

PRIMARY SCHOOLS Dropouts up after 14 years of decline

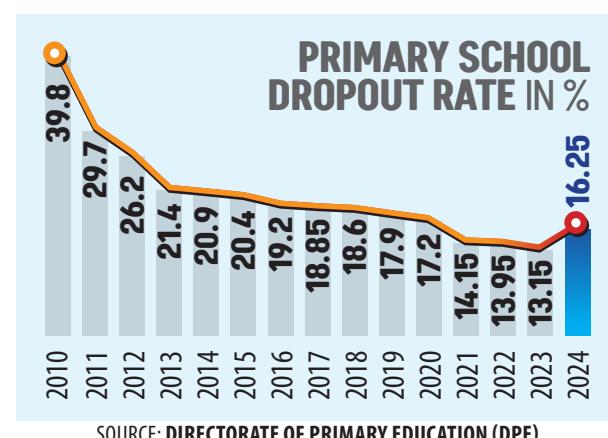
WASIM BIN HABIB

In a setback for the country's primary education system, the school dropout rate saw a sudden rise last year after a steady decline over 14 years, according to a government report.

The dropout rate increased to 16.25 percent in 2024 from 13.15 percent in 2023, shows the Annual Primary School Statistics (APSS) 2024, released by the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) late last month.

The report attributed the sudden rise in dropouts to multiple factors, including inflation-induced financial strain and early entry into the labour market -- all of which push families to prioritise immediate survival over continued schooling.

Boys made up a larger proportion of school dropouts than girls, with their rate surging to 19.02 percent in 2024, up from 14.12 percent in 2023. The rate for girls rose



slightly to 13.36 percent from 12.32 percent, it said.

More than 1.6 crore children are studying at 118,607 primary schools across the country.

The report observed that dropout rates jump as students move into upper grades, indicating that they face growing challenges while progressing through the primary education cycle.

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An effigy of Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader, along with papers and leaflets, was set ablaze as the party's central office in the capital's Kakrail was vandalised yesterday evening.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF PROTHOM ALO

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY 'Being forced to rush the trials'

ICT chief prosecutor fears next govt
may not continue trials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Crimes Tribunal's Chief Prosecutor Mohammad Tajul Islam yesterday said they are being forced to rush the trials of crimes against humanity committed during the July uprising, as well as enforced disappearances perpetrated under the

Awami League regime.

And this is happening amid fears that the next government may not continue the trials, he added.

Tajul also expressed his apprehension that the next government, which is expected to be formed after the February election, and the upcoming election.

The meeting with the BNP is scheduled for 3:00pm, followed by Jamaat at 4:30pm and NCP

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Yunus to
meet BNP,
Jamaat, NCP
leaders today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus will hold separate meetings today with the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and National Citizen Party to discuss the current political situation and the upcoming election.

The meeting with the BNP is scheduled for 3:00pm, followed by Jamaat at 4:30pm and NCP

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

ATTACK ON NUR

There will be a judicial probe

Says govt; Gono Odhikar chief in
ICU; CA talks to him over phone;
protests spread countrywide

STAR REPORT

The government has pledged a judicial inquiry into the attack on Gono Odhikar Parishad President Nurul Haque Nur.

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam made the announcement while speaking to reporters on the premises of State Guest House Jamuna, the CA's official residence, yesterday.



Nur and five others suffered critical injuries after being beaten by police and army personnel in front of their office at the capital's Bijoy Nagar on Friday evening. The assault followed clashes between Gono Odhikar Parishad and Jatiya Party activists near the latter's Kakrail office.

Until the filing of this report around 11:00am, Nur remained in intensive care at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Shafiqul said Nur would receive all necessary treatment; he would be sent abroad if required. Others injured will also be given the best possible medical care, he added.

Earlier in the morning, in a statement issued by the Chief Adviser's Press Wing, the government strongly condemned the assault on Nur, calling it "an attack on the democratic spirit of the July uprising" and on "the nation's struggle for justice and accountability".

It promised a "thorough and impartial investigation" to ensure that no individual, regardless of position or influence, escapes accountability. "Justice will be delivered transparently and swiftly," it said, while urging unity among political and social forces to safeguard democratic gains.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus spoke with Nur over the phone, assuring him of full government support. He enquired about his treatment and also conveyed sympathy to Nur's family and urged them to remain strong, the press wing said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Parts of JP HQ set on fire Party offices in several dists attacked

STAR REPORT

The central office of Jatiya Party in the capital's Kakrail came under arson attack last night. Party offices in several other districts were also vandalised.

Speaking to The Daily Star, JP Joint Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Jalali, said the Kakrail incident occurred shortly after party leaders and activists had concluded a scheduled programme and left the office premises.

"A group of 20 to 30 individuals defied police barricades and launched the arson attack on the party headquarters.

"Police responded with truncheons, water cannons, and sound

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The government's pilot programme to install semi-automatic traffic signals at seven intersections in Dhaka began yesterday. This photo, taken on the capital's Minto Road near Hotel Intercontinental, shows commuters ignoring the red signal and passing through.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

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To know more,
Keep an eye on tomorrow's business page

DUCSU POLLS BGCS pledges to end 'gono rooms' at dormitories

Panel unveils
manifesto

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Boishommo Birodh Shikkharthi Sangsad panel, of Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad (BGCS), yesterday announced its manifesto for the upcoming DUCSU election, vowing to transform Dhaka University into a research-based institution and to prioritise political freedom on campus.

BGCS was formed after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government on August 5 last year. Many of its members were directly involved in the July uprising that paved the way for political change.

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STUDENTS' UNION ELECTIONS

Want to free DUCSU
from political
interference

VP candidate Shameem tells Star

SHARIF M SHAFIQUE

Shameem Hossen, an independent candidate for the vice-president (VP) post, said he has entered the DUCSU election race to transform it into a platform for students, free from the control and interference of political parties.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Shameem, a master's student in the Department of English, said, "Since independence, what we have seen in the name of student politics is bloodshed. After 1990, DUCSU was sent to the museum, deliberately, to silence students' voices. This was because DUCSU always challenged the government."



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I'm running to
resist anti-state
forces

GS candidate Onoy tells Star

SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK

Anamul Hasan Onoy, general secretary (GS) candidate from the "Aparajeyo 71-Odomomo 24" panel in the upcoming DUCSU election, said he is contesting the polls to resist anti-state and anti-liberation forces.



SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Floods, landslides kill at least 11 in India's Jammu region

AFP, Srinagar

Floods and landslides triggered by record-breaking rain killed at least 11 people, including four children, in India's Jammu and Kashmir, officials said Saturday.

An intense monsoon rainstorm in the Indian-administered territory since Tuesday has caused widespread chaos, with raging water smashing into bridges and swamping homes.

A local disaster official told AFP that Ramban and Reasi districts were hit by heavy rainfall and landslides on Friday night, killing 11 people.

One child aged five was trapped in the debris and still missing, he added.

On Wednesday, a landslide slammed the pilgrimage route to the Hindu shrine of Vaishno Devi in Jammu, killing 41 people.

India's Meteorological Department said the torrential rain had smashed records at two locations in the region.

Jammu and Udhampur recorded their highest 24-hour rainfall on Wednesday, with 296 millimetres (11.6 inches) in Jammu, nine percent higher than the 1973 record, and 629.4 mm (24.8 inches) in Udhampur -- a staggering 84 percent surge over the 2019 mark.

Floods and landslides are common during the June-September monsoon season, but experts say climate change, coupled with poorly planned development, is increasing their frequency, severity and impact.

Climate experts from the Himalayan focused International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development warn that a spate of disasters illustrates the dangers when extreme rain combines with mountain slopes weakened by melting permafrost, as well as building developments in flood-prone valleys.

Powerful torrents driven by intense rain smashed into Chisot village in Indian-administered Kashmir on August 14, killing at least 65 people and leaving another 33 missing.



Palestinians mourn over the bodies of family members killed in an Israeli strike at Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

THAI POLITICAL CRISIS Rival camps jostle to fill void after PM's ouster

REUTERS, Bangkok

Thailand's political rivals jockeyed for power yesterday after a court sacked the prime minister, with two camps declaring they were ready to form the next government but with no indication when that might happen.

The Constitutional Court's dismissal of Paetongtarn Shinawatra on Friday for an ethics violation triggered a burst of dealmaking. Her ruling alliance put on a united front, while a party that quit her coalition sought to rally support to fill the vacuum.

Paetongtarn, 39, was the sixth premier from or backed by the billionaire Shinawatra family to be ousted by the military or judiciary in a tumultuous two-decade battle for power and patronage

among Thailand's rival elites.

With an array of competing interests, histories of betrayal and big war chests among the political groups, more shifts in allegiance could create deadlock at a time of public unease and prolonged malaise in Southeast Asia's second-biggest economy.

The once-dominant Pheu Thai party, founded by Paetongtarn's father Thaksin Shinawatra, has a mountain to climb to shore up a coalition that has hemorrhaged public support, opening the door to its former alliance partner Bhumjaithai to woo other parties and seek defections.

Bhumjaithai's leader, Anutin Charnvirakul, stole the spotlight from Paetongtarn on Friday, as a phalanx of media livestreamed his every move as he shuttled between parties offering pledges

that included calling an election within four months.

The process to elect a prime minister could be protracted, as the constitution provides no deadline. There was no indication on Saturday of when parliament would hold a vote.

Flanked by several factions that once backed the coalition, Anutin told a press conference late on Friday he already had the votes in the bag.

"We are here to work for the people, we have enough votes of support," he said.

Emerging as a kingmaker is the opposition People's Party, the largest force in parliament and a reincarnation of the party that won the 2023 election on an anti-establishment platform but was blocked from power by lawmakers allied with the royalist military.

Want to free Ducsu from political interference

FROM PAGE 1

He argued that political parties intend to regulate students' fate and keep the university bound within their political settlements. "The mass uprising has now given us the chance to raise these issues. Just as the state needs reform, Dhaka University also needs reform. I want to work to that end as an elected representative of students."

Reflecting on his own experience, Shameem said the reality of DU was far from the dream he once imagined. "In classrooms, students often struggle to stay awake. The library is rich, but finding the right books is difficult."

He said the administrative system is stuck in the past, despite global technological progress. "Even now, students pay fees manually at banks."

According to him, appointments of teachers and officials are based more on political loyalty than merit, while no government has ever addressed students' fundamental needs. "Accommodation, food quality, canteen conditions, and educational standards are routinely ignored," he said.

Shameem also highlighted the struggle of students who have a glorious past in leading democratic movements. "Many have to sleep on terraces, in gono rooms, or on rooftops, suffering from bedbugs. Yet no new halls are being built, nor is there any initiative to reclaim university land for students."

Pointing to the crises over accommodation, education, food, and safety, he said the root problem was a lack of accountability. "The administration is not accountable to students. Teachers have their syndicates, and officials have theirs. Reform is essential to ensure accountability. Even if all changes cannot be achieved in one year, we can set an example. We will bring the Ducsu elections into the university calendar, and will not allow any Senate meeting without elected student representatives."

Explaining why he chose to run independently, Shameem said every student has leadership potential. "I considered joining a panel, but realised I would not be able to fully carry out my ideas if I stayed within one."

If elected, he plans to establish a website and media cell where students can file complaints, alongside forming hall-based sub-committees to create an effective student network.

"Look at Oxford and Cambridge, students there contest elections based on quality. If students here believe in my capability and connect with my vision, I believe they will vote for me," he said.

Dropouts up after 14 years

FROM PAGE 1

The grade-wise breakdown shows that students typically begin with high enrolment and low attrition in class-I. But the system begins to falter from class-2, with dropout rates rising steadily and peaking at 7.6 percent in class-4.

"These are the areas where interventions are needed," the report pointed out.

Bangladesh has made notable progress in reducing primary school dropouts since 2010, when nearly four in 10 students failed to complete the education cycle.

Various government measures such as distribution of free textbooks, expansion of stipend coverage and mid-day meals resulted in a sharp decrease in dropout rate over the years.

An analysis of the trend shows that by 2020, the rate fell to 17.02 percent from 39.8 percent in 2010. It further came down to 13.15 percent in 2023, marking significant improvement.

REASONS BEHIND SUDDEN RISE

Inflationary pressure and a rise in living costs in 2024 might have eroded the real value of student stipends, prompting many families to prioritise survival over schooling, said the report.

Seasonal migration, household shocks, and climate-related hardships

further intensified this pressure, particularly among disadvantaged communities, it noted.

Boys are more vulnerable to dropping out than girls, largely due to early entry into the labour market or informal apprenticeship.

Experts warn that the recent reversal in student retention risks undermining Bangladesh's hard-won progress towards universal education and the Sustainable Development Goals.

They recommend introducing inflation-adjusted stipends and targeted interventions to prevent further dropouts.

"Though the government recently raised the stipend amount, it failed to keep pace with rising inflation that has sharply driven up the cost of living," said Rasheda Choudhury, a noted educationist.

Besides, prices of education materials such as exercise books, pens, and pencils have gone up, she told The Daily Star.

"In such circumstances, families are forced to decide whether they can afford to keep their children in school. Many withdraw their daughters from school to help with household chores, while boys are often pushed into income-generating work," she added.

Rasheda, also the executive director

of the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPED), called for raising the stipend amount and investing more to keep students in school and ensure quality education.

"The government must explore ways to invest in both retention of students and learning outcomes," she said.

When contacted, Abu Noor Md Shamsuzzaman, director general of the DPE, said that to prevent further dropouts, the government is initiating some measures, including the revival of the school feeding programme that was suspended in 2022.

The programme will resume next month in around 23,000 primary schools across 165 poverty-stricken upazilas. Each student will receive two food items selected from a list of biscuits, eggs, milk, buns, and bananas five days per week, he said.

"We hope this will help meet the nutritional needs of children from marginalised families, increase school attendance and reduce dropout rates."

Asked whether the stipend amount would be raised, Shamsuzzaman said they don't have any such plan right now as it will require a huge budget.

"However, the scholarship for 82,500 students selected through the Primary Scholarship Examination is likely to be increased," he added.

There will be a judicial probe

FROM PAGE 1

Doctors said Nur suffered a head injury, jaw and nose fractures, and minor internal bleeding. His face and eyes remain swollen with blood accumulation.

The former Ducsu VP was brought to the emergency ward around 11:20pm Friday and later shifted to the ICU, said Dr Mostak Ahmed, a resident surgeon at DMCH.

A medical board comprising specialists from neurosurgery, ENT, ophthalmology, and casualty departments has been formed.

"We do not think he needs surgery at the moment, but he is still not out of danger," Dr Mostak said.

The attack on Nur set off widespread condemnation and protests throughout the country.

Gono Odhikar Parishad activists yesterday rallied in the capital's Bijoy Nagar, placing three demands: banning the Jatiya Party within 48 hours, forming a committee immediately to investigate the attack, and the resignation of the home affairs adviser.

"We want justice," said General Secretary Rashed Khan.

In Rajshahi, a section of Rajshahi University students blocked the Dhaka-Rajshahi highway for nearly an hour from 11:30am, joined by around 50 students from different departments.

The rally was addressed by Fahim Reza, former coordinator of Students Against Discrimination, and Al Shahri Shuvo, general secretary of the Student Rights Council.

In Chattogram, protesters blocked Soloshohor Gate No. 2 from noon to



Gono Odhikar Parishad General Secretary Rashed Khan speaking at a press briefing in front of the party office in Bijoy Nagar yesterday. PHOTO: COLLECTED

2:00pm, chanting slogans and setting tyres ablaze, halting traffic for nearly two hours.

In Tangail, demonstrators vandalised the Jatiya Party office near the police station before blocking the Dhaka-Tangail highway for about half an hour. "The situation is now calm, and additional police have been deployed," said Tanvir Ahmed, OC of Tangail Sadar Police Station.

In Munshiganj, 30-35 protesters blocked the Dhaka-Mawa Expressway for 15 minutes, while another group staged a procession in the town that ended at the press club. Speakers there demanded justice and called for the cancellation of Jatiya Party's registration with the Election Commission.

In Pabna, Gono Odhikar Parishad men blocked the Jamuna bridge west zone intersection in Sirajganj for nearly half an hour around 12:30pm. Hatikumru Highway Police Station OC Ismail Hossain said they removed the demonstrators after a few minutes of the blockade.

Gono Odhikar Parishad activists also blocked the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway at Chandana intersection in Gazipur's Basao for about one and a half hours from around 6:00pm.

They organised a torch procession and protest rally blocking the road in Gopalganj as well.

Our correspondents in Chattogram, Rajshahi, Gazipur, Pabna, Tangail, Munshiganj and Gopalganj contributed to this report.

I'm running to resist

FROM PAGE 1

set a precedent in the ongoing journey toward a truly democratic Bangladesh."

"Everyone in our panel are student who are currently enrolled. Therefore, they understand the issues of the campus very well. Students have always found me standing by their side in every movement. That's why I think they will recognise the faces of resistance."

If elected, Onoy said, he'll get only one year to work, which he considers to be insufficient, citing the numerous crises that students face.

"But I want to assure students that I'll prioritise their basic rights: accommodation, food, healthcare, and conducive academic environment."

"At the same time, to preserve democratic practices at Dhaka University, I'll remain committed to ensuring that Ducsu elections are held every year. Alongside, we will ensure maximum allocation for education and research to transform Dhaka University into a hub of research and knowledge. If not elected, I will continue efforts so that those who are elected implement these agendas."

Speaking about the overall electoral atmosphere, he said, "Since Ducsu elections are being held after a long time, we had hopes of restoring healthy

Yunus to meet BNP, Jamaat

FROM PAGE 1

at 6:00pm, all at the chief adviser's official residence, State Guest House Jamuna, Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said at a briefing yesterday.

Shafiqul also said, "We are firmly stating that the election will be held in the first half of February. There is no force that can prevent this. No conspiracy will be able to stop it."

In response to a question whether the environment is conducive to election, he said, "You should collect statistics from the Police Headquarters. Compare the current law and order situation with last year's statistics and see whether the situation has deteriorated."

The Election Commission on Thursday announced its work plan for the 13th national polls, aiming to complete major preparations by the end of November and announce the schedule in the first half of December.

Tarique pledges

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to protect languages, culture and social values, include qualified representatives in the party structure, form cultural research institutions, give status to the Tribal Welfare Association as a trust, create opportunities for foreign technical education and training, and provide loan facilities to women entrepreneurs.

Speaking as a special guest at the conference, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said, "After the long reign of oppression by the monstrous fascist government,

JUCSU POLLS

60% of all seats vacant or uncontested

SAKIB AHMED

The upcoming Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union (Jucsu) and hall union elections have drawn 622 candidates for 340 posts.

However, nearly 60 percent of the seats are either uncontested or vacant.

Of the 622 candidates, 449 are males and 173 females. For the 25 central union posts, 179 -- 133 males and 46 females -- are in the race.

An analysis of the final list shows that out of 315 posts across 11 male and 10 female halls, 131 are uncontested while 68 remain vacant.

There are 11,919 registered voters for the Jucsu polls, which are taking place after 34 years.

Of the voters, 6,102 are males and 5,817 females.

While female students make up 48.8 percent of the electorate, their participation remains low.

According to the constitution, each hall union council has 15 posts. But in the 10 female halls, out of 150 posts, 59 remain vacant, while 65 have already been won uncontested.

In Nawab Faizunnesa Hall, six posts, including vice-president and general secretary, have only one candidate each, while nine remain vacant. In Sufia Kamal Hall, 10 posts, including VP, GS, and assistant general secretary, are uncontested and five are vacant. Fazilatunnesa Hall has nine uncontested posts, including VP, and three vacant ones.

In Female Hall No 15, six posts, including VP, are uncontested, while four remain vacant. Female Hall No 13 has 12 vacant posts, with only one contested. In Begum Khaleda Zia Hall, seven posts are vacant and six uncontested, while Jahana Imam Hall has eight uncontested and four vacant ones.

Man sent to jail over abduction, rape of girl
Victim rescued in CtG

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Bengaluru

A Jashore court yesterday sent a man to jail in a case filed over the abduction and rape of a schoolgirl four months ago.

Jashore Senior Judicial Magistrate Bornali Rani passed the order after police produced the accused Billal Hossain, 50, before the court, said Zahidul Islam, sub-inspector of Kotwali Police Station and the investigating officer.

Billal gave a confessional statement under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Police rescued the girl and arrested Billal from the Pahartali area in Chattogram on Friday night before bringing him back to Jashore, Zahidul said.

Billal from Kishoreganj had been working as a gardener in Jashore and lived with his wife in Arapura union.

The victim's father filed a case against him on April 11 with Kotwali Police Station.

According to the case, around 11:00am on April 8, when the girl was on her way to school, Billal picked up the seventh grader on his easy bike and took her to an unknown location.

After a search, the victim's family could not find her and filed the case.

In the case, her father said Billal used to visit their house occasionally. Later, the family learnt that Billal had abducted her.

SI Zahidul said Billal kept the girl captive and raped her. At one point, the girl conceived. She is now three months pregnant. The victim has been rescued from Chattogram and handed over to the family.

COMMERCIAL SPACE RENT
5 floors, 3280 sft each,
Shanta Virtue, sector -04,
Uttara. Opposite of
Rajlakshmi Kusal Center.
01714374917, 01730022779



Potato farmers in Rajshahi are facing losses due to excess production and a shortage of cold storage facilities. With prices dropping to Tk 7-8 per kg at harvest, many were forced to sell at a loss. Now, ahead of the new planting season, farmers are buying potatoes from cold storages at Tk 600-650 per maund, while a large portion of wet and spoiled potatoes is being discarded. The photo was taken at a cold storage in Mohanpur upazila recently.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

KDA avenue turns into a garbage dumping ground

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

KCC doesn't clean regularly. When it rains, the situation gets worse."

According to the conservancy department of KCC, the corporation currently collects around 800 tonnes of the 1,200 tonnes of household waste generated daily in Khulna.

Much of it is dumped in open spaces, alleged locals. Waste from 26 Secondary Transfer Stations (STS) is often seen scattered around those plants.



To address this crisis, KCC has initiated a modern waste-to-energy project at Shalua in Dumuria upazila, around 15 kilometres from the city. Once completed, the facility will process 375 tonnes of waste daily and generate 15 tonnes of bio-fertiliser, 300 kilowatts of electricity, and 5,000 litres of diesel, said officials.

The Tk 52.70 crore project under the Local Government Engineering Department is being funded by the Asian Development Bank. However, progress on the plant has been slow. Only 70 percent work has been

completed after two deadlines.

According to KCC officials, a key hurdle is the lack of available land for constructing new STSs in strategic areas such as PTI Mor, Zilla School, Boyra, and Nirala Mor.

"We have no funding issues," said Md Anisur Rahman, a waste management officer at KCC. "But we can't build STS facilities without land. If these are established, there will be a major improvement in the city's waste management."

Rafiqul Islam, a KCC worker, said waste from wards 19 and 20 is dumped at KDA Avenue daily until 3:30pm. "We used to dump on both sides of the road. Now it's confined to one side."

Garbage van driver Sheikh Shafique Ahmed said, "We dump waste here in three shifts."

Contacted, Kohinur Jahan, executive magistrate and chief conservancy officer, said, "This is an important part of the city. Under one of our projects, we have already started work on nine new Secondary Transfer Stations, of which three have been completed.

"As part of this initiative, we planned to set up an STS in this location under Ward 19. However, due to strong opposition from locals, it was not possible. Even so, we are continuing our efforts to find a suitable nearby location to establish the plant."

"It has become a part of our daily life," said a local shopkeeper, Touhid Tuhin. "We hold our noses and keep going... Nothing changes."

Abu Mollah, who runs a tea stall right opposite the dumping site, said, "Nobody wants to sit near this stench."

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"As part of this initiative, we planned to set up an STS in this location under Ward 19. However, due to strong opposition from locals, it was not possible. Even so, we are continuing our efforts to find a suitable nearby location to establish the plant."

"It has become a part of our daily life," said a local shopkeeper, Touhid Tuhin. "We hold our noses and keep going... Nothing changes."

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Putin slams discriminatory sanctions

REUTERS, Beijing

On the eve of a visit to China, Russian leader Vladimir Putin blasted Western sanctions as his country's economy teetered on the brink of recession, wounded by trade curbs and the cost of his war in Ukraine.

Russia and China jointly opposed "discriminatory" sanctions in global trade, Putin said in a written interview with China's official Xinhua news agency published on Saturday.

Putin will be in China, Russia's biggest trading partner, from Sunday to Wednesday in a four-day visit that the Kremlin has called "unprecedented."

The Russian leader will first attend the two-day summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in the northern Chinese port city of Tianjin. The security



focused SCO, founded by a group of Eurasian nations in 2001, has expanded to 10 permanent members that now include Iran and India.

Putin will then travel to Beijing to hold talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping and attend a massive military parade in the Chinese capital commemorating the end of World War Two after Japan's formal surrender.

West has slapped several rounds of sanctions on Russia since it invaded Ukraine in 2022.

US President Donald Trump said he might impose "massive" sanctions on Russia depending on whether progress was possible in his bid to secure a peace deal.

Putin and Xi declared a "no limits" strategic partnership in 2022. The two have met over 40 times in the past decade.



A boy comes out of the rubble of a collapsed building hit by Israel in the Nuseirat camp for Palestinian refugees in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. The Israeli military declared Gaza City "a dangerous combat zone" on August 29 and asked all residents of the city to evacuate immediately.

PHOTO: AFP

GAZA ATROCITIES EU ministers split over sanctions on Israel

REUTERS, Copenhagen

European Union foreign ministers were deeply split yesterday over the war in Gaza, with some calling for the EU to apply strong economic pressure on Israel while others made clear they were unwilling to go that far.

"We are divided about this issue," Kaja Kallas, the EU's foreign policy chief, said as she arrived for a meeting with the ministers in the Danish capital Copenhagen.

"If you don't have a unified voice... on this topic, we don't have a voice on the global scene. So that's definitely very problematic," she said.

Kallas said she was "not very optimistic" that ministers could agree even on a proposal she described as lenient - as it is less severe than other options to curb Israeli access to an EU research-funding programme.

The war has brought to the

surface deeply rooted differences among the EU's 27 countries on the Middle East. Many EU governments have criticised Israel's conduct of the war. But they have been unable to agree on impactful EU political or economic action.

Countries, including Ireland, Spain, Sweden and the Netherlands, have called for the suspension of an EU free trade pact with Israel. But traditional allies of Israel, such as Germany, Hungary and the Czech Republic, have rejected such steps.

"If the EU does not act as a collective now and take sanctions against Israel, whenever will it? What more could it possibly take? Children are starving," said Irish Foreign Minister Simon Harris.

A global hunger monitor that works with the United Nations and major aid agencies said last week it had determined there was famine in Gaza. Israel rejected its findings.

The European Union is Israel's

biggest trading partner, with trade in goods between the two amounting to 42.6 billion euros last year, according to the EU.

German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul said Berlin had made clear that Israel had to respect humanitarian principles in its war against Hamas and that Germany had suspended delivery of weapons that could be used in Gaza.

But he said Germany was "not very convinced" by the proposal to curb Israeli access to EU research funds, questioning how suspending such civilian cooperation that he described as sensible would be useful.

European Commission officials say they proposed the measure to send an initial signal to Israel and because it does not need unanimity to pass. Support from 15 countries would be enough if they represent 65% of the EU population.

70 killed as migrant boat capsizes off West Africa

REUTERS

At least 70 people were killed when a boat carrying migrants capsized off the coast of West Africa, Gambia's foreign affairs ministry said late on Friday, in one of the deadliest accidents in recent years along a popular migration route to Europe.

Another 30 people are feared dead after the vessel, believed to have departed from Gambia and carrying mostly Gambian and Senegalese nationals, sank off the coast of Mauritania early on Wednesday, the ministry said in a statement.

It was carrying an estimated 150 passengers, 16 of whom had been rescued.

The Atlantic migration route from the coast of West Africa to the Canary Islands, typically used by African migrants trying to reach Spain, is one of the world's deadliest.

More than 46,000 irregular migrants reached the Canary Islands last year, a record, according to the EU. More than 10,000 died attempting the journey, a 58% increase over 2023, according to the rights group Caminando Fronteras.

He accused the Kremlin of using "the time meant for preparing a leaders'-level (peace) meeting to organise new massive attacks", and called for more international sanctions on Moscow and its backers.

Ukraine's army general staff meanwhile said its forces had hit two oil refineries in Russia, which it said were supplying fuel to Russian military units.

It said they had struck the Krasnodarsky refinery in Krasnodar Krai and the Sizranovsky refinery in Samara, causing a fire near the latter.

The latest strikes by both sides followed a Russian attack on Kyiv on Thursday, in which at least 25 people died, including four children.

Russia strikes across Ukraine as peace prospects flounder

AFP, Kyiv

Russia launched "massive" strikes across Ukraine overnight, rescue services said yesterday, a new blow to peace efforts that drew a fresh appeal from President Volodymyr Zelensky for US and European help.

Despite a recent flurry of international efforts to broker a truce in the three-and-a-half year conflict, led by US President Donald Trump, there have been no signs of a let-up in fighting on the ground.

Ukrainian rescue services said on Telegram that overnight strikes on the southern city of Zaporizhzhia had killed at least one person and wounded at least 25. Three children aged between nine and 16 were admitted to hospital.

Russia confirmed it had launched overnight attacks, saying they were against "military" targets.

Zaporizhzhia regional governor Ivan Fedorov said residential



buildings were hit and scores of homes left without gas or electricity.

The cities of Dnipro and Pavlograd in the central region of Dnipropetrovsk also came under attack, causing fires, regional governor Sergiy Lysak wrote on Telegram, warning residents to take cover.

Ukraine's air force said the Russian army had launched 582 drones and missiles overnight, most of which it had downed. Zelensky, who has been pushing

for a peace summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin, said a total of 14 regions had been targeted overnight.

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Stop excessive force and legal abuse

Citizens' fundamental rights must be protected

Three recent incidents have raised serious questions about the role of law enforcement in maintaining order. The first involved a protest by BUET students, during which police used tear gas, sound grenades, and truncheons, leaving many injured. The second occurred when former MP Latif Siddiqui and Dhaka University professor Hafizur Rahman were detained by police after being harassed during a discussion, and later accused of inciting terrorism. The third was when leaders and activists of the Jatiya Party and Gono Odhikar Parishad clashed in Kakrail, leaving Gono Odhikar President Nurul Haque Nur severely injured.

Each of these situations ostensibly required police intervention—students marching towards the chief adviser's residence, a group verbally and physically attacking participants in a discussion, and rival political leaders and activists clashing. However, in all cases, law enforcement responded with excessive force. Images of a police officer restraining a student's mouth and a bloodied Nurul Haque Nur have gone viral, highlighting this brutality. At one point, police even attempted to pass off the photograph of the officer accosting a student as AI-generated—a claim that was later proven false. In the case of Latif Siddiqui, no action was taken against the harassers, yet those peacefully attending the event were detained and charged with terrorism.

It bears repeating that the primary duty of law enforcers is to protect citizens' rights, but in these incidents, they failed to do so. The use of brute force and arbitrary legal action were recurring features during the rule of the ousted Awami League regime. It is unfortunate that such practices continue despite promises of police and legal reforms. While it must be acknowledged that security forces are often required to manage volatile situations, they must not revert to outdated tactics of excessive force or misuse of the law to suppress civilians. They must act with restraint and effectiveness, ensuring that force is applied only when absolutely necessary. One may reasonably ask: why was Nurul Haque Nur not detained if he was indeed causing unrest, as claimed? The government's inertia in taking proactive measures before situations escalated was evident during the BUET protests as well.

In the coming days, protests, clashes, or attempts at mob justice are likely to continue. The government, therefore, must prioritise the protection of citizens' rights by focusing on preventive measures, rather than reactive ones that often violate basic freedoms. This requires meaningful dialogue with protesting groups. Many of their demands may be unreasonable, but the government must demonstrate sincerity in listening to them and reaching a fair resolution. People must believe that they do not need to block intersections or highways to make the government pay attention. Law enforcement, too, must evolve from using brute force to adopting a more balanced approach that respects fundamental rights. The government must also prevent the exploitation of the legal system through the filing of dubious cases.

Enforcement is key to fixing traffic woes

Don't let another traffic light experiment fail again

Amid reports that Dhaka's streets are getting semi-automatic traffic lights, we are unsure how to react. This is not something we have not tried before—we did, and we failed. The reasons behind this decades-long failure are many, including unsuitable technology, lack of technical expertise among those responsible, poor enforcement and accountability, corruption in procurement, and so on.

Under the new initiative, seven semi-automatic traffic signals have been launched on a pilot basis, covering seven out of 22 intersections between Shikkha Bhawan and the airport, before eventually expanding to all 22 intersections. But it bears repeating that traffic signals alone will not solve congestion unless certain preconditions are met. These include strict control of jaywalking, proper use of zebra crossings and footbridges, closure of unauthorised medians except at designated pedestrian crossings, and removal of unregistered vehicles from the roads.

It is also important to have sufficient CCTV cameras to capture violators and ensure they are penalised. Without genuine efforts to restore road discipline, all such measures will fall short. In fact, a major reason for our past failures with traffic lights lies in this culture of indiscipline: drivers routinely flout traffic rules and rarely face consequences. Every intersection or turning point becomes a source of chaos simply because everyone wants to be the first to cross. We see a constant stream of cars refusing to queue, forcing their way in from the sides and creating severe congestion near the lights, which also blocks vehicles going straight.

A semi-automatic signal system means that traffic police will retain the option of manually regulating vehicular flow. Therefore, a training programme for traffic police is essential so they can effectively operate both manual and automatic systems simultaneously. In addition, there should be a mass awareness campaign for drivers to learn the rules of the road, as many literally have no idea about them. Car owners, too, must recognise the need to respect traffic laws. Too often, those with some social standing consider themselves above the law, as if traffic rules apply only to "ordinary" people.

Finally, we urge the relevant authorities to take this new project seriously. The high death toll from road accidents—though not directly linked to city traffic lights but rather to our overall trend of traffic rule violations—is a constant reminder of systemic indifference that the authorities must address. Given Dhaka's overcrowded streets and neighbourhoods, it has become extremely important that traffic rules, including the use of semi-automatic signals, are properly planned and implemented.

EDITORIAL

A workable path to enforce the July Charter



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

KHAN KHALID ADNAN

What is the July Charter, constitutionally speaking? It is a political compact—ambitious in purpose, but not yet a law—drafted by the National Consensus Commission following last year's student people uprising and subsequent dissolution of the parliament. The interim government situates the charter within a roadmap to the next general election, not as a self-executing legal instrument. The commission has finalised a draft after two rounds of discussion with political parties, identifying 84 consensus items with notes of dissent on at least 11 points, while the law ministry maps which recommendations are "immediately implementable."

Yet the final draft claims far more: it says the charter will take precedence over any inconsistent law or even the constitution, that its provisions will be "beyond judicial challenge," and that the Appellate Division alone will interpret it. These are sweeping assertions. They collide with bedrock clauses of the constitution, including Article 7's supremacy and Article 26's rule that laws inconsistent with fundamental rights are void. A political document cannot displace the constitution in force. Recent party feedback also underscores the problem—BNP rejects charter precedence and opposes barring court challenges; CPB and others concur; Jamaat backs precedence—illustrating why any "supra-constitutional" claim would be divisive and legally frail.

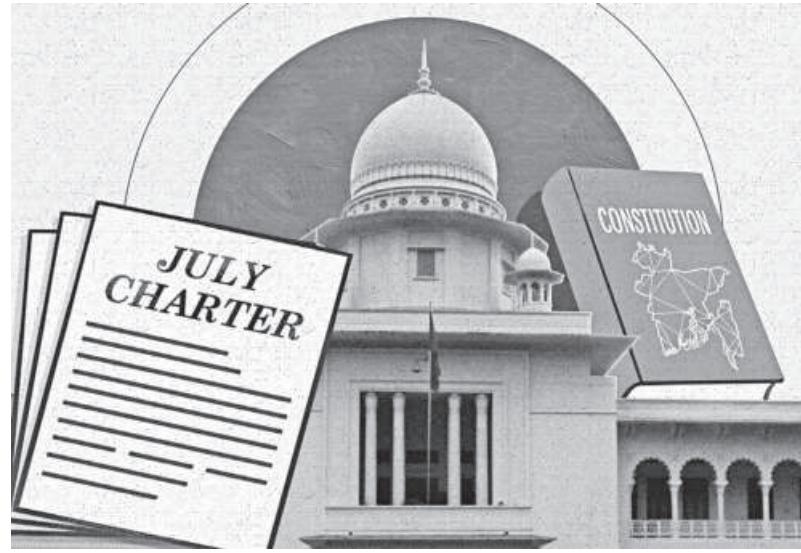
The July Charter's attempt to oust judicial review is not legally sustainable. The High Court Division's writ jurisdiction under Article 102 is part of the constitution's basic structure; the Appellate Division's "complete justice" power in Article 104 and the binding force of its decisions under Article 111 entrench the Court's role, not curtail it. Bangladesh's superior courts have repeatedly rejected "ouster clauses" that seek to immunise state action from review. And the basic structure line of cases—from Anwar Hossain Chowdhury (Eighth Amendment) to the Fifth and 16th Amendment decisions—confirm that neither parliament nor anyone else may abolish judicial review or independence.

Nor can the interim government make the charter "constitutional" by ordinance. The constitution permits presidential ordinances only when parliament is dissolved or not in session—but with a bright-line limit: an ordinance cannot alter or repeal any provision of this constitution (Article 93(1)). Ordinances can, however, carry the force of law temporarily and authorise urgent expenditure from the Consolidated Fund under Article 93(3). In short, absent a sitting Jatiya Sangsad, the charter cannot be

discipline, human rights pledges—with clear, reviewable sanctions for non-compliance, including suspension or cancellation of registration. Courts have scrutinised party constitutions and EC decisions under these provisions before.

Second, use ordinance to create a statutory Implementation Commission with defined investigative and reporting powers to monitor compliance by state agencies and political parties, issue reasoned determinations, and refer non-compliance to the EC or the courts. Its orders would remain subject to judicial review—consistent with Article 102—ensuring due process and legitimacy.

Third, ask the Appellate Division for an advisory opinion under Article 106 on contested legal questions around the charter's implementation—e.g., the permissible scope of RPO conditions, the contours of party undertakings,



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

constitutionalised by executive fiat; only a future parliament can amend the constitution under Article 142.

So what can be done now, before the elections, to make core commitments in the charter enforceable afterwards?

First, use ordinary law. The Representation of the People Order, 1972 already ties party participation in elections to registration conditions. Under Article 90B (conditions for registration) and Article 90H (cancellation), the Election Commission can require parties to meet substantive standards and even cancel registration for breach. By ordinance, the interim government can amend the RPO to require parties to file sworn undertakings to implement specified charter items—transparent nominations, internal democracy, campaign finance

or how far administrative rules may go without legislation. While advisory opinions are not judgments, they carry authoritative weight. Such guidance would materially narrow litigation risks.

Fourth, anchor political promises in legal undertakings to the Court. Parties can file affidavits of commitment in pending public-interest writs or fresh petitions. If a governing party later repudiates those undertakings, the Supreme Court's status as a court of record with power to punish for contempt under Article 108 provides a credible compliance backstop; all authorities are constitutionally bound to act in aid of the Court under Article 112. Of course, contempt is not a substitute for legislation, but it can deter wilful defiance of solemn commitments.

The need to share responsibility for Rohingya refugees



Juliette Murekeyisoni is acting UNHCR representative in Bangladesh. Once a refugee herself, she has dedicated her life and career to supporting and creating solutions for people forced to flee.

JULIETTE MUREKEYISONI

Something remarkable happened last week in Cox's Bazar. Over 100 Rohingya from camps and the global Rohingya diaspora gathered with civil society, humanitarian and development partners, UN agencies, member states and Bangladesh government officials, including the chief adviser. This took place eight years after a surge in violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State in August 2017, which compelled more than 700,000 Rohingya to flee for safety in Bangladesh. Over two days, they discussed sustainable solutions and a new future for the Rohingya. This Stakeholder's Dialogue, organised by the Bangladesh government, marks the first time that Rohingya voices were included in high-level talks about decisions that affect their lives.

The day August 25, while being a moment to reflect on the ongoing challenges faced by 1.1 million Rohingya in Bangladesh, is also an opportunity to appreciate a singular solidarity: eight years ago, the Bangladeshi people stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the fleeing refugees. Homes and hearts across Ukhia and Teknaf were opened. From village to

village, Bangladeshi families gathered food and clothing to share with the Rohingya, who had walked for days with only the most meagre possessions. This display of solidarity remains inspiring to this day. The international community also rose in partnership, contributing humanitarian assistance and condemning the violence. Over time, the Cox's Bazar hills became the world's largest refugee settlement.

Across the border, conflict in Rakhine State continues to destroy farmlands, villages and livelihoods. Over the past 18 months, 150,000 Rohingya arrived in Bangladesh, forced to flee unrelenting and targeted violence. There is little for them in the camps, where they must squeeze into already overcrowded shelters with friends, relatives or strangers. Still, conditions in their homeland—from confiscation of land and property to forced labour and conscription, torture, sexual violence and the threat of being killed—leave them no choice.

Today, half a million Rohingya children born into statelessness live in camps: citizens of no country, dependent on foreign assistance

for food, water, shelter, and nearly everything else. Meanwhile, an estimated 3.5 million people are internally displaced in Myanmar, just as unable to return to their homes as the refugees in Bangladesh.

Eight years on, the Rohingya people deserve a better solution. This life in limbo, in sprawling but temporary camps, is no match for their human potential. Rohingya refugees need strategic and innovative approaches that build skills and capacities through education and self-reliance training to rebuild their lives when conditions allow for a safe, voluntary and dignified return to their country. This will also help ensure longer-term peace in the region.

Refugee life was never meant to be a lasting condition. The millions of Bangladeshi refugees who fled in 1971 returned when the Liberation War was over. Returning home is also the Rohingya aspiration, but only when they can be confident that their lives will be safe and dignified there.

As the Rohingya themselves said in the conference, the solution lies in Myanmar. A political solution that addresses the root causes of displacement and invests in peacebuilding must be forged by governments, neighbouring states and regional bodies working together.

The Stakeholders' Dialogue, where Rohingya men, women, youth, students and activists addressed the chief adviser and other leaders, was an important step in this direction. The High Level Conference on the

Situation of the Rohingya and Other Minorities in Myanmar, planned in New York for September 30, provides a critical opportunity for such action.

Too often, the global responsibility to shelter and protect people in need is politicised. As refugees are vilified, budgets to support them are slashed. Funding for the 2025 Joint Response Plan, the most basic needs package for Rohingya to live a dignified life in the refugee camps, is only about 60 percent funded. This means that funding for food is only secured until November 30 and cooking gas only through September. Healthcare and education services have already been cut. Across the board, humanitarian agencies had to cut jobs by nearly a third, affecting refugees, local and international staff.

In the face of such challenges, the international community must continue to show solidarity. Withholding aid cannot be the answer, nor closing borders. We must continue to uphold the right of people fleeing conflict and persecution to seek asylum.

Eight years on, the Rohingya count on our continued support. They rely on us—governments, development partners, civil society, the private sector and refugee leaders—to not only meet their basic needs, but to allow them to build resilience and self-reliance, preparing them for a future back in their homeland, where they can thrive in their communities. As UNHCR, we remain fully committed to this cause.

Teenage gangs and a failing social order



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H. M. NAZMUL ALAM

In recent times, a disturbing pattern has taken hold in our society, with groups of boys barely out of their adolescence seen roaming the streets armed with knives. Recently, they again made headlines when a teen gang attacked four students from Dhaka University and Jagannath University in Lalmoni, leaving one of them stabbed. In the district towns, sometimes you see them film themselves stabbing rivals and proudly circulate the footage on social media. Across cities and districts, gangs with names like "Eagle," "Black Star," "Twist," or "Rockstar" have emerged. Their adopted slogans—"Born to Fly" or "Boss for Life," for example—are not merely adolescent fantasies, however. They are a declaration of rebellion against a society that seems to have no meaningful place for them except in the shadows of crime.

In other words, these incidents are part of a metastasising crisis exposing how deeply our social order is faltering. A casual look at the list of incidents would read like a grim catalogue: a child raped by teenage delinquents in Habiganj; expatriate families extorted by gangs in Noakhali; Rohingya minors in Cox's Bazar being absorbed into organised criminal groups; or towns or cities being plagued by "big brother" backed networks that blend politics, crime, and juvenile desperation into a combustible mix. What we are witnessing is not random chaos but the crystallisation of a parallel social order—an alternative "career path" for a generation systematically failed by their institutions.

What's fuelling this surge in teenage crime? The answers lie not just in policing failures but also in the deeper fractures of our collective life. Poverty and economic deprivation set the foundation. Drug abuse—marijuana, yaba, even inhalants—further corrodes restraint, creating both dependence and the need for money that drives extortion, mugging, and theft. According to reports, many of these boys skip school, wander

Schools and colleges, which ought to be sanctuaries for children, often double as recruiting grounds for teen gangs. Students unwilling to join them often find themselves harassed, robbed, or beaten. Parents, fearful of retaliation or reputational harm, often remain silent. Another dimension in this problem is the increasing influence of social media. Messenger groups and Facebook pages have become organisational hubs for

sensational incidents—raids, arrests, promises of reform—only for the cycle to resume weeks later. Teenagers are picked up, granted bail, and often return emboldened by a sense of invincibility. In too many cases, police officers hesitate to confront gangs that enjoy protection from influential patrons. If arrests are delayed or investigations languish, it only emboldens the gangs.

But the problem cannot be reduced to the

activities. This is a colossal policy failure. While the state focuses on macroeconomic growth indicators, many of our children are growing up with fractured moral compasses, unstable family lives, and no meaningful path to inclusion.

It is tempting to dismiss these groups as petty criminals. But this overlooks the deeper threat they pose. Teenage gangs do not simply injure individual victims; each stabbing, each extortion, or each public brawl also erodes the sense of safety and trust in our communities. They normalise violence at an age when empathy and discipline should be cultivated. They redefine masculinity through domination, coercion, and cruelty. And they foreshadow the emergence of more entrenched criminal syndicates, as disaffected adolescents grow into hardened adults.

The rise of juvenile gangs in Bangladesh also poses a philosophical dilemma. What does it say about a society when its children inspire fear rather than hope? In a sense, these boys are not just criminals—they are casualties. Casualties of families fractured by poverty, migration, and addiction. Casualties of schools that confuse memorisation with moral growth. Casualties of a state that measures development in concrete and currency but ignores the collapse of civic virtue.

So, the answers lie in rebuilding the social institutions that give adolescents a sense of belonging and purpose. This means investing in school-based counselling and mentorship, expanding drug rehabilitation programmes, training parents in modern child-rearing practices, and creating meaningful after-school activities that channel youthful energy into sports, arts, or community service. It means rethinking policing through community engagement rather than brute force. Above all, it requires de-politicising youth and dismantling the toxic networks so that "big brothers" cannot exploit adolescent desperation for partisan gain.

None of these measures is quick or easy, but without them, the cycle will deepen, and the gangs will evolve into more organised criminal syndicates. A society is ultimately judged not by how it treats its most powerful, but by how it nurtures its most vulnerable. If we allow our children to be continuously consumed by knives, drugs, and "big brothers," then the promise of our demographic dividend will collapse into a demographic nightmare.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

around in packs, and quickly become attached to the orbit of "big brothers". In return, they receive protection, identity, and even a distorted sense of purpose.

Drugs and poverty explain only part of the picture, however. The collapse of education as a stabilising anchor is equally corrosive.

teenage delinquents, amplifying their reach and networking. In this digital realm, "likes" and "shares" are replacing moral compass with performative notoriety.

The state's response to this crisis has been frustratingly superficial so far. Law enforcement typically reacts after a

failure of law enforcement alone. It is the outcome of a broader policy vacuum, one that has squandered the nation's demographic dividend. Instead of being harnessed for productive employment, innovation, or social leadership, thousands of young men are drifting into gangs or crimes or desperate

The generational mismatch of wealth



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NOSHIN NAWAL

Uncle Selim was 25 in 1985. Fresh out of Dhaka University with a degree in economics and a moustache thick enough to warrant all compliments of masculinity on earth, he landed a job at a state-owned bank. The pay was modest, but it came with dignity, stability, and the ultimate prize: a pension.

Within five years, Selim bought a plot of land in Mirpur. His colleagues smirked. Who would want to live in Mirpur, then dismissed as a wasteland of tin sheds and poultry farms? But Selim was smug. Land was cheap, dreams were affordable, and the future looked like something you could purchase, brick by brick.

Fast forward to 2025. Meet his daughter, Nabila, also 25, also with a degree in economics—hers from a private university where tuition rivalled the GDP of a small upazila. Her first job is at a multinational, and her title is so long it could double as a novella: *Associate Junior Assistant to the Regional Something-Something*. The salary looks generous—until rent, Wi-Fi, and Uber rides bleed it dry (not to mention the side of regular "social eating out").

She marks her employment milestone

with overpriced caramel lattes and Instagram captions like #GirlBoss, while privately calculating how many lifetimes it would take to afford even half the Mirpur plot her father bought with lunch money.

Selim often reminds her that he struggled more. And in fairness, he did. Load-shedding was so relentless that he could recite Dostoevsky by candlelight. Floods turned buses into clumsy submarines. Jobs demanded punctuality, but delivered salaries weeks late. His struggles, however, yielded assets: land, a home, and a pension that still pays for his blood pressure medication.

Nabila's struggles yield anxiety. Selim's collateral bought him a house. Nabila's rent buys her a shoebox flat with neighbours who treat baseline volume for music as a suggestion rather than a courtesy.

Education paints the gap in bold strokes. Selim walked into Dhaka University on merit, ambition, and the support of a public education system that still believed in social mobility. A degree then was a golden ticket. Employers queued at convocation gates.

Nabila's degree is more like a metro card—useless unless constantly recharged with

postgrad diplomas, unpaid internships, and LinkedIn workshops. Employers don't queue anymore; they seldom reply and, more often than not, they ghost.

Housing is the cruellest punchline of this saga. By his thirties, Selim had built a two-storey home with savings and a bank loan at interest rates that didn't feel like extortion. Today, tenants pay for his retirement. Nabila, meanwhile, lives in a flat with three houseplants she jokingly calls her

**Housing is the cruellest punchline of this saga.
By his thirties, Selim had built a two-storey home with savings and a bank loan at interest rates that didn't feel like extortion. Today, tenants pay for his retirement.
Nabila, meanwhile, lives in a flat with three houseplants she jokingly calls her investment portfolio.**

investment portfolio. She dreams of ownership, but the property market laughs in her face. Even if she stopped eating and breathing, the maths wouldn't work. "Buy property early," Selim advises with the smugness of a man

sitting on three plots. Nabila nods politely, then opens her food delivery app, confused between groceries and the luxury of edible food.

Consumption has evolved, too. Selim's generation stretched every taka, patched clothes, and reused everything from jam jars to gift wrappers. Savings weren't optional; they were instinct. Nabila's generation spends on experiences: sushi nights, overpriced yoga mats, and co-working spaces with plants and playlists.

She can summon a car in 60 seconds, but owning one is as likely as inheriting Buckingham Palace. Cars now are fancier than ever and therefore guzzle petrol more than ever. Petrol—the costly prince and parasite.

And yet, not everything is bleak. Nabila has freedoms Selim never imagined. She can apply for a remote job in Singapore from her bedroom, launch a start-up with nothing but Wi-Fi, or pursue a PhD in climate policy in Berlin. Her world is larger. Her possibilities, more fluid.

Selim built equity in land. Nabila builds equity in networks, ideas, and skills. The tragedy is that these intangible assets don't always translate into tangible security.

But perhaps the biggest difference lies in psychology. Selim's generation carried war scars but also optimism. They invested in land, education, and children with faith that tomorrow would be better.

Nabila's generation carries global exposure—but also decision fatigue. They can code, freelance, and work remotely from Bali, but they can't plan beyond a month.

The dollar bullies their currency, inflation mocks their salaries, and politics feels like betting on a horse with three legs.

Decision fatigue is their new daily currency. Every choice—from career paths to grocery apps—comes with a hundred tabs open in the mind. Should she invest in a mutual fund or that climate tech start-up her friend mentioned? Is it wiser to switch jobs for a pay bump or stay for the mental health days? Should she move to Canada, start a business, or just learn German and see what happens?

For Selim, life followed a path: job, land, marriage, house. For Nabila, the path is a maze, constantly redrawn by economic shifts, social expectations, and algorithmic distractions. Freedom, it turns out, can be exhausting when every option feels both promising and perilous.

Two generations. Same age. Two economies. Selim bought land with five years of savings. Nabila can't buy peace of mind with a lifetime of earnings. He built houses. She builds coping mechanisms. He left behind property deeds. She leaves behind Wi-Fi passwords.

The irony is that both believe they had it harder. Selim swears by sacrifice. Nabila insists on precarity. They're both right. But the truth is simpler: one generation inherited scarcity and turned it into prosperity. The next inherited prosperity and turned it into anxiety.

And maybe that's the most honest economic story Bangladesh has to tell. Uncle Selim built the house. Nabila is just trying to afford the coffee.

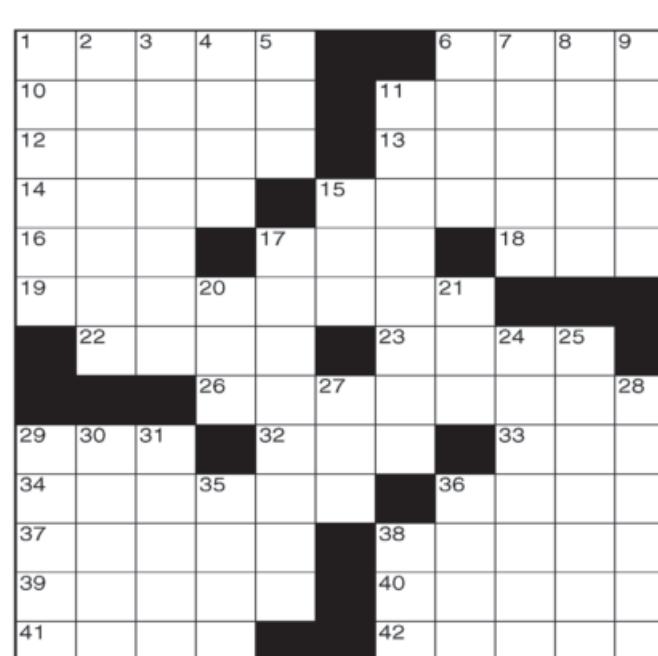
CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Skimpy swimwear
6 Forum wear
10 Went fast
11 Roof overhangs
12 Epps and Sharif
13 Enormous
14 Flag waver
15 "Gangsta's Paradise" singer
16 Greek vowel
17 Fitting
18 Church talk: Abbr.
19 Hip-hop star who sounds absurd
22 Duo
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29 Sauna site
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40 Disney's mermaid
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25 More yellow-brown
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28 In conclusion
29 URL part
30 Ship of 1492
31 Church sight
35 Toy with a tail
36 Folk stories
38 Paving goo



8-9

Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to dsopinion@gmail.com

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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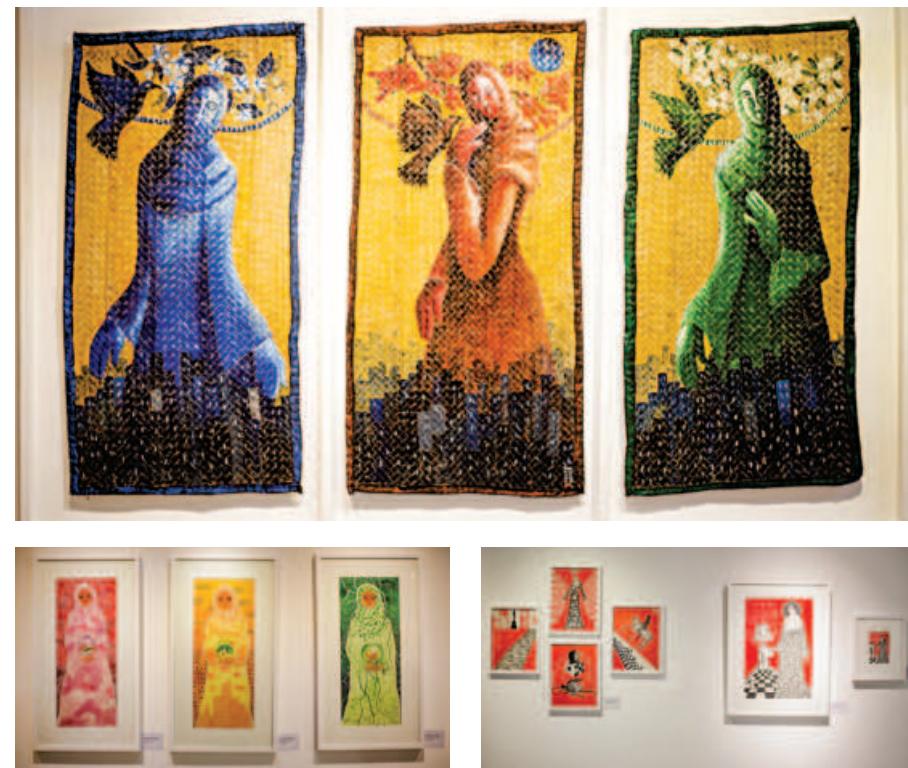
Razz, Farin-starrer 'Insaaf' set for Chorki release

Sanjoy Somadder's *Insaaf* will premiere on Chorki on September 4 at 12:01am, following its successful theatrical run during Eid-ul-Azha. The release comes after high audience demand, according to the platform.

The film stars Sariful Razz as Yusuf, a leared terrorist, and Tasnia Farin as law enforcer Jahan Khan. Mosharrif Karim adds depth in an unexpected role as a doctor, revealing the world of medical syndication.

Guest appearances by Chanchal Chowdhury and Xeler, along with the revival of the classic song *Akashete Lokkho Tara*, add further intrigue.

Farin expressed excitement about global audiences accessing the film, while Razz praised both Somadder's direction and Farin's performance. The ensemble also includes Don, Misha Sawdagor, and Fazlur Rahman Babu.



PHOTOS: THABIT AL BASHAR

ART EXHIBITION

'Hawabibi In this City': A cry against patriarchal toxicity

AISHWARYA RAJAHAN

Hawabibi In this City, a solo exhibition by artist Shaily Shraborti was inaugurated at La Galerie of Alliance Française de Dhaka (AFD) on August 25. Shaily is a Dhaka-based visual artist who holds a BFA and MFA in Oriental Art from the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka. Her art reflects the struggles, resilience, and success of women in patriarchal societies.

Hawabibi, inspired by Abrahamic traditions, is Shaily's rebellious creation against patriarchy—embodying modern women still chained to a system that denies their freedom and contributions.

Shaily's Hawabibi wears an abaya and hijab despite being Bengali in a hot climate. The artist critiques how the veil is weaponised to confine women to domestic roles, while her character

strives to break—or at least adapt to—those restraints.

Shaily uses translucent watercolour washes and crisp ink lines to depict Hawabibi as modern nature, encasing trees, birds, and flowers in orbs. In one work, she carries a Western version of herself, "Eve," in a blue orb—different in form but confined within the same subtle cage.

Several artworks feature a red backdrop with black-and-white figures, symbolising feminine rage. In one, Hawabibi appears as Durga with ten arms. Some pieces, made during the pandemic, use local mats as economical canvases for acrylic painting.

Shaily's Hawabibi symbolises resilient women in a patriarchal world. The exhibition reflects society with striking symbolism and serves as an eye-opener for visitors. It runs at AFD until September 3, 2025.



Tahsan to celebrate 25 years of music in Australia

Singer and actor Tahsan Khan will mark the silver jubilee of his music career with a month-long tour across Australia, beginning in Adelaide on September 6, followed by Brisbane on September 7, Sydney on September 13, Melbourne on September 20, and Perth on September 27. Tahsan, who started professionally with the band Black in 2000, has since released seven solo albums, including hits like *Kothopokothon*, *Kritodasher Nirban*, and *Icche*. His popular songs include *Amar Prithibi*, *Irsa*, and *Ke Tumi*.

Although he has not been actively acting lately, Tahsan appeared in the web series *Baaji* last year and hosted the first season of *Family Feud Bangladesh*. He continues to perform at home and abroad with Tahsan and the Band.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

WHAT'S THE HAPS?



Anime Fest 2025: 'Limited Realm'

Get ready for a one-of-a-kind experience crafted just for true anime fans. This year, they are keeping it exclusive with a limited audience, so every guest can enjoy a premium, full day celebration of anime, cosplay, and pure fun.

DATE: SATURDAY | SEPTEMBER 6

TIME: 11AM-8PM

VENUE: CELEBRITY HALL, GULSHAN 1



'Sisimpur' now streaming free on Bongo

For the first time, children's favourite *Sisimpur* is available on an OTT platform, with Bongo offering free streaming. The platform has already released new episodes from the show's 15th season, featuring beloved characters Halum, Tuktuki, Ikri, and Shiku.

Launched in 2005, *Sisimpur* has long been a popular educational programme for pre-primary and primary school children. The show teaches letters, words, and sentence formation, while also encouraging kids to learn from their surroundings and everyday objects.

NEWS

South Asia least

FROM PAGE 12 However, he pointed out Dhaka's limitations -- narrow export base, low FDI, a constrained private sector, strained ties with India, and the Myanmar crisis -- all of which restrict its regional agency. "During the previous government there was a unique type of relationship that in many ways constrained Bangladesh's agency... I think there's an opportunity now that hopefully you can capitalise on," he added.

Prof Mushtaq Khan of SOAS University of London said India's internal politics often spill into its relationship with Bangladesh.

"India is trying to throw out its own Muslims into Bangladesh, saying they are Bangladeshi," he said.

Stressing that connectivity cannot advance without trust, he said, "Maybe we should stop talking about roads and rail and transport networks until we solve the fundamental problem about people."

He noted a shift in Bangladesh's outlook from treating India as its dominant partner to seeking balance through engagement with ASEAN, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, the US, and China.

Prof Sreeradha Datta of OP Jindal Global University endorsed Prof Mushtaq's views. "The government of India is constantly talking about its own national interest. But what about Bangladesh's national interest? Threat perception works both ways, and I don't think India has fully recognised that," she said.

She added that Bangladesh's disrupted connectivity with Nepal illustrated how politics, not economics, drives decisions. "These were essentially politically motivated rather than profit motivated," she said, calling for a reset of relations across South Asia, though she admitted such change was unlikely soon.

Dr Amena Mohsin, former professor of international relations at Dhaka University, said connectivity in the region is largely reduced to infrastructure, not connectivity of minds. "For me, if you want to have a South Asia, that South Asianess has to be there -- the meeting of people's minds where you can identify as a South Asian,"

Jahangirnagar University Prof Shahab Enam Khan, who moderated the discussion, said the very idea of market and private sector-driven resources is being exploited through political preferences, whether it is saffron, rightism, or nationalism.

From the classroom

FROM PAGE 12

"Joy is the only man remaining in our family. He is our only support now. However little he earns, we must survive on it," Malati said in a cracked voice. "My heart breaks that I can't send him to school anymore. Some inhuman people have destroyed our happiness forever."

Joy's elder sister Nupur said, "The pillar of our family is gone. Now my little brother has to bear all the burden. That's the most painful thing for me. If I had any means, I would not let him work -- I would keep him in school."

Nupur completed her HSC last year while the youngest sibling is a sixth grader.

Shopkeeper Abu Hanif, who runs his store opposite to where Ruplal once sat, said, "For 12 years, I watched Ruplal work in front of my shop. He was a simple, honest man. He loved reading the morning paper and dreamt of educating all his children. And now, that very spot is occupied by his school-going son. It breaks my heart to see this... Ruplal's dream was destroyed. The whole society must take responsibility when a child is forced to abandon school to survive."

Joy's teachers too are distressed.

Rezaul Haque, of Taraganj Government Model High School, said, "It hurts me deeply to see one of our students working as a roadside cobbler. If his father had not been killed, he would never have had to shoulder this burden. This is a lesson for our society."

Inequality result

FROM PAGE 12

But while the country has seen economic development, the number of extreme poor has doubled in the last three years, he noted.

He pointed out that incidents of rape have also risen alarmingly, with the number in the first six months of this year almost equalling the total of last year.

These have happened when "the country has seen the fall of a fascist government and everyone is talking about a revolution", he said.

He also described the destruction and mass killings in today's world as "unparalleled."

"Never before has there been such an event, never before has there been so much progress, and never before has there been so much human

60% of all seats vacant or uncontested

FROM PAGE 2

of a women-friendly political atmosphere are the main reasons behind their reluctance to join the polls.

Faiza Mehbabin Priyonee, president of Jahangirnagar Sanskritik Jote, said, "Women are losing interest in politics as there is no supportive and inclusive environment on campus. Complaints of abuse are ignored, and perpetrators continue with impunity."

Rezwanah Karim Snigdha, associate professor of anthropology, said the long gap in JUCSU elections left many students unaware of their value. She noted that since last

August, women in politics have faced severe online harassment, discouraging them further. "Lack of recognition and insecurity have fuelled their apathy."

Some male students have also shown little enthusiasm for the polls.

Except for Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal, no other student organisation has fielded hall panels. JCD submitted full panels in four male halls and partial panels in seven, but none in the female halls.

Sharan Ahsan, a general secretary candidate from the Somprithi Oikya panel, said the university administration failed to create a festive atmosphere for the election.

"All four were full of enthusiasm. I'm surprised by such a lacklustre JUCSU this time. The university administration has probably failed to generate excitement."

The JUCSU election, last held in 1992, is scheduled for September 11.

Police have been deployed in the area to avoid further untoward incidents.

In Khulna city, at least 20 people were injured after police charged truncheons in front of the JP district and city office at Dakbandia intersection yesterday afternoon.

According to police and witnesses, a procession of 50 to 60 men from Gono Odhikar marched towards the JP office from Shibari intersection.

Witnesses said the demonstrators tried to break the gates and hurled bricks. At that time, police intervened, charging truncheons and dispersing the protesters.

Sadar Police OC Haoladar Sanwar Hossain said, "Activists of Gono Odhikar tried to create disorder in front of the JP office. Police dispersed them immediately. The situation is now under control."

In Rajshahi city, JP office in the Gonokpara area was vandalised around 12:00am.

JP THANKS ARMY, COPS
JP Secretary General Shameem Haider Patwari yesterday thanked the army and police for saving the lives of the party's workers and leaders.

Speaking at a press conference at the party's central office, Shameem, however, demanded that the government carry out a fair investigation into whether the army and police used excessive force on Gono Odhikar men to tackle the Friday's situation.

[Our correspondents from respective districts contributed to this report.]

grenades to disperse the attackers and bring the fire under control."

"The fire damaged books from the ground-floor library, important documents, and furniture."

Party sources claimed the attackers were from Gono Odhikar Parishad.

In Tangail, the JP office near Sadar Police Station was vandalised around 11:30am yesterday. The attackers later blocked the Dhaka-Tangail highway at Nagar Jalfai for about half an hour, leaving vehicles stranded on both sides.

Locals said after holding a brief rally, protesting the attack on Gono Odhikar Chairman Nur, they left the area, allowing traffic to resume.

"Additional police have been deployed in the area," said Tanvir Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Tangail Sadar Police Station.

In Thakurgaon, JP's Haripur upazila unit office was vandalised yesterday afternoon. The agitators also torched office furniture while chanting slogans against JP and its leaders, witnesses said.

Earlier, Gono Odhikar men brought out a procession from the Battali area in the upazila headquarters and paraded different streets.

When the procession reached the JP office, the activists began vandalising it, witnesses also said.

On information, police rushed to the spot, but the attackers had fled before their arrival, said Haripur Police OC Jakarta Mandal.

No one was injured in the incident, the OC said, adding that additional

MOULVIBAZAR DISTRICT

Over 437km of rural roads in disrepair

Floods, lack of funding leave locals stranded

MINTU DESHWARA

More than 437 kilometres of rural roads across Moulvibazar have fallen into complete disrepair, leaving thousands of residents isolated, local economies crippled, and vital transport routes severed.

The roads, managed by the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), have been left in various stages of disrepair, with many stretches developing large potholes and some areas losing all trace of the original surface.

According to LGED officials, the roads were severely damaged during four floods in 2024. Before repairs could begin, persistent



road is worsening daily due to the movement of light, heavy, and goods vehicles," he said.

Truck driver Md Jasim said if repairs had been carried out after the flood waters receded, the situation would not have deteriorated so badly. "Due to the delay, the Bhanugach road has worsened. Driving through the potholes means daily car repairs. Vehicles now move slowly and unevenly," he added.

Kohinur Akhter, who travels on the Tarapasha road, said she works at a government primary school and commutes daily by auto-rickshaw. "The shaking caused by the potholes makes travel unbearable, yet I am forced to use the road. It is getting worse

by the day," she said.

LGED estimates put total infrastructure losses from the floods at over Tk 1,000 crore, with damage to rural roads alone accounting for more than Tk 600 crore.

The worst-hit upazila is Rajnagar, where 99km of roads have been damaged. The road leading to Tarapasha Bazar, located in a haor area, has become nearly impassable.

In Kulaura, along the Hakaluki Haor, 66km of roads are in poor condition. Prolonged submersion during the monsoon has left these roads riddled with potholes and erosion.

Similar conditions prevail in Juri and Barlekha upazilas.

In Kamalganj, residents expressed frustration over the dire state of the Adampur road.

"The situation has disrupted transport links and cut off access to essential services in many villages," said Mifta Mia, a resident of Adampur.

Contacted, Ahmed Abdullah, executive engineer of LGED, Moulvibazar, said some urgent repair work on damaged bridges and culverts was carried out under the 2023-24 annual development allocation.

"However, no funds have been allocated specifically for roads affected by the floods. Work will commence once we receive the necessary approval and funds," he said.

heavy rainfall this year, coupled with runoff from upstream hill streams, further worsened the situation.

Shahidul Islam, a resident of Rajnagar upazila town, said the Tarapasha road was submerged under two feet of water for about two weeks last year. "Initially, the floodwater created small and large holes on the road, which gradually grew larger. The condition of the

Pvt sector, bigger budget vital for better

FROM PAGE 3

Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher, nayeb-e-ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, stressed the need for higher budget allocation and policies to support private sector growth.

He said pharmaceutical companies are forced to spend heavily on product promotion.

After he said so, a member of the audience protested, claiming doctors do not take the money.

In response, Taher clarified that he did not accuse doctors but maintained that companies spend significantly on promotion.

During the exchange, Prof Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser for the health ministry, briefly left the stage. He later returned at the organisers' request to continue the session.

BNP Standing Committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said Bangladesh has topped the list of South Asian countries in terms of social indicators but failed to make similar

progress in health.

He said the demographic dividend cannot be utilised without greater investment in healthcare, adding that if BNP comes to power, they will allocate 5 percent of GDP to health.

He said the private sector should be freed from government control, promising "serious regulatory liberalisation," and urged businessmen to prepare for self-regulation.

Prof Sayedur Rahman, representing the interim government, said no decision is made without stakeholder consultation and that the government will ensure a congenial environment for private investment.

He noted that even the US, despite being a champion of liberalism, regulates its health sector.

The government that comes next may deregulate, but no country leaves its health sector unregulated. We will regulate – but regulation will not be repressive," he said.

Joining virtually, Planning Adviser Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud said

there is a crisis of public trust in the country's healthcare system, leading many to spend huge sums abroad, which burdens the economy.

He pointed out that many large government-built infrastructures remain unused.

"In some places, there are buildings but no doctors; in others, there are doctors but no nurses or technicians. Coordination is necessary, and involving the private sector can help improve the situation," he said.

He also suggested considering private management for small healthcare clinics.

AM Shamim, general secretary of Bangladesh Private Hospital, Clinic and Diagnostic Owners Association, said they need approval from 18 agencies for licence renewal, calling it a form of "torture". He urged simplification of the process.

Prof Md Abu Jafor, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services, said the private sector provides 70 percent of health services in the country and the

government alone cannot strengthen the system.

Tapan Chowdhury, managing director of Square Pharmaceuticals Ltd, emphasised recognising the contributions of the private sector.

Saidur Rahman, secretary of the Health Services Division, said many unused medical facilities can be made functional by involving private actors.

Md Mosaddeque Hossain Biswas, president of Bangladesh Medical University, and Prof Md Shahinul Alam, vice chancellor of Bangladesh Medical University, also spoke, among others.

The event was moderated by Bonik Barta Editor and Publisher Dewan Hanif Mahmud.

PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 31

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-30 12-45 4-45 6-33 8-00
JAMAAT 5-05 1-15 5-00 6-36 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Neglect, underfunding cripple urban

FROM PAGE 3

primary healthcare centres in every ward to provide awareness, prevention, and treatment services, alongside 100 to 150 bed hospitals in each city corporation zone.

It also recommended establishing Zonal Health Offices, modelled on the Civil Surgeon's Office, to oversee hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, GP chambers, diagnostic centres, family planning, vaccination, and other public health initiatives.

These offices would include field workers, service providers, public health specialists, and other staff members.

The declaration also called for an effective referral system linking primary healthcare centres to secondary and tertiary facilities for timely treatment of complicated cases.

It stressed the need to guarantee women's and adolescents' access to SRHR services and counter stigma, misconceptions, and superstitions through awareness campaigns.

The declaration also demanded a more accountable health administration with strict monitoring to prevent exploitation by middlemen in hospitals and health centres.

Speaking as chief guest, Prof Md Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser, stressed the role of the youth and volunteers in

driving healthcare reform.

He emphasised that lasting change comes not from short-term incentives but from civic responsibility and collective action, urging the youth to extend their activism beyond their own rights to include the well-being of the elderly.

On urban health specifically, he admitted to structural gaps compared to rural healthcare. "The rural health structure is very well organised... But in cities, where more than seventy million people live, the structure for primary healthcare is not as systematic as in rural areas."

He noted the government's plan to introduce ward-based GP units in cities to provide a structured entry point for urban primary healthcare, in line with the Dhaka Declaration's recommendations.

Dr Rahman also emphasised equity and safety, highlighting the critical role of women doctors in both rural

and urban settings, and called for ensuring their protection and dignity alongside patients'.

Ipas Bangladesh Country Director Dr Syed Rubayet said, "Sexual and reproductive health services and rights are highly stigmatised and a neglected issue. We all probably know that sexual and reproductive health is a fundamental right, but there has been widespread indifference towards it."

He admitted that past and current efforts remain inadequate and stressed the urgent need for stronger action.

Edward Cabrera, first secretary (development-health) at the High Commission of Canada in Bangladesh, said the skills and advocacy learned by youth volunteers will shape the leaders of tomorrow.

He called on health professionals, government bodies, and development partners to keep supporting volunteer-led models to strengthen SRHR across the country.

TENDER NOTICE

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar, hereby announces the launch of the following tender:

TENDER REFERENCE NUMBER	ITEM DESCRIPTION
BGD-UNHCR-ITB-1466	FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FRAME AGREEMENT FOR THE SUPPLY OF AND DELIVERY OF LOT 1: MEDICAL SUPPLIES LOT 2: LABORATORY ITEMS

Interested and potential vendors are invited to participate in this Invitation to Bid (ITB) by accessing and downloading the tender documents from the UNHCR Cloud ERP Supplier Portal.

UNGM Notice Link: <https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/276411>

BDjobs Tender notice link: <https://hotjobs.bdjobs.com/jobs/unhcr/unhcr536.htm>

ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

Please confirm your participation for BGD - UNHCR ITB 1494 by using the "Acknowledge Participation" functionality in the Cloud ERP Supplier portal.

It is very important to subscribe (Acknowledge Participation) to an ongoing negotiation that you wish to participate in, as this is the only way to receive automatic email notifications with information on any changes related to this negotiation.

Instruction to Bidders:

UNHCR will organize an online supplier [Join Pre Bid Meeting here BGD-UNHCR-ITB-1494 on 02 September 2025 at 10:00 am BST via Microsoft Teams](#). Bidders may also join the meeting by scanning the QR Code from mobile:

To register as a prospective supplier and submission of bids, please follow the guidelines: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/guidelines-unhcr-suppliers-how-use-supplier-portal>

Existing suppliers use this link: <https://supplier-portal.unhcr.org/> to log in with your email address and password. Do not create a new profile if you are already registered. If you have forgotten your password, click on [Forgot Password](#) to reset your password.

Bid submission deadline: Sunday, 21 September 2025 – 14:00 hrs. BST Bangladesh time.

Kindly note that no hard copy is acceptable. The offer must be submitted only through the Cloud ERP portal.



Scan above QR Code to join



TENDER NOTICE

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar, hereby announces the launch of the following tender:

TENDER REFERENCE NUMBER	ITEM DESCRIPTION
BGD - UNHCR ITB 1494	FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FRAME AGREEMENT FOR THE SUPPLY OF AND DELIVERY OF LOT 1: ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LOT 2: SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICINES

Interested and potential vendors are invited to participate in this Invitation to Bid (ITB) by accessing and downloading the tender documents from the UNHCR Cloud ERP Supplier Portal.

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Scan above QR Code to join

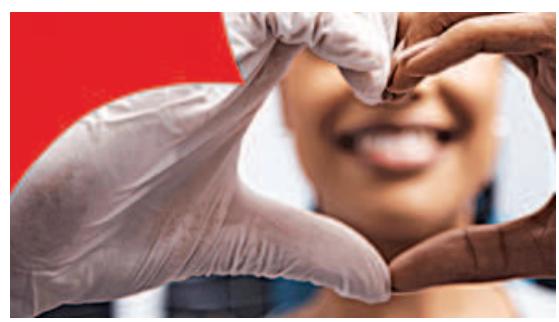
World Heart Federation marks 25 years of World Heart Day with global drive against cardiovascular disease

STAR HEALTH DESK

The World Heart Federation (WHF) has launched *Don't Miss a Beat*, a global campaign marking the 25th anniversary of World Heart Day. The initiative highlights the growing toll of cardiovascular disease (CVD), which causes 20.5 million deaths annually, more than one-third of global mortality.

Through partnerships with sports organisations, universities, hospitals, and companies, WHF is urging people to take part in the Keep the Beat challenge: at least 25 minutes of exercise for 25 days in September. The campaign underscores World Health Organisation recommendations of 150 minutes of moderate activity weekly to prevent heart disease and stroke.

Finn-Jarle Rode, CEO of WHF, stressed that low- and middle-income countries face the greatest



burden, calling on governments to introduce National CVD Plans and expand access to treatment, particularly for hypertension.

Alongside awareness activities, WHF has launched a petition on Change.org to push world leaders to commit to reaching 500 million more people with hypertension care by 2030, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The campaign is supported by WHF's 250 members and global partners, including Decathlon, Technogym, Amgen, Servier, Novo Nordisk, Bayer, Arawana, and Standard Foods. The official mascot, Cardi V, will promote heart-healthy habits and call for greater screening and treatment access worldwide.



NEW HOPE FOR TYPE-1 DIABETES

Shifting from insulin dependency to stem cell therapy

SABRINA SUPRITA

Type 1 Diabetes, also known as Juvenile Diabetes, remains a lifelong struggle for many children worldwide. In this autoimmune condition, the body mistakenly destroys the insulin-producing β -cells in the pancreas, starting from early childhood or even before birth. As a result, children with type 1 diabetes must monitor their blood glucose levels at least three times a day and depend on insulin therapy for survival. This lifelong burden not only affects physical health but also takes a serious toll on a child's mental well-being.

Imagine your happy, active child suddenly becoming unusually hungry and rapidly losing weight—even after proper meals. Frequent urination, including bedwetting, may start to occur even after using the toilet before going to bed. These signs are often missed until things get worse—your child begins to breathe heavily, emits a fruity or acetone-like breath, or even collapses during playtime. These are clear signs of high

blood sugar (hyperglycemia). Once diagnosed through tests like glucose tolerance or HbA1c, Type 1 Diabetes confirms the need for lifelong insulin therapy.

According to the International Diabetes Federation Atlas 2013, Bangladesh reported an incidence of 4.2 new cases of type 1 diabetes per 100,000 children (0-14 years), and globally, almost 9.2 million people living with type 1 diabetes were under the age of 20 in the 2024 report. Considering the solution, insulin injections were the only available treatment, with no known cure. But, in recent years, islet cell transplantation has shown some promise, but its success depends on donor availability and requires high doses of immunosuppressive drugs to prevent rejection, posing more challenges than solutions.

But there is new hope!!! Thanks to revolutionary advancements in science, stem cell-based therapy is opening a new pathway to treat type 1 diabetes—by reprogramming the

patient's own stem cells into insulin-producing islet cells!!!

A groundbreaking case from China has changed the narrative. A 25-year-old woman became the first person in the world to be cured of type 1 diabetes after receiving an injection of islet cells derived from her own reprogrammed stem cells. A research team at Peking University in Beijing successfully extracted her stem cells, converted them into insulin-producing islet-like clusters, and transplanted them back into her body. Remarkably, within just 2.5 months, she began producing sufficient insulin naturally—and stayed insulin-independent for over a year.

This milestone brings us one step closer to a future where children no longer have to fear insulin needles for life but can instead look forward to a lasting, biological cure.

The writer is a nutritionist, humanitarian aid worker, and founder of "Level Up with Nutrition", an awareness building social media platform to inspire and educate others. Email: sabrinasuprita@gmail.com

The hidden sugar in our diet: How sweet drinks are harming Bangladesh's health

ABEDA SULTANA

On a hot summer afternoon in Dhaka, a chilled bottle of soft drink or a glass of sweetened iced tea feels like instant relief. But behind the refreshing taste lies a silent threat—too much sugar consumption is quietly triggering a public health crisis in Bangladesh.

Regularly drinking sugary drinks greatly increases the risk of type 2 diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, and other health problems. Sugary drinks are also linked to tooth decay, fatty liver disease, and even certain cancers. For children and teenagers, the risks are even higher. Eating too much sugar early in life can cause health problems that last a lifetime.

In Bangladesh, sweet tea ("cha") is a daily ritual. With the growing popularity of food vlogging, new variations such as malai tea, malta tea, orange tea, and even lassi have become trendy. Young people are drawn to these drinks without considering their health effects. Bottled fruit juices are also widely consumed, often perceived as a healthy choice.

However, many of these so-called "fruit juices" are little more than sugar water with artificial flavouring and contain very little real fruit. Similarly, traditional

drinks served at weddings or during iftar in Ramadan are often loaded with excessive sugar. Changing these habits is not easy—taste preferences, social customs, and lack of awareness all play a role in keeping sugar intake high.

To fight the problem, health experts recommend a combination of education, policy changes, and industry regulation. This includes school awareness campaigns,



encouraging alternatives such as water, unsweetened tea, and fruit-infused water, and clear labelling of sugar content on beverage packaging. Taxes on sugary drinks could also be effective in reducing consumption. Some countries, like Mexico and the UK, have already introduced sugar taxes and seen declines in soft drink consumption. The UK's sugar levy, introduced in 2018, has

proven effective in cutting sugar intake. Even before it came into effect, over half of manufacturers reformulated their drinks to avoid the charge. Between 2015 and 2018, the levy led to a 28.8% reduction in sugar content per 100 ml in affected beverages, according to Public Health England.

Research shows it may have prevented more than 5,000 cases of obesity each year among primary school girls, and fewer children in England have required tooth extractions due to decay since the policy began. Similar measures could work in Bangladesh if combined with strong public awareness campaigns.

While policy changes take time, everyone can start making changes today:

- Choose plain water instead of soft drinks.
- Check labels before buying packaged beverages.
- Limit sweet tea to one or two small cups a day.
- Offer fresh fruit instead of sugary desserts at gatherings.

The sweet taste of sugary drinks comes with a bitter cost to health—it brings long-term health risks. Choosing water today could mean avoiding medicine tomorrow.

The writer is a dietitian. Email: abeda.mishu@gmail.com

7 key nutrients for strong, healthy nails: The ultimate guide

Your nails can be an indicator of your overall health, constantly renewing with the help of nutrients. While many nail-strengthening supplements are marketed, there's insufficient research to back their claims. Biotin, however, is the exception, showing promising results in small studies. It is a B vitamin (B7) that aids protein metabolism and supports nail growth, especially for brittle nails.

To nourish your nails naturally, it's crucial to maintain a balanced diet. These seven nutrients are essential for healthy nails:

Biotin – Known for promoting growth and strength in nails, found in foods like egg yolks, salmon, and

avocado.

B vitamins – B12 and folate support nail health and prevent brittle nails. Rich sources include dairy, leafy greens, and citrus fruits.

Iron – Prevents oxygen shortage to your nails. Iron-rich foods like meat, beans, and spinach are essential.

Magnesium – Vital for protein synthesis, magnesium helps with strong nails and is found in almonds, quinoa, and leafy greens.

Protein – Keratin, a protein in

nails, is built from amino acids. Consuming enough protein from meat, eggs, and legumes helps reinforce nails.

Vitamin C – Important for collagen production and nail strength. Citrus, bell peppers, and tomatoes are great sources.

Zinc – Supports cell growth and nail integrity, found in meat, seeds, and nuts.

While a variety of these nutrients from food can support nail health, biotin supplements may assist in strengthening brittle nails, though a balanced diet is preferred.



BEYOND THE HEARTACHE How grief impacts health

Grief is often thought of as an emotional experience, but its reach goes far deeper—affecting physical health in surprising ways. When someone faces a major loss, the stress can disrupt nearly every system in the body.

One of the first changes people notice is sleep disturbance. Falling asleep may become difficult, nights are restless, or, conversely, some may sleep excessively. Fatigue quickly follows, fuelled by emotional strain and reduced energy. Keeping up with balanced meals, light activity, and social connections can provide much-needed support.

Research shows that prolonged grief weakens the immune system, leaving the body more vulnerable to infections. It is also linked to inflammation, a process tied to conditions like diabetes, arthritis, and heart disease. Stress hormones, especially cortisol, often surge during the grieving period. When levels stay high, they can raise blood pressure and increase cardiovascular risk.

Digestive issues are also common—ranging from nausea and cramps to diarrhoea or constipation. Muscle tension may trigger headaches, back pain, or joint stiffness. Even the heart itself can be affected: intense grief has been associated with rapid heartbeat, higher chances of heart attack, and in rare cases, "broken heart syndrome", a condition that mimics a heart attack but usually resolves within weeks.

While some of these effects ease with time, ongoing symptoms should not be ignored. Talking with a doctor, counsellor, or support group can help individuals navigate both the emotional and physical consequences of loss, fostering healing on every level.



Menstrual dignity through markets: A safe path for underserved women

The Daily Star (TDS): How has Safepad's innovation in reusable menstrual hygiene products improved health and dignity for women in remote and marginalised communities?

Tahmid K. Chowdhury (TKC): We have developed two main product verticals. The first is our reusable pads, designed for women from all walks of life. Each Safepad is embedded with antimicrobial technology that eliminates harmful bacteria and fungi, helping women enjoy an infection-free period with confidence.

The second is our ocean plastic upcycled range, which turns recovered plastic waste into safe, comfortable menstrual products. Beyond standard pads, we have reusable post-partum pads for new mothers, labia pads for specialised needs, and breast pads to support breastfeeding women. Some of these are yet to be introduced in Bangladesh but they are part of our broader vision: ensuring no woman has to choose between her health, her dignity, and the planet's wellbeing.

TDS: What strategies have been most effective in reaching hard-to-access markets, and how do you adapt these approaches across regions?

TKC: Our delivery strategy relies on a network of partners to ensure Safepad reaches every doorstep within 72 hours. We also adapt outreach by working closely with local women entrepreneurs, community health workers, and schools.

In flood-prone areas, our teams use boats to navigate waterways, while in more conservative regions we create safe, women-only spaces to encourage open dialogue.

TDS: What role does feedback from users play in shaping product design and delivery models?

particularly regarding comfort, affordability, and trust?

TKC: Women have guided us on what works and what does not, and we have adapted accordingly. For example, we now offer two SKUs: a regular pack with four pads and an economy pack with two. The economy pack was introduced on popular demand,



enabling users to try Safepad at a lower price before committing to a larger purchase.

Based on feedback, we integrated a black biodegradable zipper bag to store pads. Durable and water-resistant, it protects the pads even if paper packets wear out from splashes while showering or handling. Many users also requested payment flexibility, which we incorporated into our sales models.

TDS: How has iDE's support influenced your ability to scale operations and build awareness around menstrual hygiene and reproductive health?

TKC: iDE connected us with new partners, expanded our reach into untapped regions, and provided platforms for large-scale awareness campaigns in schools and communities. Their market-based approach aligned with ours. Instead of distributing products

for free, we worked together to create sustainable distribution channels that empower women to earn an income while addressing a critical health need.

TDS: What future collaborations or innovations are you exploring to deepen your social impact and reach new segments?

TKC: We are working to integrate menstrual health education more deeply into schools so access to products goes hand in hand with knowledge and confidence.

Tahmid K. Chowdhury
CEO
Safepad Bangladesh

Expanding into climate-vulnerable areas is also a priority, as supply chain disruptions there can leave women without essentials. On the innovation side, we are developing pads that are lighter, faster drying, and more affordable, while continuing to expand our reusable product categories for different life stages. Our goal is to make responsible consumption the norm, ensuring menstrual products do not add to the mountain of waste we are already battling.

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

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

Taskin shines in clinical win

SPORTS REPORTER FROM SYLHET

Bangladesh pacer Taskin Ahmed picked up from where he had left off in the series against Pakistan, claiming 4-28 against Netherlands in the first of three T20Is to set up a convincing eight-wicket win for Bangladesh at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium on Saturday.

"After injury I was struggling for rhythm but day by day it's getting better. I worked hard on the last few days in training and hard work always pays off."

Taskin Ahmed said after the match



SCORES IN BRIEF

Bangladesh vs
Netherlands,
1st T20I

Netherlands: 136 for eight in 20 overs
(Nidamanuru 26, O'Dowd 23, Pringle 16;
Taskin 4-28, Saif 2-18)

Bangladesh: 138 for two in 13.3 overs
(Litton 54 not out, Saif 29 not out, Tanzid
29; Dutt 1-30, Pringle 1-16)

Result:
Bangladesh won
by eight wickets

**Player of the
match:** Taskin
Ahmed

experience to get wickets in Mirpur.

But against Netherlands in Sylhet, Taskin was noticeably quicker, claiming his first two wickets with some extra bounce he extracted off the pitch and the latter two through slower deliveries.

On Saturday, Taskin gave Bangladesh the early breakthrough as he removed Dutch openers Max O'Dowd (23 off 15) and Vikramjit Singh (four off 11) and in his first 10 balls, conceded just two runs.

Taskin was impressive in the death overs as well as he took the wickets of Kyle Klein (nine off 12) and Noah Croes (11 off 13) to finish with an impressive bowling figures for the third straight T20I and helped Bangladesh restrict their opponents for just 136-8 in 20 overs after sending them to bat first.

Saif Hassan, who returned to the T20I after nearly four years, also chipped in with a couple of wickets in his two overs of off-spin.

With a four wicket haul, Taskin now has 10 wickets in four T20Is against the Dutch at an economy of 6.5 and an average of 10.4.

In reply, captain Litton Das hit a splendid 54 not out off 29 balls while Saif struck an unbeaten 19 ball 36 as Bangladesh chased down the target in just 13.3 overs and went 1-0 up in the series. The second match will be held at the same venue on Monday.

Reds, Gunners fight to stay perfect

REUTERS

Liverpool and Arsenal will both try to remain perfect in the Premier League today when they meet in Merseyside, England.

Liverpool (2-0, 6 points) have had the far more adventurous route to their flawless record, twice giving back late leads only to score match-winning goals even later.

Last Monday, it was Mo Salah setting up Rio Nguimoh deep in second half stoppage time to seal a 3-2 victory at Newcastle United, but the good news for Reds manager Arne Slot is that so far, his side appears less reliant on the veteran Salah for their attacking production, thanks in no small part to their summer transfer business.

In particular, former Eintracht Frankfurt attacker Hugo Ekitike is off to a quick start at Anfield with two goals and an assist.

Meanwhile, Arsenal (2-0, 6 points) have yet to concede in the new campaign and last Saturday romped to a 5-0 home victory over Leeds United that was realistically decided when Bukayo Saka scored the Gunners' second goal in first-half stoppage time.

But Saka, Kai Havertz and Martin Odegaard are already dealing with injuries, with the former two expected to miss at least several weeks.

That will put the focus on summer signings like Noni Madueke, Viktor Gyokeres and Eberechi Eze, who were acquired in part to help the Gunners combat exactly these kinds of situations.

NCL triumph brings no revival for Sylhet cricket

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Sylhet

Looking in from the outside, cricket in Sylhet seems to be thriving.

Sylhet division are the reigning champions of the first-class competition National Cricket League (NCL), earning their maiden title last season, and many players from this part of the country, like Zakir Hasan, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Nasum Ahmed, Jaker Ali Anik, Ebadot Hossain and Khaled Ahmed are currently representing Bangladesh in different formats.

But hidden behind the velvet robe of NCL glory and the honour of being a nursery for national stars is the bare skeleton of a cricketing system that is grinding to a halt, with pre-board election chatter overshadowing on-field stagnation.

The sorry state

After their triumph in the NCL in October, expectations were sky high regarding the sport's overall development in this part of the country. The region was crying out for infrastructural revamp, more competitive leagues and a structured talent hunt programme.

But the NCL silverware did not bring with it any of the desired perks. On the contrary, the last 12 months or so have been one of the most testing periods for cricket in this division.

In August last year, the National Sports Council (NSC) dissolved all divisional and district sports associations in the country following the student-led mass uprising

that led to the ouster of the Awami League government.

Since June, an 11-member ad-hoc committee formed by the NSC has been running the Sylhet Divisional Sports Association, and the four districts under the division also have ad-hoc committees now.

But according to local organisers and coaches, the lengthy inactive period prior to the formation of the committees has stagnated the region's cricket.

"There was no programme or competition in Sylhet after winning the NCL title last season," Sylhet divisional team manager Ali Wasiquzzaman Chowdhury told The Daily Star on Friday.

"The [Sylhet] International Cricket Stadium is mainly engaged for the national team, first class players and other programmes. But for the other players, there is no scope. The district stadium has to be shared with football, hockey and other sports," Ali said, detailing the shortage of training facilities in the region.

"Once there were cement wickets in every area in the town. But now, if you roam around the city, you will see only two to four wickets. The situation has changed a lot. In the last few years, the area-wise teams have vanished."

Ali also said that the Sylhet District Cricket League, the most prominent 50-over tournament in the region, did not take place last year owing to political unrest.

"Due to the situation in the country, the tournament didn't take place last year. In the last 35 years, this league has happened almost every year. We don't have leagues in Sunamganj, Moulvibazar and Habiganj districts. Sunamganj, Moulvibazar haven't had a league in 12-13 years. But

still there are people who will go to the board as councillors without doing anything," he added.

Main focus on BCB polls?

Considering the lengthy inactive period, the primary focus of cricket administrators in Sylhet right now should be on revitalising the game.

However, the buzzword in the annals of Sylhet's cricket administration right now is the forthcoming Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) elections in October.

It is learnt that three members of the Sylhet Divisional Sports Association's ad-hoc committee – Dr. Md. Enamul Haque Chowdhury, Rahat Shams and Enamul Haque Jnr – are frontrunners to get the sole Sylhet divisional councillorship for the polls. Sylhet division head coach Rajin

Saleh is likely to get the councillorship from the Sylhet District Sports Association.

"Previously, there was only one party. But now, there are many parties and the situation is different... As there are different types of pressure, the authorities will have to give it a lot of consideration before giving someone a councillorship," a local organiser said, requesting anonymity.

Sylhet will host the next BCB board meeting on September 1, and the divisional association will accord a felicitation to the NCL winning team on the seventh – both events will be attended by BCB president Aminul Islam Bulbul.

Some feel that these visits could be the perfect backdrop for settling the councillorship issues behind the scenes, but Sylhet division's ad-hoc committee member Rahat claimed that they are planning to capitalise on these events by getting the nod from the president on various development plans.

"We have divided the BCB president's 'triple century' plan into nine different segments at a granular level. Among them, coaching development, school cricket development, women's cricket development, regional cricket branding, sustainable fundraising and stakeholder management will be executed soon after getting clearance from the BCB. "We will invite 350 people, which would include different stakeholders, during the reception programme. We will try to secure the cricketing resources required for the development of Sylhet cricket," he said.



American hopes suffer blow

REUTERS, New York

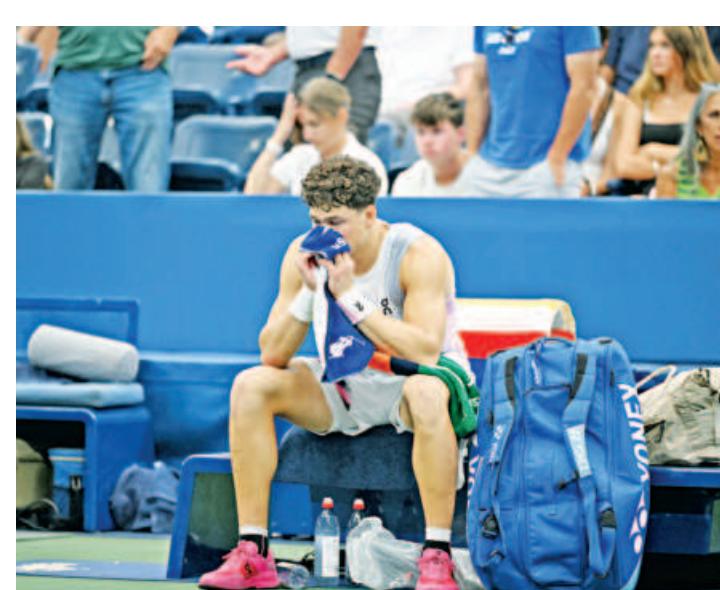
Sixth seed Ben Shelton retired from his US Open third round clash with Frenchman Adrian Mannarino on Friday before 17th seed Frances Tiafoe was knocked out in a big blow to American hopes of ending their 22-year wait for a men's Grand Slam champion.

Twenty-three American men began the tournament looking to win the title and emulate compatriot Andy Roddick, who claimed the Flushing Meadows crown in 2003.

But Friday's shock results meant fourth seed Taylor Fritz was left standing as the country's best title hope at the year's final major after he fought past Swiss Jerome Kym 7-6(3) 6-7(9) 6-4 6-4 at Louis Armstrong Stadium.

Fritz could be joined in the fourth round by Tommy Paul, the only other American man left in the draw, with the 14th seed set to face a tricky challenge when he takes on Kazakh 23rd seed Alexander Bublik at Arthur Ashe Stadium on Saturday.

Shelton grabbed his left shoulder and winced in pain after hitting a forehand early in the fourth set in a tight clash at Louis Armstrong Stadium and pinched



at the spot as he prepared to receive a serve from Mannarino in the second game.

He managed to hold his own in the second game before the physio again.

"I just did something to my

shoulder, I don't know what it is. I'm in a lot of pain," Shelton told his father and coach, Bryan Shelton, before taking a medical timeout midway through the second game in the fourth set.

Shelton later told his father that it was the "worst pain" he had

felt in his life, before meeting with the physio again.

He managed to hold his own for a while against left-hander Mannarino, who produced some moments of magic, but looked dejected at the break and shed tears into his towel before pulling out, to gasps from the home crowd.

"When he started having pain, he was leading in the match," said Mannarino, who rallied from

a set down to draw level at 3-6 6-3 4-6 6-4 when the match was abandoned.

"He probably would have won. It's unfortunate for me and very lucky for me. I don't really know what to say right now. I suppose I'm happy to get through. I wish him the best."

"I was having good fun on the court - there were some long rallies. I lost some of them, won some of them. It was fun to play. Ben's such an amazing player, it was a great match."

"I was enjoying my time on court, even if I was losing."

American fans were left to swallow another bitter pill around an hour later, when Tiafoe, who last failed to reach the Flushing Meadows fourth round in 2019, crashed to a 6-4 6-3 7-6(7) defeat by Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff on Grandstand.

Struff regained his composure after a flurry of double faults towards the end of the contest to send out last year's semi-finalist.

"I think everybody knows sometimes it's tough to serve out the match," Struff said.

"I tried to stay calm and tried to refocus and I managed to get some energy back so I was very happy about that."



Bangladesh's Mohammad Abdullah (L) chest-bumps with a teammate after one of his two goals during their 8-3 win over Chinese Taipei in the 2025 Men's Hockey Asia Cup at the Rajgir Sports Stadium in Bihar, India yesterday. The result has all but guaranteed them third place in Pool B, setting up a must-win clash against South Korea tomorrow to keep their Super 4s hopes alive in the eight-team competition.

PHOTO: AHF

Munshiganj (red) and Madaripur (green) players vie for possession in the curtain-raiser of the National Football Championship at the Birsreshtho Fl. Lt. Matiur Rahman Stadium yesterday. Hosts Munshiganj prevailed 2-1 with second-half strikes to mark a winning start, bringing together all 64 districts in a nationwide festival of football organised by the Youth and Sports Ministry and the Bangladesh Football Federation.

PHOTO: BFF



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South Asia least integrated after Africa Say experts, blame political decisions trumping economic logic

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Regional cooperation in South Asia remains in a precarious state, largely due to political decisions that often override economic logic, foreign policy experts said yesterday.

Despite widespread poverty and the looming threat of climate change, South Asia is the least integrated region in the world outside sub-Saharan Africa, they noted, urging honest conversations to improve people's lives.

The observations came on the final day of the two-day Bengal Delta Conference, organised by Dacca Institute of Research and Analytics (DAIRA) at the InterContinental Dhaka.

"SAARC is largely dormant, hampered by India-Pakistan tensions, contested borders, and fragile economies," said Michael Kugelman, senior fellow at the Asia Pacific Foundation, during a panel discussion as part of the conference.

Kugelman said Bangladesh is well positioned to contribute to regionalism because of its flexible foreign policy, reflected in its 2023 Indo-Pacific Outlook which echoed both US and Chinese priorities. Bangladesh also maintains strong ties with China, Japan, the EU, Russia, the UK, and multilateral lenders.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Tarique pledges safe Bangladesh for all ethnic groups

BSS, Mymensingh



BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said an opportunity has emerged to uphold the fundamental rights of all individuals, including members of every ethnic group, in a dictatorship-free Bangladesh.

"Therefore, BNP is determined to build a safe Bangladesh with all ethnic groups," he said while speaking as the chief guest virtually at the national representative conference of the Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Khudro Jatigoshti Dal at Tareque Memorial Auditorium of the Town Hall in the city.

Seeking support, cooperation and vote from the minority ethnic groups in the next general election, Tarique said if voted to power, BNP will create employment, ensure a working environment and establish a safe Bangladesh for all, regardless of their political allegiance, opinion, religion, caste and tribe.

"BNP's view is that no matter what language, tribe, religion or ideology, our first identity is that we are Bangladeshis. No matter where we live -- mountains, plains, cities, ports or remote villages -- every citizen of the state has equal rights."

Tarique mentioned that BNP has plans to protect the rights of small ethnic groups, take initiatives

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



The broken and slippery staircase of Babubazar Bridge beside Sir Salimullah Medical College in Old Dhaka remains a daily hazard for thousands commuting between Dhaka and Keraniganj due to poor maintenance. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



Inequality result of capitalist-type development

Says Serajul Islam Choudhury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury yesterday said the country's economic progress is a "capitalist type of development" which is behind inequality.

"We are seeing the 'visible images' of development, the reflections, and we are also being inspired by it. However, that development is a capitalist type of development which creates inequality, isolation, and destroys nature," he said.

He was speaking as the chief guest of the Bazlur Rahman Memorial Award 2024 ceremony, organised by the Liberation War Museum at its auditorium in the capital.

Prof Choudhury, one of the country's most revered intellectuals, said people had fought the Liberation War in 1971 to free themselves from oppression, achieve economic freedom, and end discrimination.

He stressed that the dream of liberation was a dream of social revolution "to establish collective and social ownership in place of individual ownership".

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2

Evacuation of Gaza City 'undignified, risky'

Warns Red Cross as Israel steps up warnings, tightens siege

AGENCIES

The Red Cross yesterday warned that any Israeli efforts to evacuate Gaza City would put residents at risk, as Israel's military tightened its siege on the area ahead of a major planned offensive.

After nearly 23 months of devastating war, Israel is under increasing pressure to end its offensive in Gaza, where the United Nations has declared a famine and the majority of the population has been displaced at least once.

But despite the calls at home and abroad for an end to the war, the Israeli army is readying itself for an intensified operation to seize the Palestinian territory's largest urban centre and relocate its inhabitants.

It is impossible that a mass evacuation of Gaza City could ever be done in a way that is safe and dignified under the current conditions," International Committee of the Red Cross President Mirjana Spoljaric said in a statement.

The dire state of shelter, healthcare and nutrition in Gaza meant evacuation was "not only unfeasible but incomprehensible under the present circumstances".

An Israeli military statement on Friday declared Gaza City a "dangerous combat zone", adding that daily pauses in fighting intended to allow limited food deliveries would no longer continue.

The military did not call for the population

to leave immediately, but a day earlier COGAT, the Israeli defence ministry body that oversees civil affairs in the Palestinian territories, said it was undertaking preparations "for moving the population southward for their protection".

A journalist working for AFP on the northern edge of Gaza City reported he had been ordered to evacuate by the army, adding conditions had become increasingly difficult, with bombardments coming closer to his position and gunfire and explosions heard nearby.

The UN estimates that nearly a million people currently live in Gaza governorate, which includes Gaza City and its surroundings.

The territory's civil defence agency reported intense Israeli strikes in Gaza City's Sabra and Zeitoun districts, and an "escalation" in the Sheikh Radwan area north of the city centre.

On Friday, Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN's Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA, warned that there were "nearly one million people between the city and the northern governorate who basically have nowhere to go, have no resources even to move".

On Friday, the United States said it would not allow Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to travel to New York next month for a United Nations gathering of world leaders, where several US allies are set to recognise Palestine as a state.

On information, police

BCL leader 'beaten, hacked' to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Police recovered body of a leader of banned Bangladesh Chhatra League yesterday morning near his home in Bhola town.

Md Saifullah Arif, 23, was beaten and hacked to death at some time between early hours of yesterday, said police and family members.

Arif was the vice-president of Bhola Sadar upazila unit of Chhatra League, said his father, Bashir Uddin.

He was absconding for a long time after the ouster of the Awami League government on August 5 last year. He returned home, in the town's Nabi Mosque Road area, two days ago to see his ailing father, sources said.

Bashir said Arif had dinner with his family late Friday night after which everyone went to sleep.

Around dawn, when Bashir went out for Fajr prayers, he found Arif lying motionless on a road near his home.

The assailants might have called Arif, taken him out of the house, and killed him, Bashir said.

On information, police

From the classroom to a cobbler's stall

14yr-old son of Ruplal, killed in a mob beating, drops out of school to support family



S DILIP ROY

Joy once dreamed of studying and building a bright future for himself and his family. But on August 9, that dream was dashed forever.

For the son of slain cobbler Ruplal Robidas, of Ghonirampur Dangapara village in Rangpur's Taraganj upazila, education has become a luxury -- the struggle now is simply to survive.

Along with his father, 14-year-old Joy Robidas lost his childhood too.

A ninth-grader at Taraganj Government Model High School, he has now taken up his late father's profession.

On Friday morning, Joy was seen sitting on the small wooden stool, the same one his father once sat on, in Taraganj bazar, repairing shoes with his

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2



Bangladesh captain Litton Das and Saif Hassan celebrate their eight-wicket victory over the Netherlands in the first of three T20Is at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday. Both Litton (54 off 29) and Saif (36 off 19) stayed unbeaten, but the winning foundation was laid by pacer Taskin Ahmed's four wickets off 28 balls, with Saif also contributing with two key top-order dismissals, after the hosts chose to field.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Late Alhaj Giashuddin Ahmed

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

15th Death Anniversary

Today is the 15th death anniversary of Late Alhaj Giashuddin Ahmed. On this day of remembrance, we the family members, directors, officers and employees of Popular Jute Exchange Limited as well as other sister concerns fondly recall the memories of his industrious & benevolent life, and pray for the salvation and eternal peace for his departed soul.



POPULAR JUTE EXCHANGE LIMITED

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