said their winning idea was to produce an "algae lime paint", which is eco-friendly and non-toxic. She said when they reached out to people, they refused to accept it, as theirs was not a well-known brand. Finding a suitable platform for product promotion remains a challenge, she added.

Rafiqul Alam Khan, manager at BYLC Ventures, urged young entrepreneurs to be patient for success.

SM Fahim Shahriar, CEO and co-founder of SustainLaunch Labs, also addressed the event.

The roundtable was moderated by Tanjim Ferdous, in-charge of NGOs and foreign missions at The Daily Star.

Over 1,500

FROM PAGE 5

The reinstatement and monitoring are ongoing, and a list of offenders is being prepared, said the DC.

The reports were submitted to the HC through Deputy Attorneys General Nur Mohammad Azami and Md Ershadul Bari Khandakar.

The HC bench of Justice Kazi Zinat Hoque and Justice Aynun Nahar Siddiqua ordered the ministry and the DC to submit further progress reports by October 22.

PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 29

LAUNDERING TK 100CR CID sues 33, including 3 former MPs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday filed a case accusing 33 recruiting agents, including three former MPs, of laundering over Tk 100 crore involving labour recruitment to Malaysia between 2016 and 2024.

The accused include former MPs Masud Uddin Chowdhury, Nizam Uddin Hazari, and Benjir Ahmed.

The case was filed with Banani Police Station by Md Moniruzzaman, sub-inspector (financial crimes) of the CID. Additional cases against other members of the syndicate are underway, said CID sources.

According to the case statement, CID investigation found that the accused are part of a syndicate. Former MP Masud Uddin Chowdhury of Feni, managing director of recruiting agency Five M International Ltd, in collusion with others, allegedly laundered about Tk 100.75 crore between August 18, 2016, and May 30, 2024.

For processing the documents of 9,372 Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia, the agencies collected Tk 150,000 per worker in addition to government-fixed recruitment fees of Tk 78,990.

Workers also paid Tk 10,000 for passports, Tk 17,000 for Covid-19 tests, Tk 6,500 for medical fees, and Tk 3,000 as uniform fees.

The case notes that receipt, transfer, and handover of such money, under the Money Laundering Prevention Act 2012, are punishable offences.

The investigation will be conducted by the Additional Inspector General of CID.

On August 20, the CID seized assets worth about Tk 500 crore belonging to Ruhul Amin Swapna, alleged chief of a syndicate sending manpower to Malaysia.

150-year-old printing press left to decay

MD AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

The remains of a printing press, believed to be around 150 years old, have been left abandoned for decades near Mrittunjoy School in Mymensingh.

City residents, researchers, and activists are demanding that this historic printing press be preserved before it is completely destroyed.

In early August, members of the Antiquities Preservation Committee – a local group comprising researchers and social and cultural activists – found the decaying press left under the open sky, with most of its parts missing.

Abdul Kader Chowdhury, a member of the committee, claimed the press is about 150 years old.

Citing The Monthly Sourav, a newspaper edited by Kedarnath Majumder in Mymensingh's history, archaeology researcher Swapna Dhar said Harchandra Roy Chowdhury, a zamindar of Sherpur, brought the printing press to Mymensingh in 1875. Later, Girish Chandra Roy Chowdhury, Sreekantha Sen, Sreenath Roy, Horikishore Ray, and Upendra Kishore Ray from Sherpur and Kishoreganj were also involved with the press, mainly for literary works, he said.

In 1947, Anath Bandhu Guha, founder of Mrittunjoy School, also used the press, Dhar added.

After a few years of use, responsibility for the press was handed over to Maulana Shamsul Huda Panchbaghi, an Islamic scholar, social reformer, and political leader from Mymensingh's Gafargaon upazila. The press continued

operating even after Bangladesh's independence, mainly printing political leaflets and posters," Dhar said.

However, in an essay titled Mymensingh Patrapatrika, published in 1987 to mark two centuries of Mymensingh town, Prof Abdul Kader Khan noted that Mymensingh has a rich history of printing presses, many of which were established primarily for literary works.

Prof Khan wrote that this press was brought to Mymensingh from Sherpur in 1893.



Referring to historical evidence, Rezaul Karim Aslam, a collector of ancient musical instruments in Mymensingh, said the design of the printing press shows it was manufactured by HS Cropper and Co, a company established by Henry Smith Cropper in the United Kingdom.

The company produced such presses between 1866 and 1892. The press's nameplate bears the inscription PATENT 2403, corresponding to a patent registered in 1867.

The Cropper press, operated by a

foot pedal, was widely popular for small-scale printing jobs such as letterheads, invitations, programmes, business cards, and other forms of job printing, Aslam added.

Imtiaz Ahmed Tansen, member secretary of the committee, said they submitted an application to the Department of Archaeology on August 25 to protect the press, as it holds archaeological value.

Shankar Basak, 55, who lives near the printing press, said he has seen it abandoned since his boyhood.

Over 1,500 sued for looting stones from Sada Pathor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday submitted two compliance reports to the High Court stating that 1,500 to 2,000 unidentified individuals have been sued over the large-scale looting of stones from Sada Pathor, a major tourist site in Bholaganj of Sylhet's Companiganj upazila.

The case was filed on August 15 with Companiganj Police Station under the Mineral Resources Act and relevant sections of the Penal Code, according to a report from the secretary of power, energy and mineral resources ministry.

In another report, the Sylhet deputy commissioner said 50 lakh cubic feet of stone and 11 lakh cubic feet of sand have already been reinstated at the Bholaganj stone quarry.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Freeze 120 bank accounts of ex- land minister Court passes order

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to freeze 120 bank accounts of former land minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, his family members, and their beneficiaries over corruption allegations brought against them.

The former land minister and others deposited Tk 44,24,70,965.87 in these accounts.

Judge (in-charge) Md Ibrahim Miah of the Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after ACC Deputy Director Md

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Aarti Pal makes malsha (traditional clay bowls), a staple household item made by artisans of Kumar Para. Each bowl is sold to traders across Khulna and beyond at a wholesale price of Tk 5-7. The photo was taken in the Palpara area of Sharafpur union yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

HABIGANJ-SHAYESTAGANJ Illegal sand trade damaging road

MINTU DESHWARA

If you travel along the Habiganj-Shayestaganj road, particularly near the Sudiakhal area, you will see large piles of sand stacked on the roadside.

Locals allege that certain individuals have been illegally extracting and selling this sand without government permits.

They claim that the stockpiling of sand has caused severe damage to the Habiganj-Shayestaganj road, turning it into a deadly stretch prone to frequent accidents.

Residents are now demanding that the administration launch an immediate drive to remove these illegal depots.

During a visit, this correspondent found sand heaped along the Sudiakhal section of the regional road. The sand is dredged from the other side of the road and later transported across Habiganj on tractors.

Locals blame these overloaded tractors for damaging the road.

According to sources, the business is run by a man named Nazim Ahmed.

One resident, requesting anonymity, said Nazim operates alongside an influential syndicate. Out of fear, locals avoid speaking against them publicly, though anger over the issue is widespread.

Faruk Ahmed, a CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver, said, "Sand is often loaded onto tractors. This has broken

several spots on the road, and a major accident could happen anytime."

Residents of Chunarughat added that the illegal extraction continues "right under the nose of the authorities," undermining both environmental and institutional integrity.

Pedestrian Minhaj Mia said,



"Accidents frequently happen here. On rainy days, when sand mixes with rainwater, the risk increases. We want this illegal sand business removed."

Local resident Alamgir Mia noted that an illegal depot has been built beside the road for easier transport, disrupting traffic.

He added that indiscriminate dredging is altering riverbeds and worsening erosion.

Although Nazim Ahmed admitted to running the sand trade without

permission, he denied causing damage to the road. "I am not involved in these things [damaging the road]. Some people are doing this to tarnish my reputation," he said.

Tofazzal Sohel, a member of the central executive committee of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA) and general secretary of Habiganj

Tenderer, said,

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD

Road Division, Pirojpur

E-mail: pirdivisionrhd@gmail.com

Corrigendum/Amendment-01

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Road Transport & Bridges/Road Transport & Highways Division
2	Agency	Roads & Highways Department
3	Procuring Entity Name	Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Pirojpur
4	Procuring Entity Code	N/A
5	Procuring Entity District	Pirojpur
6	Corrigendum for	Toll Collection Activity and Operation & Maintenance of Real-Time Web-Based Toll Collection System for Bekutia Bridge at 41st Km of Barishal-Jhalokathi-Pirojpur-Bagerhat-Khulna Road (N-807) for 3(Three) years under Pirojpur Road Division during the year 2025-2026
7	Corrigendum Ref No	35.01.7980.462.99.171.20-2384
8	Date	28/08/2025

KEY INFORMATION

9	Procurement Method	NCT & OTM
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FUNDING INFORMATION

10	Budget and Source of Funds	GOB
11	Development Partners (if applicable)	N/A

PARTICULAR INFORMATION

12	Project/Program Code (if applicable)	N/A
13	Project Name (if applicable)	N/A
14	Tender Package No.	01/Manual/PSN/PRD/2025-2026
15	Tender Package Name	Toll Collection Activity and Operation & Maintenance of Real-Time Web-Based Toll Collection System for Bekutia Bridge at 41st Km of Barishal-Jhalokathi-Pirojpur-Bagerhat-Khulna Road (N-807) for 3(Three) years under Pirojpur Road Division during the year 2025-2026
16	Tender Publication Date	13/08/2025
17	Pre-Tender Meeting Date	27/08/2025 at 12:00 p.m. Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Pirojpur (Zoom Meeting ID- 634 685 4277; Passcode: 12345)
18	Tender Last Selling Date	14/09/2025 up to 05:00 p.m.

Date	Time
15/09/2025	12.30 p.m.
15/09/2025	02.00 p.m.

Name & Address of the office(s)	Address
Selling Tender Document (Principal)	Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Pirojpur
Selling Tender Document (Others)	Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Barishal
Receiving Tender Document	(i) Office of the Superintending Engineer, RHD, Barishal Circle, Barishal (ii) Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Pirojpur
Opening Tender Document	Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division Pirojpur

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

22	Eligibility of Tenderer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenderers shall have the legal capacity to enter into the Contract under the Applicable Law. Tenderers shall be enrolled in the relevant professional or trade organisations registered in Bangladesh. Tenderers shall have fulfilled its obligations to pay taxes under the provisions of laws and regulations of Bangladesh As per requirements specified in TDS & TOR
23	Brief Description of Services	Toll Collection Activity and Operation & Maintenance of Real-Time Web-Based Toll Collection System for Bekutia Bridge at 41st Km of Barishal-Jhalokathi-Pirojpur-Bagerhat-Khulna Road (N-807) for 3(Three) years under Pirojpur Road Division
24	Price of Tender Document (Tk)	TK. 4000.00 (Four Thousand) Only



A group identifying themselves as "July Fighters" chant slogans surrounding former minister and expelled Awami League leader Abdul Latif Siddique, accusing him and other participants of conspiring at an event at the Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Latif Siddique harassed, handed over to cops

FROM PAGE 16
against the former lawmaker and 15 others.

Earlier, Prof Hafizur said in his speech, "We can see that plans are being made to throw away the country's constitution. Behind this are Jamaat-Shibir and the National Citizens Party. Under Professor Yunus' leadership, they are dishonouring the freedom fighters."

Soon afterwards, the group identifying themselves as July Fighters stormed the venue.

Latif Siddique later told reporters, "I didn't know there would be any problem here. I have no connection with the Awami League. I came only because I was invited."

Al Amin Rasel, a member of the group, said, "We are July Fighters. Here, corrupt leaders of the Awami League, Jibon League, and banned Chhatra League were gathering and plotting. We will not tolerate this."

Shamim Hossain, a Jamaat leader from Paltan Thana who accompanied the group, added, "A quarter is trying to pit 1971 against 2024. Those gathered here are involved in the

2024 killings, some are even accused in cases. We handed them to police instead of taking the law into our own hands."

Among other participants were former secretary Abu Alam Shahid Khan and Mancha 71 Coordinator Prof Abdullah Al Mahmud.

Around 12:45pm, DMP DC (Crime & Operations) SN Md Nazrul Islam told reporters that Latif Siddique was brought to the police station but "no decision had been made yet" as checks were underway if he was accused in any cases. Shahbagh Police Station OC Khalid Monsur later said they might be taken to the DB office.

In a statement issued in the evening, DRU strongly condemned the attack, saying its members were harassed while trying to stop the government's inaction.

He wrote, "Whenever the topic of Liberation War or freedom fighters comes up, some people get provoked. Yet, police take the victims, not the mobsters, into custody. Without government support, such incidents could not continue one after another."

He urged the authorities to stop shielding the perpetrators.

was condemnable.

"In reality, they are obstructing the 2024 uprising's democratic aspirations. They must be prevented,"

CPB President Mohammad Shah Alam and General Secretary Ruhi Hossain Prince said in the statement.

Mahmudul Hasan Manik and Nur Ahmad Bakul, acting president and acting general secretary of Bangladesh Workers Party, also condemned the attack. In a statement, they demanded the immediate release of Siddique and others, blaming the government for failing to prevent unlawful mob violence.

Prof Anu Muhammad, in a Facebook post, termed the incident "fascist violence" and criticised the government's inaction.

He wrote, "Whenever the topic of Liberation War or freedom fighters comes up, some people get provoked. Yet, police take the victims, not the mobsters, into custody. Without government support, such incidents could not continue one after another."

He urged the authorities to stop shielding the perpetrators.

'Want to build modern, safe, liveable campus'

FROM PAGE 1
youth engagement in constructive activities, strengthen cultural and sports programmes, ensure digital facilities with cybersecurity, create a green and animal friendly campus, and make DUCSU more effective while increasing the university's engagement in international platforms.

The JCD panel vowed to eliminate the notorious practices of guestroom and gonoroom (common room) culture, forced participation in political programmes, repression, terrorism, extortion, and illegal occupation of the campus.

They also promised to make the university fully residential by constructing new halls and ensuring that every newly admitted student gets

"a seat and a study table" from day one. The manifesto also includes increasing subsidies at canteens and cafeterias, ensuring food quality with the help of nutritionists.

It has also promised to abolish curfew-like restrictions in female dormitories, allowing women students more flexible entry hours at night.

NO DIRECTIVE TO INVOLVE ARMY
The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) yesterday dismissed reports about army deployment in the upcoming central student union elections at different universities.

In a statement, the ISPR said, "No directive has been given from the government to involve the Bangladesh Army in these elections, nor will there

be any scope for such involvement in the future."

The release added that the army believes the elections can be held peacefully and in a festive manner with the assistance of existing law enforcement agencies and under the supervision of university authorities. "Bangladesh Army extends its best wishes to all," it said.

When asked about the ISPR statement, Chief Returning Officer of the DUCSU election Prof Mohammad Zashim Uddin said army assistance may be sought if needed to ensure security.

"If the need arises, we will request their assistance through the university administration," he said, adding that as of now, there is no reason for concern regarding security.

Debunking DMP claim

FROM PAGE 16

The statement follows protests by engineering students in Dhaka's Shahbagh on Wednesday. The students were marching towards the chief adviser's residence to press home their demands when police charged batons and fired teargas shells to disperse the crowd. The clash left at least 50 students injured, according to protesters, while the home ministry said eight policemen were also hurt.

Meanwhile, The Daily Star

photographer Orchid Chakma, who was present at the scene, described the incident as it unfolded.

"Along with other photographers, I was standing near the road divider between Shaheed Abu Sayed International Convention Centre and the InterContinental Hotel," Orchid said. "Around 2:15pm on Wednesday, a group of police coming from Minto Road towards the InterContinental Hotel pushed the students towards Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. It was at

that moment that one of the protesters was restrained by the police. Several photographers captured the moment. Afterwards, water cannons were used to disperse the crowd," he added.

Contacted, Muhammad Talebur Rahaman, DMP deputy commissioner, told The Daily Star, "We have verified and found that no such incident took place."

Asked about photojournalists from different outlets having taken the picture, he said, "That is their issue. No such incident has taken place."

BGB chief refutes the self-defence claim

FROM PAGE 16

warnings. This mostly happens in the dead of night. In such attacks, 35 BSF personnel were seriously injured in the first six months of this year alone," he said.

Maj Gen Siddiqui said, "We cited examples where some of the killings took place in broad daylight. Sometimes, minors were killed. We raised a question: how can a minor pose a threat to an armed BSF soldier? In broad daylight, what kind of threat can an individual pose to the soldier?"

He added that if any Bangladeshi inadvertently crosses the boundary without criminal intent, BSF should apprehend them or, as a goodwill gesture, hand them over to BGB, without using lethal force.

The BGB chief said that in the DG-level talks, both sides agreed to try their best so that no crossings, deliberate or inadvertent, take place and no lives are lost.

On allegations of push-ins, the BSF chief said, "Foreigners staying illegally in India are dealt with as per the law of the land. All Bangladeshis who are found

illegally entering India inadvertently and without any criminal intent are handed over to the BGB respectfully."

He added that BSF had already handed over more than 550 Bangladeshis during the DG-level talks, while over 2,400 nationality verification cases remain pending with the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi, some for more than five years.

Asked about reports that Indian nationals were also pushed into Bangladesh, the BSF DG said, "If there are any instances of border violation by Indian nationals, a well-established mechanism exists between both countries for deportation. We will immediately accept if they are Indian nationals."

On why push-ins started this year, he said, "There is no specific reason. People are coming back ... through proper channels, through gaps, and through us. Whosoever we find, we immediately hand over them to the BGB."

"As I said, we have well-established mechanisms for deportations. We follow that only," the BSF DG said while

responding to a query whether pushing registered Rohingyas from India into Bangladesh violated the international law.

Regarding the conference outcome, BGB chief Maj Gen Siddiqui said, besides border killings and push-ins, the talks focused on preventing smuggling, particularly narcotics and arms, human trafficking, and illegal constructions within 150 yards of the border.

BSF also raised concerns about criminals entering India, BGB's objection to some Indian development projects, and fake Indian currency, while river-related and survey matters were also discussed, he said.

The DG-level conference concluded with the signing of the Joint Record of Discussions.

The Bangladesh delegation, led by BGB DG Siddiqui, included officials from several ministries and agencies, while BSF DG Chowdhury headed the 11-member Indian delegation with representatives from India's home and foreign ministries and the High Commission in Dhaka.



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
University Grants Commission of Bangladesh

UGC Bhaban, Plot # E-18/A, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

www.ugc.gov.bd

Commonwealth Scholarships in the United Kingdom (UK) tenable from September/October -2026

1. Applications are invited from Bangladeshi nationals for higher study under the Commonwealth Scholarships for MS/PhD in the United Kingdom (UK) tenable from September/October -2026 by following the mentioned terms and conditions below. **Please read all the terms and conditions carefully and fill up the Application Form as directions.**
2. **Category:** (a) One year Taught Masters (MS) course. (b) Doctoral (PhD) degree of up to three year's duration.
3. Applications are invited under six themes (mentioned below) for MS/PhD Program:
 - (i) Science and technology for development
 - (ii) Strengthening health systems and capacity
 - (iii) Promoting global prosperity
 - (iv) Strengthening global peace, security and governance
 - (v) Strengthening resilience and response to crises
 - (vi) Access, inclusion and opportunity
4. Candidates must mention the Broad Subject under the Six Themes (The Broad Subject means on which the applicant has obtained his/her first degree (Hons./Bachelor)/terminal degree (Master).
5. **(a) Qualification for Master's program:** Holding a first degree (Honours) of at least upper second class (2:1) honours standard/CGPA, or a second class degree (2:2) honours standard/CGPA and a relevant postgraduate Master's degree (terminal degree) in the same condition. **(b) Qualification for PhD program:** Holding a first degree of at least upper second class (2:1) honours standard/CGPA, or a second class (2:2) honours standard/CGPA degree and a relevant postgraduate qualification (a Master's degree) in the same condition.
6. **(a) For Master's Application:** Not have commenced and be currently registered for a Master's Degree or equivalent course leading to MPhil or PhD in the home country or abroad. **(b) For PhD Application:** Not have commenced and be currently registered for a PhD, or an MPhil leading to a PhD, in the home country or elsewhere.
7. Applicant's must mention total and obtained marks/GPA/CGPA at the time of filling the Application Form. (If the result of any degree of an applicant is Distinction, Excellent, Very good, Good and Passed etc, the applicant must mention the total number and the obtained number with the percentage in the form)
8. Candidates for Medicine or Dentistry must show the year of passing of each prof/part of MBBS/BDS , marks obtained, total and average marks with percentage in the Application Form.
9. Only Short-listed candidates will be eligible for interview in person. Any attempt of persuasion regarding the Commonwealth Scholarships in the UK tenable from September/October – 2026 will disqualify the applicant automatically.
10. The applicant must submit the Unconditional Offer Letter from the United Kingdom Universities with the Application Form. The applicant having Conditional Offer Letter related to Language Proficiency or Finance will be eligible to submit the Application Form. In this regard, if anyone of the applicants is short listed for Interview, the applicant must show and submit a copy of Language Proficiency Certificate/Result Sheet (e.g. IELTS, TOEFL etc.) at the Interview Board. University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh will check the authentication of the Offer Letter/s.
11. All the information (Direction/s, Application Form/Short list/s, Interview date/s, Selection/s or nomination/s, result/s and other relevant information etc.) regarding the mentioned Scholarships will be uploaded at UGC website (www.ugc.gov.bd) under the heading of "Notice Board/International Collaboration, Scholarship and Fellowship Box" timely. The applicant must check and collect all the information from the UGC website by his/her own responsibility. No communication will be done with the applicant/s from UGC side.
12. The Application Form is editable and must be typed (not hand written) in the prescribed directions. Additional papers can be attached with the Application Form for the description of the publications (if necessary).
13. The applicant/s in service must submit the Application Form through proper channel or with the prior approval of the concerned authority (proper channel means the concerned authority who will permit the study leave to the applicant if the applicant is nominated for the mentioned scholarships).
14. Copies of certificates, mark sheets of examinations passed result sheets, Language Proficiency Certificate (e.g. IELTS, TOEFL etc. if needed) examination, Offer Letter/s and 1 (one) copy of passport-size attested photograph must be enclosed with the Application Form.
15. Incomplete, faulty and shortage of any documents attached with the Application Form will be rejected automatically.
16. **Completed Application Form (Only Hard Copy) must be submitted to "The Director (IC), International Collaboration Division, University Grants Commission of Bangladesh, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207" within 25 September, 2025.** No Application Form will be received after the last date of submission. Name of Scholarship with category must be mentioned on the envelop and drop into the Application Drop Box kept in front of the reception of UGC.

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e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited through the national e-GP portal for the following procurement of works/goods.

e-Tender ID	Name of Works	Closing & Opening Date & Time	Procuring Entity/Contact Persons
1141991	Supply of Toner and Cartidge for NOCS Mogbazar	03-Sep-2025 15:40:00	(Shamim Ara Begum) Superintending Engineer NOCS, Mogbazar Circle, DPDC. Mogbazar T&T 33/11 KV Sub-station, DIT Road, Malibagh, Dhaka-1217, Phone: 9355276, Fax: 9336605 Email: semogbazar@drdc.gov.bd

The interested persons/firms/organizations may visit website (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) to get the details.

DGM (HR) Public Relations, DPDC

Department Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology
University of Chittagong
Chittagong-4331, Bangladesh
Phone: 0234460765 (extn-4414)

Date: 28/08/2025

e-Tender Notice

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal system and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System by the department of Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology, Biological Science Faculty, University of Chittagong, Chittagong for the procurement of following goods.

SL. No.	Tender ID & Package No.	Package Description	Online Tender Notice Publication Date	Online Tender Opening & Closing Date
01	ID-1144790, GEB-eGP (OTM)-G-02/BCCTF/GB-2025-26	Supplying chemicals, instruments and installation of necessary instruments for investigating the bacterial antibiotic resistance patterns and genetic basis in relationship with the rising climate change problem for enhancing the treatment strategies by combining antibiotics and supplements for Bangladeshi population in Department of Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology at University of Chittagong.	28-Aug-2025 15:00:00	22-Sep-2025 12:00:00

e-Tender details can be downloaded from as stated above on e-GP system for purpose. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank. e-Tenders will be accepted only up to as above date and time. Accepted tender will be opened online immediately after as stated above date and time.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP portal system and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

28/08/2025
Professor Dr. Mohammad Al-Forkan
Dept. of Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology
University of Chittagong
&
Project Director
"Investigating the bacterial antibiotic..... Bangladeshi Population"

GD-1893

27.08.2025
Mst. Jesmin Pervin
Director (IC),
International Collaboration Division, UGC



LAW REFORM

Analysing the 2025 Amendments to the CrPC

Fixing 60 working days for submitting the police investigation report under the newly inserted section 173B sounds promising. Extension is allowed only in limited circumstances. Magistrates are now empowered to take actions against the investigators for causing unreasonable delay.

SHEIKH MD. MUHIBBULLAH

The Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 (CrPC) has been the cornerstone of our administration of criminal justice for more than a century. However, people have constantly criticised its provisions for granting excessive power to the police. Finally, the government of Bangladesh has enacted the Code of Criminal Procedure (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 2025. This write-up will analyse the changes brought by the amendments that are both ambitious and significant.

At the core of this amendment lies the restructuring of the provisions related to both the pre-arrest and post-arrest processes. The newly brought provisions (sections 46A–46E) put strict obligations on the officer or person making an arrest. Among the many significant changes are the requirements for police to carry visible identification while making arrests, disclose their identity when requested, and show official identification upon request.

Importantly, after making an arrest, preparing a written arrest memorandum is now compulsory. Not only will the arresting officer prepare such a memorandum, but they will also have it attested and countersigned by a family member or local witness (and if no such witness is available, the reasons thereof shall be recorded), as well as by the person arrested, unless refused by them. Furthermore, the arresting officer must provide the arrested person with a chance to reach out to their relatives and consult a lawyer, preferably within 12 hours from the time of arrest.

Moreover, if injuries on the body of the arrested are found or if they appear to be sick, certificates shall be furnished through

immediate medical examination and treatment, preferably by a medical officer in a government hospital. However, if no such government medical officer is available nearby, the arresting officer can have the detainee examined and treated by doctors at private hospital as well, provided the doctor is a registered medical practitioner.

Similarly, the long-criticised section 54, notoriously known as a free license for police to arrest virtually anyone, has been brought under scrutiny and tightened by provisions that offer more clarity, justification, and accountability. Notably, these changes to section 54 were greatly influenced by our Apex Court's guidelines in *Bangladesh v BLAST (2016)* popularly known as the Rubel killing case. Most of the guidelines are addressed in this amendment, however, few guidelines from the original verdict by the HCD are left unaddressed e.g., interrogating the accused in a room with glass walls within sight of the lawyer or relations, etc.

Furthermore, significant changes have been brought about regarding police remand. Previously, the period of police remand could be extended up to 15 days upon the application by the police. From now on, an accused cannot be held in police custody for more than 15 days in total. If further detention is considered necessary, only judicial custody can be permitted. Ordering medical examinations before and after such police custody to rule out by the Magistrate any torture or marks of injury is also made mandatory.

The controversial practice of "shown arrest" application has also been addressed comprehensively under section 167A, which now obliges the magistrate to entertain such applications only when certain requirements

are met, such as producing the accused before the magistrates with supporting documents and allowing the accused a chance of being heard.

Additionally, fixing 60 working days for submitting the police investigation report under the newly inserted section 173B sounds promising. Extension is allowed only in limited circumstances. Magistrates are now empowered to take actions against the investigators for causing unreasonable delay.

And lastly, the mobile court system, for its prompt actions, has long been acclaimed by the public. However, many demanded that it be conducted by judicial officers rather than executive officers. This aspiration is reflected in the newly inserted section 264A, which states that a summary trial for scheduled offenses can be conducted at 'any place' within the jurisdiction of the court, and the judgment can also be pronounced in the same session.

Other noteworthy reforms include digital-summons, online-bail bonds, protection of the victims and witnesses, abolishing whipping as punishment, rationalising fine in several sections to match current socio-economic realities.

While these reforms are comprehensive and ambitious, their success will greatly depend on their proper implementation. Police corruption and political influence may continue to remain as a major challenge to the implementation of these promises. Despite these concerns, it has to be admitted that the 2025 Amendment reflects the policymakers' genuine commitment towards ensuring justice for the litigants.

The writer serves as a judge in the Bangladesh Judicial service and writes on legal and judicial reforms.

LAW LETTER

Preferential gifts as a tool of injustice

HASAN BIN RAFIQ

The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act 1937, through section 2, envisages Islamic Shariat to have its full application in certain cases, such as gifting properties when the parties are Muslims. Gifts are a form of transfer of property where the donor transfers the property to the donee in good faith without any consideration. However, at times, gifts may have adverse impacts on third parties, and that shall be the main focus of this write up.

Imagine this hypothetical scenario: Al Amin's mother died a year ago. His father remarried and became the father of another son. After a few months, the father gifted almost all valuable properties to the second wife and the newborn son. With an infant sister, Amin is now living with fear and uncertainty. Similarly, suppose Mr Azad has four sons and two daughters. Out of no just reason, he gifted his most valuable property located in Gulshan to his sons, depriving his daughters and wife.

Such preferential gifting- especially gifting property to one's sons, depriving the daughters is quite common in our society. Notably, Islamic Shariat (Quran and Sunnah) does not approve of arbitrary deprivation of heirs through such gifting, rather calls such practice injustice. For instance, in Sahih Bukhari, Hadith no 2587, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Be afraid of Allah, and be just to your children" when he came to know that a preferential gift was made to a son by the father, unjustly depriving his other children.

Again, in Sahih Muslim, Hadith no 1623, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) noted "I cannot bear witness to an injustice" in response to a preferential gift resulting in similar deprivation. Even within the tenets of the Hanbali school of thought, such gifts are deemed as void.

Significantly, academic arguments go "if it is found that a gift is not a mere gift and [is] made with motive to deprive some heirs then that should be declared void treating it as an evading device to Islamic Law Inheritance" (Professor Ekramul Haque, Dhaka University Law Journal, 2014, volume 25).

Our Constitution aims at realising a society free from exploitation. It provides economic and social justice for our people. At the core of our emergence, lies the values of equality, human dignity, and social justice. Article 28(l) bars the State from discriminating against its citizens on the ground of religion, amongst others. In my view, preferential gifting practices have the potential to be abused to the disadvantage of individuals who are vulnerable (including, for instance, women). For the sake of public policy, restrictions are often imposed at a reasonable extent against property rights (for example, to prevent monopoly). Similarly, this unfettered practice of preferential gifts should also be restricted.

Notably, the Indian Supreme Court declared triple talaq void. In the case of *Shayara Bano v Union of India (2017)*, there were two important issues whether the triple talaq was an essential religious practice in Islam and whether it violates fundamental rights. The court found that triple talaq comes under Talaq al Bida, which is not haram, but the Prophet (PBUH) himself did not practice or approve of it. In the context of unjust preferential gifting, our court can also adopt a similar view and treat it as void in order to prevent the injustice. Additionally, there can be one more safety test, which is to see whether the legislative reform made in this regard is compatible with Shariat as a whole.

Our aim to build a society free from economic exploitation is not possible, leaving such a tool of injustice that disproportionately impacts women as is. People have economic freedom, and this author does not seek interference with such freedom. It is the arbitrary use of such freedom that ought not to perpetuate injustice and deprivation.

The writer is LLM student, University of Dhaka.

LAW WATCH

Law and our safety on the road

MANISHA BISWAS

Last year, within 9 months, road crashes claimed more than 5,500 lives, while 33.71% of these occurred on national highways. Besides death, many are left with life-changing injuries, often without any form of compensation or access to immediate medical care. According to findings by the Road Safety Foundation, in March 2025 alone, 587 accidents resulted in 1,231 people being injured. These are the tragedies that could often be prevented yet that continue to occur due to longstanding deadly loopholes within our road safety systems and the lack of adequate implementation of the Road Transport Act 2018.

First crucial area of concern in this regard is the medical responses. Timely emergency medical services and appropriate trauma responses can prevent rising death tolls and reduce the severity of injuries after accidents. In 2016, when a young bus helper was refused emergency services, which subsequently led to his untimely demise, a writ petition was filed by the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) and others. In 2018, the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh enunciated a set of guidelines on ensuring emergency medical services to the victims of road accidents and protecting "Good Samaritans".

The court instructed all government and private hospitals and clinics to ensure

emergency medical services for road accident victims, discounting the legal complications on their financial abilities. The court directed all public and private hospitals as well as clinics to have infrastructural support for an emergency department, including adequate manpower, machinery, and ambulance services for the injured victims. Lastly, the court advised the Ministry of Health and Family Planning to publish the guidelines through a gazette notification and thereby build awareness among the masses. Despite such strong guidelines, till now there is no unified emergency response system. The ambulances that are available are often poorly equipped, slow to arrive, and with the guidelines not yet being published by the concerned ministry, hospital authorities still remain unaware of the High Court's directives.

Another important area is remedying the victims. Notably, the compensation for victims are currently regulated by the Road Transport Act 2018 (replacing the Motor Vehicles Ordinance 1983). The law focuses on transport fitness, drivers' working hours, the role of assistants, and the allocation of responsibilities in both road management and accidents. Instead of holding the owner solely responsible to pay the compensation, it establishes a financial fund through government grants, fines obtained under the Act, annual contribution of vehicle owners and donation from motor vehicle owners' associations. However, the

process of calculating such aid still remains ambiguous. There is no established scheme to assess payable amounts based on the severity of injuries. Although compensation is mentioned in cases of death, the law does not set clear standards for what constitutes an appropriate amount, and in many instances, the sums offered appear rather arbitrary and grossly inadequate. This lack of clarity leaves victims and their families without a reliable means of redress.

Finally, there are drivers who are an important stakeholder, yet whose rights are often overlooked. According to section 39 of the Road Transport Act 2018, the government may, by gazette notification and in line with the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006, fix the working hours and rest periods for drivers, conductors, and helper-cum-cleaners of transport vehicles, which employers and workers must comply with. However, due to unsafe road conditions, many work 12 to 18 hours within an unregulated "no work, no pay" scheme. In a system where drivers are paid per trip and forced to meet harsh deadlines for pick-up and drop-off, their labour rights and mental health have long been overlooked. As a result, fatigue, stress, and risky driving practices continue to often result in fatal accidents on our roads.

On 13 August 2011, a highway crash claimed the lives of Tareque Masud, a celebrated filmmaker, and Mishuk Munier, a respected Dhaka University faculty member. Fourteen

years have passed since that day, and their families have endured a prolonged legal battle. It has been seven years since the High Court Division delivered its verdict in their compensation claim, yet the appeal before the Appellate Division remains unheard, leaving justice in limbo. To prevent such tragedies and the prolonged suffering that follows, the health ministry must urgently implement clear guidelines for emergency medical services, alongside legal protections for "Good Samaritans," supported by a nationwide unified emergency response system, as suggested by the apex court in its judgment. Equally vital would be to formulate a mechanism for awarding compensation to the victim and to specify the working hours for drivers and helpers, ensuring their well-being and fostering a culture of safety that can begin to reform the dangerous driving norms.

The writer is Senior Research Officer, BLAST.



Comparison is a curse

—

VICKY ZAHED



People have mostly seen him in positive roles. He's a true gentleman in real life, but I wanted to break that image. So, I cast him as a devil-worshipper in Silence, and people were shocked. In AKA, his character has a vicious attitude and an important role. I have a feeling audiences will remember this character.

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

The human psyche has always been a source of endless fascination for Vicky Zahed. Known for weaving stories that blur the line between reality and imagination, he has built a reputation for leaving audiences stunned with twists they never see coming.

At present, the director has his hands full with two back-to-back projects—*Khowabnama*, released yesterday on the Capital Drama YouTube channel, while his Hoichoi original *AKA* will follow closely behind on September 4. Adding to the excitement, *Khowabnama* arrived just a day before his birthday, making the release all the more special.

In the midst of all this, we caught up with Vicky to talk about his latest projects, the ongoing buzz around his career, and what lies ahead. Just last Wednesday, several social media pages claimed that he would soon be making his silver screen debut alongside Afraf Nisho. When asked about it, the director admitted he was just as surprised as anyone else.

"I don't know where these rumours stem from," Vicky clarified. "Honestly, I haven't said anything anywhere about doing a film, neither on my Facebook nor on any other social handle. Nothing has been finalised yet. Yes, I am planning to make movies, but when everything is set in stone, I will let people know. With my first film, I plan to explore the thriller genre."

While *Khowabnama* is a romantic tragedy, *AKA* is a psychological thriller—both hold a special place for the director. *Khowabnama* delves into the power of love and its potential to push a person to extremes. Starring Tawsif Mahbub and Tanjin Tisha, the project has already created a buzz with its posters. "I'm really nervous about this project, especially seeing the social media reactions. I truly love this story, and it feels like a gift to my fans for my birthday," Vicky shared.

One scene, in particular, has become a talking point online: Tawsif Mahbub being buried deep in the ground, surrounded by snakes. "We actually dug a grave with the help of real gravediggers and draped Tawsif in an actual shroud (*kafoner kapor* in Bengali). He couldn't



move at all, and on top of that, he was terrified of snakes. We placed six snakes on him, and the scene was shot around 3am or 4am. He had to completely rely on us for safety. It was a daring stunt, but he performed it bravely. Honestly, this scene isn't just a gimmick; it's essential to the plot. When viewers watch the series, they'll understand why it was crucial."

Although Vicky rarely directs romantic dramas, his previous works, including *Chirokāl Aaj* and *Neel Shukh*, infused romance with unexpected twists that kept audiences hooked. "I don't do many romantic dramas, but the ones I do are loved by the audience. *Neel Shukh* was primarily a love story, but the ending had a thrilling twist. People also enjoyed *Chirokāl Aaj*. Since the audience wanted me to explore romance, I decided to make a tragic romantic drama with *Khowabnama*."

With *AKA*, Vicky Zahed experimented with a social thriller for the first time. "*AKA* is meta, which means the audience can relate to many elements of the story. You'll feel like you're living in its world. It's the journey of a common man who becomes extraordinary. I'm fascinated by the human mind. *AKA*'s (the main character) psyche is very intriguing; he sees animal faces

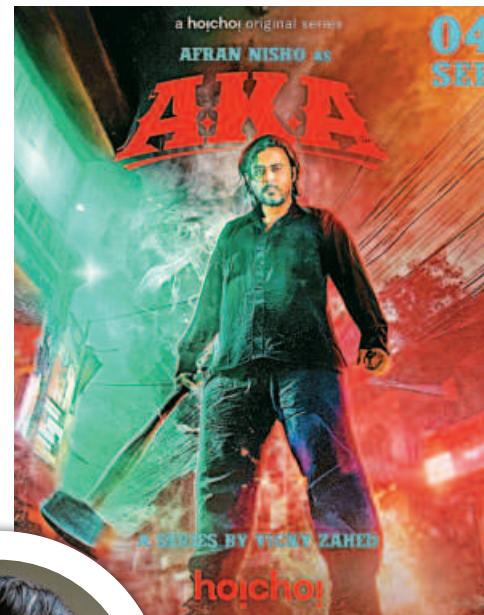
instead of human ones, is in love with music, and has phenomenal writing skills. If you watch the trailer, you'll hear some powerful dialogue. This character is complex: someone capable of writing beautiful words while also brutally harming others. Afraf Nisho shares a romantic moment with Masuma Rahman Nabila in the series. It's fascinating to see how he balances everything, and I believe audiences will be hooked by his journey."

Lately, Vicky has frequently collaborated with Azizul Hakim, experimenting with different morally grey characters. "People have mostly seen him in positive roles. He's a true gentleman in real life, but I wanted to break that image. So, I cast him as a devil-worshipper in *Silence*, and people were shocked. In *AKA*, his character has a vicious attitude and an important role. I have a feeling audiences will remember this character."

With great work comes great expectation, and people constantly expect excellence from Vicky. "It is really becoming a burden," he admitted. "From the beginning of any of my projects, there's immense pressure on me. I feel like I have to do better than my previous work. It's almost like a curse—when you've done many great projects, people start comparing. I put my heart and soul into all my projects, and if people still compare negatively, it really hurts."

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSVED & COLLECTED

04 SEP



COMING SOON

Farooki hails Lalon tribute, urges broader cultural recognition

Filmmaker and Cultural Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki has welcomed the government's decision to elevate Lalon Shah's death anniversary to a "Category A" national day, calling it a step towards dismantling intellectual colonisation.

In a social media post yesterday, he argued that nations are first made taught to see their culture as inferior. He said Lalon's songs were sidelined as "folk," not high art, while rock was dismissed as "counterculture."

He urged the post-July 2024 state to officially embrace cultural practices that already resonate globally. Alongside Lalon, the cabinet discussed honouring SM Sultan, Humayun Ahmed, and rock icons.

Mustafa Monwar's 90th birthday to be celebrated with puppetry



Legendary artist Mustafa Monwar will be honoured on September 1 with a day-long programme at Bangladesh Mohila Samity to celebrate his 90th birthday.

Titled *Mustafa Monwar Jayanti*, the celebration is being jointly organised by Hatakorii in Acting, Actors Studio, and BotTala.

Festivities will begin at 9am with a children's doodling workshop, followed by a puppet show at 10am by Inventors and Together We Can, paying tribute to Monwar's pioneering contribution to puppetry.

The play *Bonnotherium*, directed by Evan Riaz and adapted from Sukumar Ray's *Heshoram Husiyarer Diary*, will be staged at 11am.

Ikrimkri will present children's books in the courtyard, reflecting Monwar's belief that art and reading belong with play.

NEWS

Bangladeshis losing 5.5 years to toxic air

FROM PAGE 16
Lalmirhat, the least polluted district, records seven times the WHO threshold.

Between 1998 and 2023, the country's PM2.5 pollution -- particles smaller than 2.5 micrometres -- surged by 66 percent, eroding 2.4 years of life expectancy. In 2023, annual average PM2.5 rose to 60.8 micrograms, 1.7 times the national standard and more than 12 times the WHO guideline.

"If PM2.5 concentrations in Bangladesh were reduced to meet WHO limits, an average resident could live 5.5 years longer," the report states.

Dhaka faces one of the gravest impacts, with residents potentially living nearly seven years longer under WHO standards. Meeting the weaker national standard would still add over four years.

In Chattogram, residents could gain 6.2 years under WHO limits and 3.3 years under the national threshold.

Together, Dhaka and Chattogram -- home to nearly half the country's population -- would see average life expectancy rise by over six years.

Other centres show similar risks.

In Gazipur, residents could gain 7.1 years with cleaner air, while Narayanganj residents could add 6.6 years. In Comilla, Tangail, Khulna, and Mymensingh, the gains would range between five and six years, and in Sylhet 3.5 years.

The AQI's 2023 data shows global PM2.5 concentrations were 1.5 percent higher than that of 2022. Its toll on life expectancy is four times that of alcohol use, and five times that of transport injuries or unsafe water and sanitation.

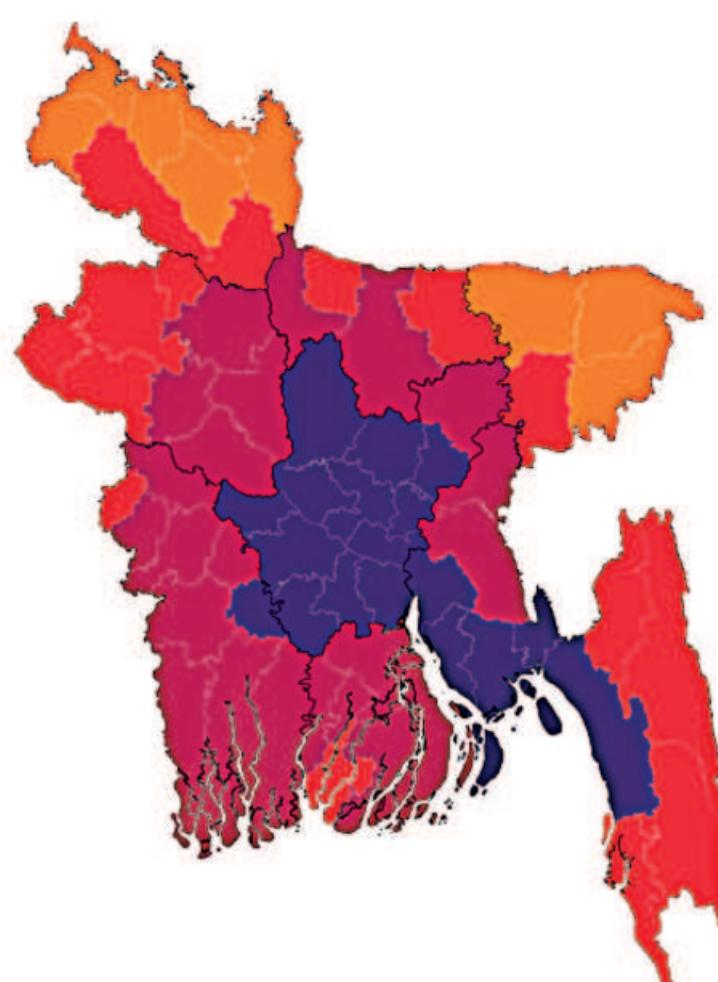
In 2022, Bangladesh's Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change formulated the Air Pollution Control Rules. These require a National Air Quality Control Plan, nationwide monitoring, identification of pollution-causing activities, and emission standards for industry, automobiles, and major projects.

In Dhaka, the 2019 brick kiln law bars kilns near residential, commercial, agricultural, and sensitive areas.

As a punitive step, the government

Potential life expectancy gain, in years, if PM2.5 level is permanently reduced to the WHO standard

3 to <4 4 to <5 5 to <6 >=6



last week declared Savar a "degraded airshed" and said operations of all brick kilns, except Tunnel Kilns and Hybrid Hoffman Kilns, will be restricted from next month.

Sources of PM2.5 include transboundary pollution, brick kilns, smoke from low-grade fuels, solid waste burning, and dust from construction. Brick kilns around Dhaka alone cause 58 percent of the city's air pollution. On February 24, the High Court ordered the removal of all illegal brick kilns nationwide.

"Even with full action, it will take years to reduce air pollution. We also need quality fuel, otherwise the air will remain polluted."

Speaking to The Daily Star, Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan said 3,491 kilns without clearance would be shut down, and illegal kilns relocated. "We have already instructed closure of illegal kilns and are conducting drives at construction sites. The biggest challenge now is phasing out old vehicles."

"Even with full action, it will take years to reduce air pollution. We also need quality fuel, otherwise the air will remain polluted."

Protests on amid campus shutdowns

FROM PAGE 16

cannons, and truncheons.

SHUTDOWN

At Buet, which usually remains closed on Thursdays, students boycotted scheduled exams in solidarity. Departments and exam halls were empty yesterday morning. On Wednesday night, the university issued a notice, signed by Registrar Prof NM Golam Zakaria, postponing all undergraduate exams scheduled between August 30 and September 18. The notice cited "the prevailing situation".

Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet) also saw a boycott of classes and exams, leaving its campus deserted.

At Rajshahi University, students from Engineering and Agriculture faculties blocked the Dhaka Rajshahi highway from 11:00am to 1:00pm. They marched on campus streets and staged a sit-in at the main gate.

Sifat Abu Saleh, chief organiser of the university chapter of the Engineering Rights Movement, told The Daily Star that many students were injured during the "Long March to Dhaka," several of them were critically wounded.

Faozul Kabir Khan, said the committee's role was to act as a bridge. "There are

"Despite repeatedly submitting memorandums to the government regarding their demands, we have received no response," he said.

REVIEW BODIES

The government formed two committees to examine the demands of engineering students and diploma engineers.

On Wednesday, an eight-member committee, led by Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources Adviser Muhammad Faozul Kabir Khan, was formed. After its first meeting yesterday, a 14-member working group was also constituted, led by Housing and Public Works Secretary Nazrul Islam.

Talking to reporters after the meeting at the Secretariat, Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan, who is a part of the eight-member body, said the group would hear from both sides, consult experts, and review legal matters before submitting recommendations within a month. "This problem has existed for years and cannot be solved overnight," she said, urging protesters to submit demands in writing.

Faozul Kabir said the committee's role was to act as a bridge. "There are

differences between BSc and diploma engineers. Our task is to bring both sides together and work out a neutral solution."

The group will meet on Sunday.

Students under Prokoushod Odhikar Andolon are demanding that the post of assistant engineer in the ninth grade be filled only through exams, with BSc engineering as the minimum qualification. They also want higher degree holders to be eligible for 10th grade posts currently reserved for diploma engineers and insist that only BSc graduates should use the title "engineer".

Diploma engineers, meanwhile, are pushing for a seven-point demand. These include clearly separating their roles from those of BSc engineers, reserving sub assistant engineer posts for diploma graduates, and fixing the staffing ratio of BSc to diploma engineers at 1:5.

They also want the promotion quota from sub assistant to assistant engineer raised from 33 to 50 percent, administrative posts to remain under the admin cadre, and an end to cadre switching by engineers.

Army chief

FROM PAGE 16

ISPR said.

On August 22, the army chief was accorded a guard of honour at the PLA headquarters, followed by a meeting with General Chen Hui.

Their discussions focused on strategic cooperation between the two countries, enhancing people-to-people contact, support for the repatriation of forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals, and Chinese assistance in advancing Bangladesh's defence industry.

On August 23, General Waker met Chen Defang, President of NORINCO Group, and discussed matters related to the Bangladesh Army, including the upgradation and maintenance of military equipment currently in use.

He also visited the PLA Academy of Armoured Forces in Beijing, where Bangladeshi officers receive technical training, and inspected its training facilities and research laboratories for military equipment production, said ISPR.

The army chief also toured various factories and research centres of NORINCO Group in Beijing and Xiang, as well as China Aerospace Long-March International Co Ltd and Aisheng UAV Factory, where modern arms and ammunition are manufactured, the ISPR release added.

General Waker left for China on August 20 on an official visit.

each other, candidates are reaching out to voters, and even opponents are showing respect. The Shibir GS candidate gave me flowers, so did the JCD GS candidate," he said.

However, he criticised the government's decision to deploy the army on the polling day. Calling it "unjustified," Sadi said, "Dhaka University students are wise enough to decide what is good or bad. The army should safeguard national sovereignty, not patrol universities. Police are sufficient for security. If the administration does not reverse the decision, I will consider it has other political intentions."

Expressing concern, Sadi alleged, "A certain portion, like the fascist Awami forces, fears the students' mandate. Some in the administration know that the Duchs election will make them accountable. That is why an effort is being made to thwart this election."

He also said that his campaign has little to no budget. "Even in the last election, I spent nothing. I want to show that victory is possible without posters and banners."

Sadi said his panel reflects true diversity. "We have candidates from the hills, from flood-hit northern regions, from coastal areas. If such a diverse group wins, then people from all corners of Bangladesh will win."

He praised the festive election atmosphere compared to previous years. "It feels like Eid on campus. Seniors and juniors are checking on

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গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
 নির্বাচী প্রকৌশলী সওজ এর কার্যালয়
 সড়ক বিভাগ, টাঙ্গাইল।
 ফোন : ০৯২১-৬৪০৪৩
 E-mail: eetan@rhd.gov.bd

স্মারক নং- ৪৭৪.০৭.০০১.২৫-

তারিখ: ২৮-০৮-২০২৫ইং।

সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে (LTM) ঠিকাদার নবায়ন ফি, তালিকাভুক্তির ফরম সংগ্রহ ও জমার সংশোধিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতার্দাৰ সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলেৰ অবগতিৰ জন্য জানালো যাচ্ছে যে, অত্ৰ দণ্ডৰেৰ স্মারক নং-৪৭৪.০৭.০০১.২৫-২০২৫, তা-
 ৩০-০৬-২০২৫ খ্রি, তাৰিখে সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিৰ (LTM) ঠিকাদার নবায়ন ফি, তালিকাভুক্তিৰ ফরম সংগ্রহ ও জমা
 দানেৰ সময়সীমাৰ তাৰিখ অনিবার্য কাৰণ বশতঃ সংশোধন কৰা হোৱা।

পূৰ্ব অনুমোদিত সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিৰ ঠিকাদার নবায়ন ফি, তালিকাভুক্তিৰ ফরম সংগ্রহ ও জমাদানেৰ শেষ তাৰিখ	সংশোধিত সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিৰ ঠিকাদার নবায়ন ফি, তালিকাভুক্তিৰ ফরম সংগ্রহ ও জমাদানেৰ শেষ তাৰিখ
৩১-০৮-২০২৫ইং, সময় বিকাল- ৫.০০ ঘটিকা	১৫-০৯-২০২৫ইং, সময় বিকাল- ৫.০০ ঘটিকা

(ড. সিনথিয়া আজিমুরী খান)
 পরিচিতি নং-৬০২১৪
 নির্বাচী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ
 সড়ক বিভাগ, টাঙ্গাইল।

GD-1896

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 ৭১-৭২ ইক্সটেন পার্টেন, রমনা, ঢাকা
 কল্যাণ শাখা
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নং-৪৯.০০.০০০০.০২৪.২৩.০১৭.২৫-৬৫

তাৰিখ: ১৩ ভাৰত ১৪৩২ বঙ্গাব্দ
 ২৮ আগস্ট ২০২৫ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতার্দাৰ বাণিজ্যিক পুনৰুৎপূৰ্ণ ব্যাক্তি (অনিবাসী বাংলাদেশি) নিৰ্বাচন নীতিমালা, ২০১৮ অনুযায়ী নিৰ্বৰ্ষিত তিনটি
 ক্যাটাগোরিতে বাণিজ্যিক পুনৰুৎপূৰ্ণ ব্যাক্তি (অনিবাসী বাংলাদেশি), ২০২৬ নিৰ্বাচনেৰ লক্ষ্যে আগ্রহী ও যোগ্যতা সম্পূৰ্ণ সকল
 অনিবাসী বাংলাদেশিৰ নিকট হতে নিম্নোক্ত শর্তাবাদীনে দৰখাস্ত আহবান কৰা যাচ্ছে:

ক্র. নং	ক্যাটাগোরি	সংখ্যা	প্রয়োজনীয় যোগ্যতা
০১	সিআইপি (এনআরবি) [বাংলাদেশে পিলটক্ষেত্ৰে সৱাসৱিৰ বিনিয়োগকাৰী]:	০৫জন	(ক) ২০২৪-২০২৫ অৰ্থবছৰে বাংলাদেশেৰ শিল্পাখতে মূলধন হিসেবে ৩,০০,০০০ (তিনি লক্ষ) মার্কিন ডলাৰৰ সমপৰিমাণ বা তদূৰ্ধ পৰিৱাপ্ত বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা সৱাসৱিৰ বিনিয়োগকাৰী; (খ) শিল্প প্রক্রিয়াটাংক বাণিজ্যাবাধীন হলে যন্ত্ৰপাতি আমদানিৰ প্ৰাপ্তিগত, যেমন-বিল অৰ লেডিং, বিল অৰ এন্টি, লেটাৰ অৰ ফ্ৰেডিট ইত্যাদিতে উন্নিত পৰিমাণ বৈদেশিক মুদ্রাৰ লেনদেন।
০২	সিআইপি (এনআরবি) [বাংলাদেশে বৈধ চ্যাম্পেলে সৰ্বাধিক বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা প্ৰেসেপকাৰী]:	৭৫ জন	২০২৪-২০২৫ অৰ্থবছৰে অপন্ত্যাবাসযোগ্য নূনতম ১,০০,০০০ (এক লক্ষ) মার্কিন ডলাৰৰ সমপৰিমাণ বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা ব্যাংকসহ অন্যান্য বৈধ চ্যাম্পেলে বাংলাদেশে প্ৰেৰণ।
০৩	সিআইপি (এনআরবি) [বিদেশে বাংলাদেশি পণ্যোৰ আমদানিকাৰক]:	১০ জন	(ক) ২০২৪-২০২৫ অৰ্থবছৰে বাংলাদেশ হতে মূনতম ৩,০০,০০০ (তিনি লক্ষ) মার্কিন ডলাৰৰ সমপৰিমাণ বৈদেশিক মুদ্রাৰ [Free on Board FOB] বাংলাদেশি পণ্য সংশ্লিষ্ট দেশে আমদানিকণ; (খ) পিআরসি (Proceeds Realisation Certificate) এৰ যাধৰে বাংলাদেশি পণ্য সংশ্লিষ্ট দেশে আমদানিৰ পৰিৱাপ্ত; এবং (গ) অধিক মূল সংযোজন সম্পূৰ্ণ বাংলাদেশি পণ্য (Higher Value Added Product) সংশ্লিষ্ট দেশে আমদানিকাৰককে অগ্ৰাধিকাৰ প্ৰদান কৰা হৈব।

শৰ্তাবলীঃ

১। ১০ সেপ্টেম্বৰ, ২০২৫ হতে ১৫ সেপ্টেম্বৰ, ২০২৫ তাৰিখ বাংলাদেশ সময় রাত ১২.০০ টাৰ মধ্যে নিৰ্ধাৰিত ওয়েবসাইট www.cip.probashi.gov.bd এৰ মাধ্যমে অনলাইন-এ আবেদন দাখিল কৰতে হৈব। উত্তৰ সময়সীমাৰ পৰ কেৱল আবেদন দাখিল কৰা যাবে না।

২। বিদেশশৰ্ষ বাংলাদেশ দুতাৰাস অথবা প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ও বৈদেশিক কৰ্মসংস্থান মন্ত্রণালয়ে সৱাসৱিৰ হাৰ্ড কলি আকাৰে কোন আবেদনপত্ৰ জমা নেওয়া হৈব।

৩। অসম্পূৰ্ণ এবং অক্ষুণ্ণ আবেদন বাতিল বলে গণ্য হৈব।

৪। কৰ্তৃপক্ষ কোন প্ৰকাৰ কাৰণ প্ৰদৰ্শন কৰিবলৈ কোন আবেদন কিংবা এতদসংক্রান্ত সকল কৰ্মসংক্রান্ত বাতিল/হাবিত কৰাৰ অধিকাৰ সংৰক্ষণ কৰে।

সাইমেন্দা কৰ্মসংক্রান্ত ২৮/০৮/২০২৫
 প্ৰিয়ৱৰ সহকাৰী সচিব
 ফোন: ০২-৮১০৩০২৫৫
 ইমেইল: saswelfare@probashi.gov.bd

GD-1898

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 কুন্দু নৃ-গোষ্ঠীৰ সাংস্কৃতিক ইনসিটিউট
 রাজামাটি।
 (knsirangamati.portal.gov.bd)

(একই তাৰিখ ও স্মারকে স্থলাভিসিত)

স্মারক নং-৪৩.৩২.৮৪০০.০০১.১১.০৩৫.২৫-৬৫(৮)

তাৰিখ: ১২ই ভাৰত ১৪৩২ বঙ্গাব্দ:

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

কুন্দু নৃ-গোষ্ঠীৰ সাংস্কৃতিক ইনসিটিউট, রাজামাটিৰ রাজস্ব বাজেটে ০৮ ক্যাটাগোরিৰ ১৪(চোদ) টি শূন্যপদ পূৰণেৰ লক্ষ্যে কুন্দু
 নৃ-গোষ্ঠীৰ সাংস্কৃতিক প্ৰতিষ্ঠান আইন, ২০১০ এবং কুন্দু নৃ-গোষ্ঠীৰ সাংস্কৃতিক ইনসিটিউট কৰ্মচাৰী চাকৰী প্ৰিয়ীনামালা,
 ২০২২ খ্রি: অনুযায়ী জনবল নিয়োগেৰ উদ্দেশ্যে উল্লিখিত শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা (প্ৰযোজ্য ক্ষেত্ৰে) ও বৰ্ণিত শৰ্ত
 সাপেক্ষে নিৰ্ধাৰিত ফৰমে দৰখাস্ত আহবান কৰা হচ্ছে।

ক্র. নং	পদেৰ নাম	পদ সংখ্যা	বেতন ক্ষেত্ৰ ও প্রেড	আবেদন দাখিলেৰ শেষ তাৰিখে বয়স	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
১।	সহকাৰী পৰিচালক	০১টি	২২০০-৫৩০৬০ (৯ম প্রেড)	১৮-৩২ বৎসৰ	কোনো শীৰ্ষক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে ক) প্ৰথম প্ৰেৰি বা সমমানেৰ সিজিপিএ-তে মাতৃকোতৰ বা সমমানেৰ ডিপ্তি; অথবা খ) অনুন হিতীয় প্ৰেৰি বা সমমানেৰ সিজিপিএ-তে মাতৃক বা সমমানেৰ তিপ্রিসহ অনুন হিতীয় প্ৰেৰি বা সমমানেৰ সিজিপিএ-তে মাতৃকোতৰ ডিপ্তি; গ) ০৪(চো) বৎসৰ মেয়াদি অনুন হিতীয় প্ৰেৰি বা সমমানেৰ সিজিপিএ-তে মাতৃকোতৰ ডিপ্তি।
২।	ফিল্ড অফিসাৰ	০১টি	১৬০০-৩৮৬৮০ (১০ম প্রেড)	১৮-৩২ বৎসৰ	ক) কোনো শীৰ্ষক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে অনুন হিতীয় শ্ৰেণিৰ মাতৃকোতৰ ডিপ্তি এবং খ) জনুদুৰেৰ জন্য বিভিন্ন উপজাতীয় প্ৰদৰ্শনী সামগ্ৰী সংগ্ৰহ ও সংৰক্ষণ সংক্রান্ত বিষয়ে অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হৈব।
৩।	হিসাব বক্ষক	০১টি	১০২০-২৪৬৮০ (১৪তম প্রেড)	১৮-৩২ বৎসৰ	কোনো শীৰ্ষক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে বাগিজ বিষয়ে অনুন হিতীয় শ্ৰেণিৰ মাতৃক বা সমমানেৰ পৰীক্ষায

A test of governance on campuses

Public universities should promote students' democratic exercise

The imminent student union elections at three prominent public universities—Dhaka, Jahangirnagar, and Rajshahi—are a welcome, if long overdue, development. After decades of dormancy, their revival could signal the cautious return of vibrant campus politics. In today's Bangladesh, the importance of these polls extends beyond university corridors into a broader political context; they mark the resumption of a democratic exercise within public institutions. A generation of students has grown up without experiencing electoral choice or accountability. For them, the simple act of casting a ballot and seeing that choice reflected in a representative body is more than a procedure—it is a powerful reaffirmation of popular will.

Beyond these universities, however, the broader picture continues to be one of delay and deflection. According to a report by this daily, many other public universities remain uncertain about whether polls will ever be held, either due to legal hurdles or administrative constraints. There are 56 public universities in Bangladesh. Of them, only seven have the legal provision for a central students' union. But even where legal grounds exist, progress remains sluggish. Chittagong University, despite having the framework, long shelved the issue and only just announced an election schedule. Shahjalal University has formed a committee to redraft its ordinance, though polls were last held there 27 years ago, and no clear timeline for polls has emerged. This pattern of half-steps reflects an institutional ambivalence towards student politics.

Equally troubling is the claim that students themselves are not demanding elections. Vice-chancellors at Barishal University and Bangladesh Agricultural University have said they will only act if a "majority" of students formally request polls. This stance contradicts an 86 percent pro-election vote in a Barishal referendum. At BUET, a teacher insists there is "no demand from the students' side." Historically, student unions have been training grounds for democratic debate, accountability, and leadership. Their absence has left a vacuum, denying new generations the opportunity to engage in democratic practice on campus.

That said, the elections now in preparation will no doubt serve as a litmus test for national politics. Student unions have long mirrored the ideological battlegrounds of their parent parties. Their revival can offer a measure of party appeal among educated youth ahead of the planned national election in February. Viewed in this context, a transparent, peaceful electoral process in universities could help restore faith in our democratic mechanisms.

If students and university authorities can navigate these contests constructively, they could set a precedent for tolerance and fair play at the national level. The students' demands are modest: they seek only the machinery of representation that underpins any democracy. Jagannath University, which has already advanced a constitution for its union, proves that where there is administrative will, solutions can be found. Other institutions would do well to see today's student activism not as a threat but as an opportunity.

Don't compromise Dhaka's liveability

Higher FAR in DAP will only worsen the city's existing problems

We are quite concerned about the proposed amendments to Dhaka's Detailed Area Plan (DAP), which, if implemented, could significantly undermine the city's liveability. A draft revision of the DAP 2022 suggests increasing the Floor Area Ratio (FAR)—the ratio of the total floor area of a building to the size of the land upon which it is built—from 20 to 80 percent across most of the capital's 68 zones. This would allow more people to live or work in a given area, potentially leading to overcrowding and placing greater strain on the city's already stressed infrastructure. For example, the proposed changes include raising FAR in Khilkhet from 2 to 4.4, Mirpur DOHS from 2.5 to 4.8, Badda from 2 to 3.3, Rampura from 2 to 3.5, Mirpur from 2.8 to 3.4, and Basabo-Khilgaon from 2 to 3.3. Urban planners argue that these revisions would primarily benefit commercial interests and have called on the government to immediately suspend the amendment process.

Reportedly, the push to amend the DAP began shortly after its official gazette was published on August 24, 2022, as developers and landowners voiced strong opposition to the FAR restrictions it introduced. Following last year's political changeover, real estate developers intensified their protests, prompting the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartirpakkha (Rajuk) to draft the proposed amendments. Since the draft was approved in principle on August 10, it has sparked mixed reactions from city planners, architects, environmentalists, and developers.

While real estate developers argue that the changes are necessary to meet rising housing demand in the rapidly growing urban areas, urban planners warn that the revisions could worsen Dhaka's existing challenges. They caution that the proposed amendments could push population density in some areas to 50,000 people per square kilometre—well above global standards for liveable cities. While a two-katha plot currently houses three families, the proposed changes would allow up to six families in the same space, increasing pressure on utilities and reducing access to light and ventilation.

We, therefore, urge the government to carefully consider the concerns raised by experts and urban planners before granting final approval to the DAP. Planners have recommended several measures to preserve balance in residential areas, including imposing limits on building heights, banning high-rise developments on narrow roads, and enforcing fire safety regulations for taller structures. They have also stressed the importance of coordinated planning under the National Spatial Plan to alleviate pressure on Dhaka. Without effective strategies for population distribution and road infrastructure, an increase in FAR could obstruct the city's sustainable development.

EDITORIAL

A dangerous suggestion

No provision in the constitution should be outside the purview of the judiciary



THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam
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MAHFUZ ANAM

As a people, we have a tendency to be enamoured with the present political realities and treat the past with utter disdain. Even worse, we want to rewrite it, thus overvaluing the present and throwing the past into the bin. That is why we don't learn from the past and repeat our mistakes. Our history is full of this. It is a reflection of both our emotional nature and superficial knowledge base. One result of this is that we seldom engage in debates but instead mostly have rhetorical exchanges in which our capacity to shout holds sway over our capacity to reason.

A more cynical view would be that we desperately want to harvest the political advantages that followed the power vacuum left by the ouster of the past regime, caring neither for the truth nor for morality, values, and national interest. Thus, we push our self-serving narrative using the political power of the day. The fact that attempts to tailor the past do not stand the test of time—what better proof could there be than Hasina's fall?—never seems to have dawned on us. So, we follow the same route and end up in the same gutter.

The rhetoric of those in the driving seat is that many things about the past, especially after '71, have been a big mistake or highly distorted and need to be re-examined. If it is an intellectual journey, then we can all benefit from it. But if it is a political project, then it will be self-destructive except for those who still don't believe in Bangladesh. Some of the present-day narrators consider themselves as the custodian of the "truth", and any attempt to question them is turned around as trying to resurrect the past, thus discouraging independent thinking, critical assessment, and enquiring habits.

One example of unjustifiably denigrating the past is the way our present constitution is being discussed and treated. The narrative is that the constitution gave rise to fascism and hence it has to be replaced. An alternative view could be that the rise of Hasina's dictatorship and her arbitrary use and abuse of power were not intrinsic to the constitution that we got in 1973. Rather, it was the misuse of certain parts of the constitution's provisions that destroyed its democratic structure. The separation

abuse of the parliamentary procedures facilitated by the frequent walkouts, boycotts and finally resignation from the parliament that left the ruling party an unchallenged and open field to do as they pleased. Even the standing committees did not play their roles of holding the government to account because of the overwhelming power of the prime minister, who

later. Our piece today will discuss two provisions of the NCC report's last segment titled "Pledge to implement the July Charter."

First, we fully agree that all political parties must make an irrevocable pledge that, as and when they are elected to the coming parliament, they will work together to amend the constitution and incorporate the provisions contained in the July Charter. Without the parliament voting these amendments into the constitution, there is no other process that can legitimise the progress made so far. Hence, the vital importance of the "pledge."

Below we illustrate the problems that arise from the provisions made in Pledges no. 2 and no. 4 (reproduced below) that we consider to go against



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

all democratic spirit and stand out as a repetition of the mistakes of the past.

Pledge no. 2 reads: "The people are

the owners of this state; their will is

the supreme law, and in a democratic

system, the people's will is reflected and

established through political parties.

Therefore, we, the political parties and alliances, having collectively and through long discussions adopted the 'July National Charter 2025' as the clear and supreme expression of the people's will, shall ensure the incorporation of all provisions, policies, and decisions of this Charter into the Constitution; and if there is anything contradictory in the existing Constitution or any other law, then in that case the provisions/declaration/recommendations of this Charter shall prevail."

Pledge no. 4 reads: "Every provision, declaration, and recommendation of the 'July National Charter 2025' shall be considered constitutionally and legally enforceable; therefore, its validity, necessity, or matters related to its issuance shall not be questioned in any court." (The original text of both paras is in Bangla; the English translation is ours).

Let's take the opening lines of Pledge 2. "People are owners of the state"—yes. "Their will is supreme law"—yes. "and in a democratic system people's will is reflected and established through political parties". Well, here start the problems.

A total of 30 political parties participated in the consensus dialogue in the second round. As many as 11 of them are not yet registered. Four parties have obtained registration after the uprising. So, these 15 parties (II+4) have never participated in any election. So, nothing definite can be said about how many votes they would get. They may sweep the polls or get muted support. We don't know, and hence we cannot presume. In the 2008 elections, six political parties got zero votes.

In a democracy, every cluster of citizens has the right to form political parties and carry on their activities as long as they are compliant with the law. They may represent the best of ideas in the world, but unless they have faced the test of public support—through elections—they cannot be said to represent the people in general.

Then there are new parties, the most famous of which is the National Citizen Party, the party born out of the July-August uprising. The whole nation totally supported the student-

led movement against the dictatorial regime of Sheikh Hasina. A section of student leaders then formed a political party with their own ideology and national goals. But how much public support they presently enjoy cannot be judged by their brilliant success in toppling Sheikh Hasina.

Let's focus on the 2008 election again. It is considered to have fulfilled most of the criteria of a free and fair election. The percentage of votes were: AL 48 percent, BNP 32.50 percent, Jatiya Party 7.04 percent, Jamaat 4.70 percent, and independent 2.98 percent. These four parties, including independents, got a total of 95.22 percent votes. Of the above four parties, two are out of the present-day scene. The remaining BNP, Jamaat and independent candidates add

Constitutions, by definition, are products of people's will, which changes over time as society and civilisation advance. Yes, we have a history of misusing the 'amending process' but making any part of a constitution 'unamendable' is a dangerous and self-defeating option. We now have a magnificent chance to strengthen democracy and all its institutions. Let's not miss it. Sadly, indications are that we are.

of powers between the legislative, the judiciary, and the executive—which was well designed in our constitution—was distorted over time. Powerful leaders like Bangabandhu, Ziaur Rahman, HM Ershad, Khaleda Zia, and Sheikh Hasina all used their parliamentary majority and other means to expand the authority and power of the executive, which over time throttled both the legislature and the judiciary.

What went wrong is due to the political culture practised by our political parties, many of whom are

now the authors of the July Charter. It is they who, when in power, used their majority to curb the system of "checks and balances." If we examine the last 35 years of parliamentary democracy, we see that both the BNP and the AL—parties that ruled during this period—never assisted in strengthening the judiciary or the Jatiya Sangsad, but were enthusiastic about strengthening the executive branch. The role of the majority party in the House, the opposition, and the farcical role of the House Speaker all contributed to turning a democratic constitution into a legal framework for dictatorial regimes. It is also the result of the

Then came the Fifth Amendment introduced by President Ziaur Rahman that validated all actions and constitutional changes from August 15, 1975 to April 9, 1979, including the Indemnity Act that gave constitutional protection to self professed killers, thereby destroying the "moral" value of this sacred document. Here was another grave example of how the executive branch made a mockery of the whole constitution and respect for the legal system.

Then there were other amendments brought about through actions that did not fulfil what is known as the "constitutional process." The ruling party ordered it and the majority of MPs carried it out. One exception was the caretaker government whose introduction was bipartisan but, regrettably, its annualism was totally partisan and aimed at manipulating elections that we saw in 2014, 2018 and 2024.

The National Consensus Commission (NCC) has worked hard to prepare a July Charter, including a series of suggestions for amendments to our Constitution. An in-depth comment on their work will follow

up to 40.18 percent of the votes. So, the consensus reached by the NCC reflects the views of only 40.18 percent of voters participating in the 2008 elections. These are not conclusive facts but suggestive ones to help us decide for the future.

However, there is one severe criticism of the NCC that cannot be and should not be ignored for the sake of democracy, inclusiveness and justice. The issue of women. Women represent about 50 percent of our population and nearly 50 percent of voters. Yet they had almost no voice in the formulation of such a historic document, the July Charter, whose provisions are going to be incorporated in our constitution and will prevail over any other existing ones. Ignoring women voters is a shame and a moral "crime" that NCC will always have to live with. How can that be considered a democratic basis for consensus?

Parties like BNP have millions of women voters, yet they did not consider it fair to take a single woman-member in their own team. If a 47-year-old political party like BNP does not consider it worthwhile to ensure women's representation, then how reflective is the NCC report in terms of women's rights as voters?

Pledge 4 says in conclusion that "its validity, necessity, or matters related to its issuance shall not be questioned in any court."

We take strong objection to this Pledge. In a democracy, how can any provision of a constitution be outside the purview of the judiciary? It is the most undemocratic, dictatorial and oppressive provision that can be. Once again, we are putting the executive branch above the judiciary and the legislative branches. As mentioned in the beginning, we learn very little from the past and hence repeat it ad infinitum. Interestingly, the ousted PM introduced Article 7B by which she made the "Basic provision of the constitution," making up one-third of the constitution, non-amendable. Why are we following her footsteps?

Constitutions, by definition, are products of people's will, which changes over time as society and civilisation advance. Yes, we have a history of misusing the "amending process" but making any part of a constitution "unamendable" is a dangerous and self-defeating option.

We now have a magnificent chance to strengthen democracy and all its institutions. Let's not miss it. Sadly, indications are that we are.

Elections belong to the people, not the politicians

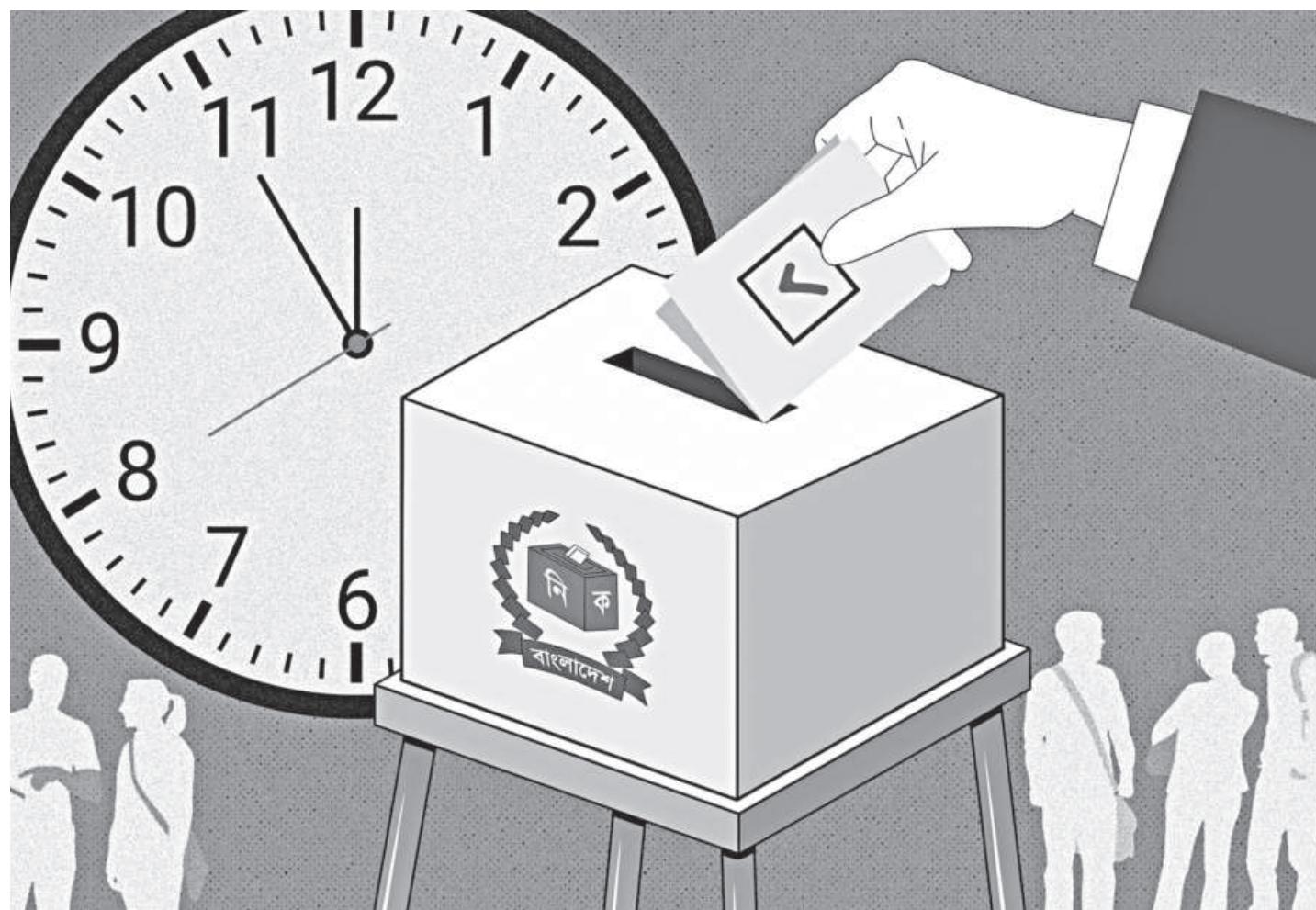
Azman Rahman
is a political commentator.

AZMAN RAHMAN

The July uprising was not an isolated event. It stood in a long line of struggles where citizens of this country took to the streets to reclaim their rights. In 1971, they fought a bloody war to secure sovereignty after their voices were ignored following the 1970 election. In 1990, they rose again to bring down military rule and restore democracy. In 2024, they marched once more—this time against the autocratic rule of Sheikh Hasina who, through election engineering and various repressive tactics, had suppressed them for more than a decade. Each of these moments carried the same message: that power must flow from the people, not the other way around.

The fall of Sheikh Hasina's government of 15 years created a fragile hope that Bangladesh could finally return to that principle. But whether that hope will survive depends on what we do now and in the coming days. The next election forms a crucial part of that equation as it can signal whether Bangladesh has really broken the cycle of manipulation and is ready for the transformation necessary for a true democratic transition. In other words, an election that reflects people's choices and an elected government that carries out their mandate will show whether the hope created by the uprising will be turned into meaningful change, or lost once again to history. Therefore, any delay or disruption of the electoral process must not be entertained.

However, recent events suggest a smokescreen being created over the election timeframe. The chief adviser has said that polls will be held in February, but uncertainty lingers. Some political parties are still emphasising reforms before elections, with the NCP openly opposing the February date. Such mixed signals fuel doubt at a time when



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

clarity is essential. Boycotts and threats of withdrawal only deepen the risk of another disputed election. Political parties cannot abandon the people to a narrowed choice, as they did before.

This nation was founded on the demand for people's sovereignty, and this has been the bedrock of all subsequent uprisings or movements. So to deny or delay voting will not just be a political failure; it will

mean a rejection of the country's founding promise. The kind of election engineering or disruption we have seen over the last few decades has already eroded public trust, pushed younger generations away from politics, and left society increasingly polarised. The longer this pattern continues, the harder it will be to repair the breach between citizens and institutions, including political ones.

The accumulated costs of this state of affairs have been visible everywhere. Instability has continued to stall economic growth, foreign investors remain wary, and people are still left to bear rising prices and uncertainty. The national poverty rate has already soared to nearly 28 percent, according to a recently published estimate by the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC). Bangladesh's reputation as a

responsible actor in peacekeeping, climate diplomacy, and trade is also at risk. A country cannot expect a place in global leadership while denying basic political rights to its own citizens. The world is watching, and credibility is not easily rebuilt once it is lost.

The greater burden of change rests not on the people, who have already demonstrated their will, but on political parties. They must prove that they can compete without relying on manipulation, boycotts, or backroom arrangements. Elections cannot remain tools for power preservation; they must become the mechanism that gives power legitimacy. Political leaders who fail to understand this will only invite another wave of public resistance.

Against this backdrop, what is needed now are structural guarantees. An Election Commission that acts with authority and independence, equal access to media and the right to assemble for all parties, and security forces bound to the constitution rather than partisan loyalty—these are the minimum conditions of credible democracy. Without them, the promise of the July uprising may collapse.

Above all, political parties must accept the people's verdict. Democracy does not survive on the convenience of elites; it survives when citizens can cast their ballots freely and see their choices respected. With more than half the population under 35, Bangladesh's future depends on whether this generation grows up believing in the power of the vote or dismissing it as a sham. Their political memories cannot be defined by repeated disillusionment. They deserve the right to shape the country's future through genuine, competitive, and peaceful elections.

The July uprising showed that Bangladeshis will not accept the denial of their rights for long. The lesson of 1971, 1990, and 2024 is consistent: when leaders shut down democracy, people rise to reclaim it. If the political class ignores that history today, it risks again pushing the nation back into chaos. So this time, the elections must belong to the people, and politicians must accept the result.

Global warming is winning while we are smiling



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QUAMRUL HAIDER

Although we have now surpassed the midpoint of 2025 and will shortly reach the halfway mark of this decade, commonly recognised as the "make-or-break" decade for international climate initiatives, the signs from the climate system are more evident than ever. It is deteriorating, as the main culprit behind global warming—carbon dioxide emissions—continues to rise. Notwithstanding the commitments and assurances made by governments worldwide, global carbon dioxide emissions reached an all-time high in 2024. Our planet is now on the verge of an irreversible climatic disaster as more carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases accumulate in the atmosphere.

According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), "extreme heat is breaking records worldwide." However, this ongoing trend of deadly heatwaves is merely an early indication of far more severe conditions to come. Additionally, a peer-reviewed study, titled "State of the Climate," published by the American Meteorological Society with contributions from numerous scientists across the globe, presents a range of climate metrics that achieved new records in 2024. This study offers one of the most comprehensive analyses of the various impacts of global warming, both on

a global scale and regionally. Key findings include: "the global temperature across land and oceans, global sea level, and ocean heat content all reached record highs in 2024, and glaciers experienced the greatest ice loss of any year on record."

The year 2024 was marked as the hottest ever documented, with global temperatures averaging 1.52 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels for the first time. This figure is alarmingly near the 1.5 degrees threshold established by the 2015 Paris Agreement, which scientists warn is a crucial tipping point for catastrophic climate consequences. These unprecedented temperatures act as a wake-up call, indicating that 2025 could be a pivotal year—one in which surpassing the 1.5 degrees limit may become the norm rather than the exception. By the end of this century, climate models predict that the global average temperature will be 3-5 degrees higher than current levels, rendering our planet uninhabitable.

Two sweltering heatwaves battered Europe earlier this summer, leading to hundreds of heat-related fatalities, igniting wildfires, and straining power systems to their maximum capacity. Temperatures surged past 40 degrees, reaching as high as 46 degrees in Spain and Portugal, due to heat domes—high-pressure systems

that trap hot air over a region, resulting in prolonged extreme heat. Meanwhile, India experienced its longest and most oppressive heatwave on record, compelling millions to evacuate their residences.

As climate change drives global temperatures higher, glaciers, polar ice caps, and ice sheets in Greenland and mountainous regions are melting faster than ever recorded. In early 2025, satellite

Extreme weather events have already escalated in 2025, including devastating floods in Brazil, record-breaking droughts in East Africa, sudden hailstorms in Spain, and snow in the Sahara Desert. The frequency and intensity of these disasters are no longer considered uncommon or once-in-a-century events; rather, they have become annual occurrences.

observations by NASA revealed that the Antarctic Ocean's sea ice fell to its lowest level for the third consecutive year. The situation in the Arctic is equally dire. This winter, the maximum extent of Arctic Ocean ice was noted to be the smallest since the inception of such records, and experts now predict that we may have our first ice-free summer in the Arctic as soon as the end of this decade.

Rising temperatures, combined with

melting ice, are projected to cause the sea levels to rise by 1.3-1.6 metres by the end of this century, with potentially devastating impacts on coastal communities and low-lying countries such as Bangladesh. Satellites and tidal gauges show that the global sea level has risen by 21 to 24 centimetres over the past 140 years.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, the frequency and severity of wildfires globally have doubled over the past twenty years. In the first four months of 2025, both Canada and Australia recorded their earliest and most extensive wildfires in history, with smoke travelling across continents and contaminating cities located thousands of miles away. Experts caution that increasingly frequent megafires may become a lasting characteristic of the planet's evolving climate. As these wildfires emit billions of tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, they exacerbate the challenge of reversing global warming, potentially putting us beyond a critical threshold of no return.

Extreme weather events have already escalated in 2025, including devastating floods in Brazil, record-breaking droughts in East Africa, sudden hailstorms in Spain, and snow in the Sahara Desert. The frequency and intensity of these disasters are no longer considered uncommon or once-in-a-century events; rather, they have become annual occurrences. In the United States, record-setting tornado outbreaks and extraordinary heatwaves have put immense pressure on emergency response systems.

Forests function as the lungs of the earth, absorbing vast amounts of carbon dioxide. In 2024, the Amazon rainforest experienced a loss exceeding 4.5 million acres due to illegal logging, mining activities, and

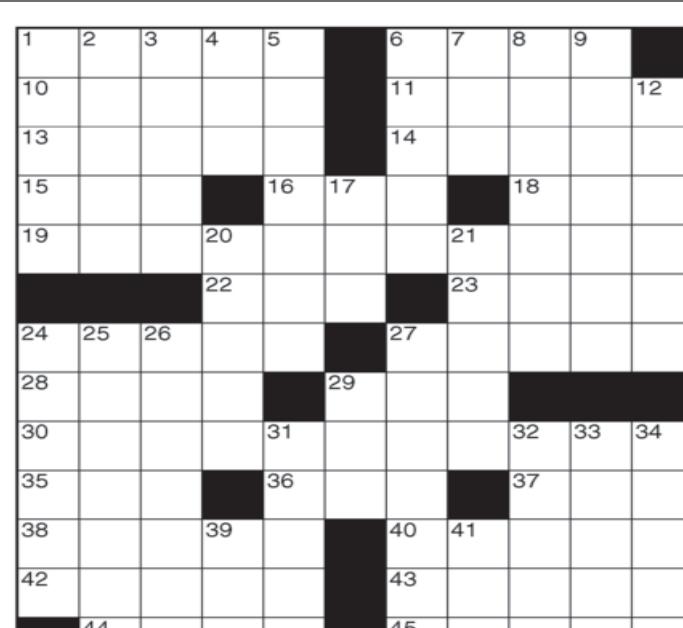
fires, as reported by the World Resources Institute. In Central Africa and Southeast Asia, the situation is equally severe. In addition to destroying important species habitats, deforestation also lowers the planet's capacity to absorb carbon dioxide. Scientists warn that some rainforests may reach a critical point in 2025, when they start to release more carbon dioxide than they absorb if current trends continue. This disastrous move would impede the mitigation of climate change and hasten global warming.

Permafrost is a layer of soil and rock, sometimes extending 1,500 metres into the ground beneath the Arctic's frozen exterior. It is a significant source of methane and carbon dioxide. Methane's impact over a century is more than 25 times that of carbon dioxide, which makes it particularly concerning. A 2025 study claims that greenhouse gases are being released into the atmosphere as a result of permafrost thawing faster than expected.

Unfortunately, many nations are backtracking on and watering down their pledges to combat climate change. Numerous countries among the 196 that are bound by Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement are acting as if they are content with global warming.

When combined, the aforementioned ramifications of climate change provide compelling proof that humans have altered the climate in a way that will significantly change our planet not only in the far future but also during our own lifetimes, thereby handing over our children and grandchildren the warmest climate that any generation of *Homo sapiens* has ever experienced.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH





SHAKIL'S MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

The story of a pledge to walk gently on earth



Ikramul Hasan Shakil
Shakil is a mountaineer who has scaled Everest and completed The Great Himalayan Trail.

IKRAMUL HASAN SHAKIL

The mountains' call – sometimes in silence, sometimes in the rustle of dry leaves, sometimes in the babble of waterfalls, and sometimes in the roar of glaciers. Once someone hears that call, they can no longer remain confined within walls. My "Sea to Summit Everest Expedition" was just such a journey – an outer test of endurance that became an inner story of self-discovery.

This expedition began on February 25, 2025, standing at the edge of the Inani Beach in Cox's Bazar. I carried a message: reduce single-use plastic and carbon emissions. How much do we really respect nature? Does our way of life violate its balance? My walk from the Bay of Bengal toward the Himalayas was a search for answers.

The word Himalaya stirs a chill of vastness and wonder. Higher and higher I climbed, as the noise of the world fell away – replaced by pine shadows, glittering peaks, and the cries of unseen birds, each turn a page of a living novel.

Yet the mountains are more than beauty. In the simple lives of those who dwell here – their warm smiles, their hospitality, and their quiet harmony with nature – I discovered a truth: strength is born of simplicity, and progress lies in the joy of needing less.

My "Sea to Summit" journey was never just an expedition. It was a call to conscience, a vow to walk gently on this earth, to fight plastic waste and rising carbon levels, and to honour nature with every step. Over 1,372 kilometres, through rivers, highways,

villages, and finally Everest's perilous heights, I carried this mission.

When people asked my goal, I answered with pride: "To build a clean, green, and conscious world." And so I walked on – through sun and storm, rain and snow – unshaken in spirit, unwavering in dream.

The Sea to Summit expedition gave me so much. It gave me sleepless nights, anxiety, tears, fear, and countless unpleasant experiences. But all the pain and suffering faded when nature embraced me in its colourful shawl, when I was overwhelmed by the selfless love of strangers. They didn't know me, nor I them – yet somehow, a spiritual connection formed.

It would be my own Odyssey if I wanted to put into words the memories I gathered on the way. The confined space of a page won't

allow me to do that. But nature was my guide, all the way to the summit of Everest.

For example, when I reached Mahasthangarh and started my walk along the almost lifeless Karatua river early in the morning, a drizzle began, as if nature itself wanted to make our journey more beautiful. By the time I reached the Shibganj upazila market, the rain intensified, as if nature was asking us to pause for a moment. So, I obliged. There is no way I could violate the command of nature.

I must mention the beauty of rural Bangladesh. Walking along the earthen roads, where dust mingles with the simplicity of village life, is itself a lesson for hardened hearts. Along the way, I came upon surreal alleys – towering trees on either side swaying in the breeze, as if their leaves were singing. A little further

lay small villages, and beside them stretched vast paddy fields. One feels tempted to dive into that sea of green, yet the journey must go on!

And as fatigue crept in, nature had its own way of rejuvenating the soul. After a day of exhausting walking – scorched by the sun and drenched in sweat, when the body felt almost numb – a dip in the river or a splash of bucketful, soul-cold water drawn from an ancient well was enough to awaken life again.

This journey wasn't mine alone; it belonged to everyone who loves nature, believes in change. A stranger, who gave me a glass of water, an inspiring word from another, they were all part of my journey. My friends were there, but without them, it was impossible to finish the daunting task.

After 64 long and exhausting, and eventful days, in which I walked 1,372

kilometres across Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, I reached Everest Base Camp at an altitude of 5,364 metres on April 29.

After resting there for a few days, on May 6 at 1:30am, I set out from Base Camp toward Camp-1 with three climbers from Taiwan, myself, and three Sherpa guides. As we crossed the dangerous and deadly Khumbu Icefall, dawn broke. Then one night at Camp 1, two nights at Camp 2, and after completing the rotation, we returned to Base Camp. We waited for good weather to push for the summit.

On May 15 at 1:00am, we began the summit push from Base Camp. We reached Camp 4 by noon on the 18th. After a few hours of rest, we set out for the summit at 7:45pm. Through fierce winds and snowfall, we climbed all night.

And at the final edge of this journey, on May 19, 2025, at 9:30am Nepal time, I raised the flag of Bangladesh on the summit of Mount Everest, the highest peak in the world.

If people ask me why I did this, I have one answer: to create awareness that we are a part of nature and we are responsible for preserving it. I have completed this expedition in 84 days, not to set any record. I did it to convey the message.

I know there are many who share the dream of building a clean, green, and conscious world. I know I am not alone.

When the cold wind of the Himalayas touches my face, I realise how pure life can truly be. And it is in search of that purity that I walked – from sea to summit.



Want to share your travel experiences with us? Please send your stories to holiday@thedailystar.net

PHOTO: IKRAMUL HASAN SHAKIL



This is the first time that Manchester United have lost an EFL Cup tie against a fourth-tier opposition.

Grimsby's squad is worth £3.1m, compared to United's staggering £765m squad valuation.

"I'm a United fan, so I'm half-fuming, to be honest. But nights like this are exactly why you play football." -- Christy Pym, Grimsby goalkeeper



GRIMSBY REAPER

PHOTO: REUTERS

Manchester United's Bryan Mbeumo holds his head after missing in a marathon shootout, as Grimsby Town stunned Ruben Amorim's side 12-11 in the League Cup second round at Blundell Park on Wednesday. Mbeumo, who had earlier scored his first United goal after they fell 2-0 down inside 30 minutes, saw his effort crash off the bar following Harry Maguire's late equaliser and an 18-minute penalty drama where 15 consecutive spot-kicks were converted before his miss sent the home fans into delirium.

Rain disrupts training, clouds Sylhet series

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Sylhet

Recurrent rain interruptions in Sylhet has majorly disrupted the Bangladesh team's preparation camp ahead of the three match T20I series against the Netherlands, which will be followed by the Asia Cup, and raised a question over the logic of holding a series in late monsoon in the most rain-soaked region of the country.

Bangladesh cancelled their practice session in the evening at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium on Thursday due to poor weather. Players like Saif Hassan, Nurul Hasan Sohan and Jaker Ali Anik trained at the indoors under the supervision of senior assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin after the regular practice got called off.

This was far from a one off incident as since the team's camp began on August 20, persistent rain and wet outfield has forced the players to leave the field and train indoors on quite a few occasions.

Even the Netherlands team's preparation got hampered by the

weather as after coming to the ground in the afternoon to conduct their first practice session yesterday, they could only warm-up before rain spoiled their training.

Bangladesh usually don't host international cricket during this time of the year. Since 2017, the Tigers have played only three home series in the August-September window – a two-Test series against Australia that year and back-to-back T20I series against Australia and New Zealand in 2021.

As the Tigers have not played any international games since mid-July and the Asia Cup is coming up, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) arranged this series as an exception.

But the good intentions behind holding the series could get washed away as persistent rain in Sylhet has made it difficult for the grounds men to prepare good sporting wickets.

Moreover, according to the weather forecast, there is a high probability of rain during all three matches, scheduled on August 30, September 1 and 3.

BCB's head of turf management

Tony Hemming seemed very much aware of the constant rain threat.

"I can't comment on the wickets due to protocol... But I think this will be a series where there is chance of rain every day," Tony told The Daily Star on Thursday.

Bangladesh skipper Litton Das, however, did not want to fuss about the weather as it is not in their control and instead, wanted to focus on using this series to prepare for the Asia Cup.

"Every international match is a challenge. The Netherlands are also a good team. Maybe they don't play much in these conditions, but if the match is played on a good wicket, they are used to playing on good wickets. So, there will be challenges for both sides," said Litton.

"If we have the opportunity to check some players before the Asia Cup, we will do that. But at the same time, it's international cricket, so you have to go out there to win," he added.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Liverpool, City set for Real Madrid clashes

Holders PSG to face Barcelona, Bayern Munich

AFP, Monaco

Liverpool and Manchester City will both come up against Real Madrid in this season's Champions League while title-holders Paris Saint-Germain were handed a tough list of opponents in Thursday's draw, including Barcelona and Bayern Munich.

Xabi Alonso's Real will play City at home and take on Premier League champions Liverpool at Anfield. Arne Slot's Liverpool, who finished first in the league phase last season only to be eliminated by PSG in the last 16, will also play Atletico Madrid, PSV Eindhoven and Qarabag of Azerbaijan at home.

In addition, they must go to Inter Milan, Eintracht Frankfurt, Marseille and Turkish champions Galatasaray.



Citywill welcome Borussia Dortmund, Bayer Leverkusen, Italian champions Napoli and Galatasaray to the Etihad Stadium.

As well as Real, they will also visit Villarreal, Monaco and Norwegian newcomers Bodo/Glimt.

PSG will entertain Bayern, Tottenham Hotspur and Newcastle United and go to Barcelona.

Luis Enrique's team will also face Atalanta at home as well as Leverkusen, Sporting Lisbon and Athletic Bilbao away.

Every team now plays eight games against eight different opponents in the new format of Europe's elite club competition, which was introduced last season. All 36 clubs are pooled

together into one league rather than split into groups.

The top eight teams advance to the last 16, while those finishing between ninth and 24th go into the knockout round play-offs. The bottom 12 teams are eliminated.

Other fixtures to look out for will include Barcelona visiting both Chelsea and Newcastle, while Arsenal entertain Bayern and Atletico and must also go to Inter Milan and to Bilbao.

UEFA is not expected to announce specific fixture dates until Friday at the earliest, but the first round of games will take place across three days from September 16 to 18. The eighth and final matchday is scheduled for January 28. This season's final will take place in Budapest on May 30 next year, with UEFA announcing on Thursday that the game will kick off at 6:00 pm local time rather than the usual 9:00 pm.



Novak Djokovic gestures playing a violin with his racket, staying optimistic about tuning back to his old self after he reached the US Open third round for a record-equalling 19th time on Wednesday. Djokovic battled past Zachary Svajda 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-3, 6-1 to stay in the hunt for an unprecedented 25th Grand Slam singles title. He next faces Cameron Norrie tonight.

What to WATCH

SPORTS

Sri Lanka vs Zimbabwe

1st ODI

Live from 1:30 pm

UAE T20I Tri-Series

Afghanistan vs

Pakistan

Live from 9:00 pm

STAR SPORTS 1 AND 2

US Open

Live from 9:00 pm

Kings in tough group in AFC Challenge League

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Premier League giants Bashundhara Kings face a daunting task in the group stage of the AFC Challenge League after being drawn into a formidable Group B on Thursday.

They will compete against Al Seeb Club of

Group A: Altny Asyr FC, Al Shabab Club, Paro FC, FC Abdysh-Ata

Group B: Al Seeb Club, Al Ansar FC, Kuwait SC, Bashundhara Kings

Group C: FC Regar-TadAZ, Safa SC, Al Arabi SC, FC Muras United

Group D: Manila Digger FC, Preah Khan Reach Svay Rieng FC, SP Falcons, Ezra FC

Group E: Dawa United FC, Shan United FC, Tainan City FC, Phnom Penh Crown FC

Oman, Al Ansar FC of Lebanon, and Kuwait SC of Kuwait -- all of whom are defending champions in their respective top tier leagues.

Kings earned their place with a 1-0 win in the preliminary round against Al Karamah SC. The group stage matches will start on October 25, with Kuwait hosting the Group B fixtures.

U-23 ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS

Expat touch, senior core drive hopes

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are "mentally prepared" to qualify for the AFC Men's Under-23 Asian Cup for the first time with a squad featuring 13 senior national players and four expatriates: Cuba Mitchell and Tanil Salik (UK based), Fahamedul Islam (Italy), and Zayaan Ahmed (US).

"Having 12 to 13 senior players is a big boost... The new players like Cuba, Zayaan and Salik have added quality, and we feel mentally prepared for the challenge," said star forward Sheikh Morsalin, tipped to captain the side in the Qualifiers event, running from September 3-9.

The squad will leave for Vietnam in the early hours of Saturday. Fahamedul, however, will join his teammates there on September 1 and thus remains unlikely to start in first fixture.

Eleven group winners and the four best runners-up will advance to the 16-team finals in Saudi Arabia in 2026.

In preparation, the charges of AKM Saiful Bari Titu trained in Bahrain for over three weeks and

BANGLADESH FIXTURES

September 3, 6pm: Vietnam

September 6, 3pm: Yemen

September 9, 3pm: Singapore

played two friendlies against Bahrain U-23 side, losing 1-0 and 4-2.

"The chemistry we built in Bahrain has lifted confidence," said Titu, adding the team are also working to adapt to the playing style which senior team coach Javier Cabrera plans to use in October's Asian Cup Qualifiers in Hong Kong.

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BSRM
THE ONLY STEEL FACTORY IN BANGLADESH TO RECEIVE THE
GREEN FACTORY AWARD 2025



Bangladeshis losing 5.5 years to toxic air

Warns study by University of Chicago

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Air pollution is cutting Bangladeshis' average life expectancy by 5.5 years, making it the country's deadliest external health risk, according to a report published yesterday.

The global annual report of the Air Quality Life Index (AQI), published by the University of Chicago's Energy Policy Institute (EPIC), warns that health toll caused by particulate matter (PM) pollution far exceeds that of tobacco use, malnutrition, or unsafe water. Smoking reduces life by about two years, malnutrition by 1.4.

"Bangladeshis are losing more years of life to dirty air than to smoking or malnutrition," said Michael Greenstone, director of EPIC and creator of the AQI.

The study shows that all of Bangladesh's 166.8 million residents are exposed to fine particulate pollution above both the World Health Organization (WHO) guideline of five micrograms per cubic meter and the national standard of 35.

"Even with full action, it will take years to reduce air pollution. We also need quality fuel, otherwise the air will remain polluted."

SYEDA RIZWANA HASAN, environment adviser

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

BORDER KILLINGS BGB chief refutes the self-defence claim of BSF

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Border Guard Bangladesh Director General Maj Gen Mohammad Ashrafuzaaman Siddiqui yesterday strongly refuted BSF's claim that BSF personnel only open fire in self defence along the Bangladesh-India border.

Speaking at a joint press briefing after the four-day 56th BGB-BSF DG-level conference in Dhaka, he said border killings was the top issue during the conference.

BSF chief's remark came after Indian Border Security Force DG Daljit Singh Chowdhury defended his force while responding to a reporter's query about border killings, saying that they only fire when attacked by trans-border criminals.



"BSF personnel fight only as a last resort in the face of an imminent threat to their life in self-defence, irrespective of the nationality," BSF DG told reporters.

The BSF DG said the BSF has followed a non-lethal strategy for the last 15 years, but in many cases, criminals launch violent attacks against patrols. "Whenever the criminal activities are thwarted by BSF troops, the criminals respond with abuses, stone-pelting, attacks with sharp-edged lethal weapons, and in complete disregard of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

CHINA VISIT Army chief highlighted Rohingya repatriation



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Support for the repatriation of forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals was among the key topics discussed during the Army Chief General Waker Uz-Zaman's official visit to China.

The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) disclosed the update in a press release yesterday.

General Waker returned home Wednesday night after holding courtesy meetings with senior Chinese civil and military officials, including General Chen Hui, Political Commissar of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Ground Force, to discuss various bilateral issues.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Sadi pledges to tackle students' problems

GS candidate of Independent Student Unity panel tells Star

SHARIF M SHAFIQUE

Al Sadi Bhuiyan, a candidate for general secretary from the Independent Student Unity panel in the upcoming Ducus election, said his candidacy is driven by a sense of responsibility toward Dhaka University and its students.

In an interview with The Daily Star, the former president of the Dhaka University Journalists' Association (DUJA) said, "I left behind better career opportunities to contest this election out of responsibility to the university and its students."

He said he was elected cultural affairs secretary of Surja Sen Hall in the 2019 Ducus polls "despite Chhatra League dominance".

"When I first came to campus, I



THE SLOW 'SNAIL-BLAZERS'... A Bradybaenid snail edges carefully along a damp branch in Faticchhori's Hazarikhil, Bradybaenidae, often called Asian land snails, are found across East and Southeast Asia, including Bangladesh, inhabiting moist forests, scrublands and gardens where shade and humidity keep their delicate bodies from drying out. They are herbivorous grazers, feeding on fresh leaves, decaying vegetation and even fungi, quietly recycling nutrients back into the soil. Beyond their ecological role, Bradybaenid snails have quirky traits -- like producing calcium "love darts" during courtship. Their shells, often beautifully banded, provide camouflage against bark and leaf litter.

PHOTO: TANVIR JUBAIR



Debunking DMP claim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday issued a statement regarding an image showing a protester being restrained, involving Md Masud Alam, Deputy Commissioner of DMP's Ramma Division.

"Recently, an image created using Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology, has circulated on various media outlets and social media platforms, drawing the attention of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP)," the statement said.

"It appears that someone deliberately created this image with the intention of spreading unnecessary confusion among the public. A close examination of the image reveals that it was entirely generated using AI technology and has no basis in reality," said the DMP News report.

DMP News is the online portal of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



This photograph of a police official muzzling a Buet protester on the capital's Minto Road on Wednesday has gone viral. The DMP dismissed the image as AI-generated, but The Daily Star's photographer, present at the scene, captured the incident as it happened around 2:15pm that day.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Label Gaza conflict as genocide

Hundreds of UN staff pressure rights chief, cite UN's past failure in Rwanda as a warning

AGENCIES

Hundreds of UN staff at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Volker Turk have asked him to explicitly describe the Gaza war as an unfolding genocide, according to a letter seen by Reuters.

The letter sent on Wednesday said the staff consider that the legal criteria for genocide in the nearly two-year Israel-Hamas war in Gaza have been met, citing the scale, scope and nature of violations documented there.

"OHCHR has a strong legal and moral responsibility to denounce acts of genocide," said the letter signed by the Staff Committee on behalf of over 500 employees. "Failing to denounce an unfolding genocide undermines the credibility of the UN and the human rights system itself," it added.

It cited the international body's perceived moral failure for not doing more to stop the 1994 Rwanda genocide that killed more than 1 million people.

There was no immediate response from the Israeli Foreign Ministry. Israel has previously rejected accusations of genocide in Gaza, citing its right to self-defence following the deadly October 7, 2023, Hamas attack that killed 1,200 people and resulted in 251 hostages, according to Israeli figures.

The subsequent war in Gaza has killed almost 63,000 people, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, while a global hunger monitor says part of it is suffering from famine.

Meanwhile, at least 24 people have been killed in Israeli attacks across Gaza overnight and yesterday morning, including a woman and her child in central Gaza's Bureij refugee camp, reports Al Jazeera.

Gaza's Ministry of Health has recorded four more deaths "due to famine and malnutrition" over the past 24 hours, including two children, bringing the total number of hunger-related deaths in the enclave to 317, including 121 children.

No buildings remain standing in the southern part of the Zeitoun neighbourhood in Gaza City as the Israeli ground operation launched earlier this month demolished more than 1,500 homes, according to Gaza's civil defence.

Since dawn yesterday, Israeli forces arrested 12 people across the occupied West Bank, targeting journalists, reform activists, and freed prisoners amid intense raids and home invasions, according to the Palestinian Prisoners' Media Office (ASRA).

The head of the World Food Programme (WFP) Cindy McCain told Reuters yesterday that more food aid is reaching Gaza but it still remains far from enough to prevent widespread starvation.

ENGINEERING STUDENTS Protests on amid campus shutdowns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BSc engineering students yesterday announced divisional and national rallies from today to press home their three-point demand.

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) suspended all undergraduate exams until September 18.

Student leaders declared the programmes at a press briefing at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, in the capital. They said the "complete shutdown" on campuses would continue until their demands were met.

The government has formed two committees to review issues raised by BSc and diploma engineers. However, the students said the committee formed by the government had made no clear decisions over their demands. They also condemned Wednesday's police action on the protesters near InterContinental hotel, which left many injured. Despite the DMP commissioner's apology, no officer has been suspended or investigated, they said.

On Wednesday afternoon, BUET and other engineering students blocked Shahbagh intersection before marching towards the chief adviser's residence, Jamuna. Police intercepted them near Hotel InterContinental, used sound grenades, teargas canisters, water

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Latif Siddique harassed, handed over to cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former minister and expelled Awami League leader Abdul Latif Siddique and Dhaka University Prof Sheikh Hafizur Rahman were detained yesterday after a group identifying themselves as July Fighters harassed the two, among others, during a discussion and handed them over to police.

The discussion, titled "Our Great Liberation War and the Constitution of Bangladesh", was organised by a platform called Mancha 71 at Dhaka Reporters' Auditorium. Dr Kamal Hossain, one of the framers of the constitution and president emeritus of Gono Forum, was expected as chief guest.

The event, scheduled for 10:00am, began an hour late. Soon after Prof Hafizur's speech, the group entered the hall, chanting slogans such as "July weapons, rise again", "Grab the League, fill the jails" and "July fighters, unite and fight".

The group tore the banner and blocked participants inside. Around 12:15pm, they handed over Latif, Hafizur, journalist Manzurul Alam, and at least 15 others to police, who took them away in a van. Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Additional Deputy Commissioner Asaduzzaman was present.

Police later confirmed that Latif Siddique and others were in Detective Branch custody throughout the day. Last night, DB chief Md Shafiqul Islam told this newspaper that a case under the Anti-Terrorism Act would be filed

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4