



5G goes live, but few phones to connect

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Mondera set to show off her dance chops

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21,000 children disabled in Gaza war: UN committee

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Half the venue, athletes too many

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Fugitives can't run in national elections

Proposes EC, seeks 46 amendments to RPO

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and AHMED DEEPTO

The Election Commission has proposed stricter amendments to the election law, including a provision barring fugitives from contesting national polls.

The EC sent 46 proposed amendments to the Representation of the People Order (RPO), 1972, to the law ministry for vetting on Tuesday. The RPO is the law under which the commission regulates national elections.

Under the new proposal, the EC has outlined several major changes, including recognising the armed forces as law enforcers and granting itself the authority to cancel a constituency's election if significant irregularities are found. The proposal also reintroduces the "No Vote" option in constituencies with only one contestant. If approved, it will allow the EC to hold a fresh election if "No Vote" get the majority votes.

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) Abul Fazal Md Sanaullah briefed reporters on the proposed changes to the RPO yesterday.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO RPO

- Armed forces to be recognised as law enforcers
- EC empowered to cancel entire constituency's vote
- Candidates must declare foreign assets
- Security deposit raised to Tk 50K from Tk 20K
- Campaign spending capped at Tk 25 lakh
- Fresh election if 'No Vote' option receives a majority of votes
- Alliance candidates must use own party symbol

When asked why the EC is now taking steps to disqualify fugitives, Sanaullah said: "The Election Commission has held discussions with the National Consensus Commission. The Election Commission is now satisfied and feels that including such a provision will be beneficial. "In case of misuse, the provision could be amended again if necessary."

In February, the Electoral Reform Commission recommended preventing individuals accused of serious human rights violations from participating in elections if the International Crimes Tribunal accepts the charges.

The commission identified extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, inhumane torture, and attacks on journalists or human rights activists as severe human rights violations. It also recommended making individuals involved in money laundering ineligible to contest polls if

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Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and heads of foreign delegations arrive for a military parade marking the 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two, in Beijing, China yesterday. Story on page 5. PHOTO: AFP

Mohammadpur, Adabor grapple with teen gangs

Extortion, violence continue despite police drives

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Around 2:30pm Tuesday, a 40-year-old man stood silently at Adabor's Road-10 Balur Math, staring at some shanties.

He said he had built four rooms there five years ago on rented land. One was for his family, while the other three were sublet for Tk 9,000 a month.

It was the main source of income for Jalil, a day labourer.

But the sense of certainty and calm started to fade when a local gang of mostly teenagers extorted Tk 10,000 from him after last year's uprising, as law and order deteriorated rapidly.

"About a month ago, followers of Monir and Gujha Monir demanded Tk 5,000 every month. When I refused, they beat me mercilessly and warned of another attack if I didn't pay within 15 days," he said.

Fearing for his family's safety, he moved to a rented room in Dhaka Udyan Housing. On Tuesday, he returned only to check on tenants after massive joint drives in Adabor following an attack on police.



AI-GENERATED IMAGE

For speaking to this newspaper, the man gave a pseudonym -- Abdul Jalil -- out of fear of repercussions.

Such stories are now common in the area.

Residents said they are constantly forced to pay extortion or face assaults and live in terror. At night, people don't dare to step out. Gang members abduct people, demand ransom, rob valuables, and openly trade drugs.

"No one dares to protest," said one resident, requesting anonymity. Locals said gangs often justify

extortion, claiming money is needed to cover bail expenses.

Jalil himself was told that because several members were recently freed, he had to contribute. Many like Jalil rent parts of Balur Math -- a large stretch of land -- and build tin houses and rent them out.

Police and locals said the area is dominated by Anwar -- known as "Kobji Kata Anwar" -- who controls multiple gangs.

Though members are now aged between 15 and 30 years, they are

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Editors' Council voices concern over 3 issues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Editors' Council yesterday expressed concern over three developments: denial of a genuine protest photograph as AI-generated, attempts to create a mob at the Dhaka Reporters Unity, and the government's move to implement a law first drafted during the ousted Awami League government's tenure.

In a statement, the council said that during the recent engineering students' protest, a police officer was photographed pressing his hand over a student's face.

After the photo appeared in several media outlets, police claimed that it had been generated using artificial intelligence (AI). Multiple media organisations later confirmed the photo was authentic.

On this issue, the council said, "We are aware of AI technologies, and if we ever publish an AI-generated

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Construction materials have been left piled up for over two years around the Bosila Puratan Government Primary School, disrupting students' regular activities. The Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority has been conducting development work along the river boundary in Mohammadpur's Bosila area for more than four years. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

NEWS ANALYSIS

LDC graduation: an economic cliff?

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

As Bangladesh approaches its scheduled graduation from the least developed country (LDC) category in November 2026, a sense of unpreparedness hangs over both the government and the private sector. The milestone represents a recognition of progress on three key United Nations criteria: per capita income, human assets, and economic vulnerability. To qualify for graduation, a country must meet at least two of these three thresholds in two consecutive triennial reviews. Bangladesh has distinguished itself as the first country to achieve all three criteria in both the 2018 and 2021 reviews.

On the income front, Bangladesh's per capita gross national income has reached an estimated \$2,684, well above the 2024 graduation threshold of \$1,306. Its Human Assets Index, which measures outcomes in health and education, scored 77.5 against a required threshold of 66, reflecting progress in literacy rates and reductions in under-five mortality. The Economic Vulnerability Index, which assesses resilience to shocks, stood at 21.9, comfortably below the threshold of 32. Taken together, these figures underscore the resilience and growth that have made graduation possible. Yet many economists and industry leaders warn that inadequate preparation and the slow pace of reforms could turn this milestone into an economic shock, weakening the country's competitiveness in global value chains.

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Revisions done, July Charter set to be sent to parties

MD ABBAS

The finalised July Charter is likely to be sent to political parties in a day or two following revisions to three contentious commitments that several parties had raised objections to.

However, the National Consensus Commission has decided not to include the implementation process in the July Charter.

A member of the commission, preferring anonymity, said that once the charter is sent to the political parties, any objections they may have will not be addressed.

Earlier on August 16, the commission sought pledges on eight broad commitments, prioritising the ideals of the July uprising.

Among these, three points drew concerns from some political parties, including the BNP: a provision stating that if the charter conflicted with existing laws or the constitution, the charter would take precedence; another that vested the authority to interpret any provision or recommendation of the charter in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court; and a clause that barred challenges to the charter's legitimacy in court.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, the commission's Vice-President Prof Ali Riaz said the three commitments had been revised in response to the concerns.

"We are consulting legal experts and revising the commitments with provisions that will be both legally sound and politically acceptable."

He added that the final charter will be structured in two volumes. The first will contain the consensus points that can be implemented immediately through government orders and ordinances, and the second will include issues that would require more time for implementation.

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We want ASEAN-Bangladesh-China summit on Rohingyas

ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights tells Yunus

UNB, Dhaka

ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR), a platform of former and current lawmakers of Southeast Asian countries, yesterday proposed an international conference involving Bangladesh, China and ASEAN countries to resolve the Rohingya issue.

The APHR made the proposal when a delegation from the advocacy group called on Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus at the Jamuna, his Deputy Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad Majumder said.

“Two things should be done on a priority basis. One is an ASEAN-led effort to raise funds for Rohingyas. The other is a high-level ASEAN-Bangladesh-China political summit to resolve the Rohingya issues,” said Charles Santiago, a former member of the House of Representatives, Malaysia, and co-chairperson of APHR.

Seeking ASEAN co-operation to resolve the Rohingya crisis, the chief adviser reiterated his call for Bangladesh to be included as a member of the regional body.

“We want to be a sectoral dialogue partner of ASEAN. This is one thing we keep repeating. Since we are not part of ASEAN, we cannot bring the issue to ASEAN. It is important for us because the issue needs to be addressed,” said the chief adviser.

The chief adviser also urged APHR to form a new ASEAN parliamentary group and allow Bangladesh to join it as an invitee.

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Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus presents the book “Art of Triumph” to Transparency International Chairperson François Valérien at the state guesthouse Jamuna yesterday.

PHOTO: PTD

VIOLENCE AT CU

Imtiaz clinging on to life in ICU

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Imtiaz Ahmed, a master's student of the International Relations Department at Chittagong University, has been fighting for his life at the ICU of Parkview Hospital in the port city since Sunday.

He was critically injured during a clash between CU students and villagers on Sunday and was placed under life support after undergoing surgery on his head that night.

Imtiaz's mother, Shahnaj Ameer, shared that she had spoken to him via video call twice on Sunday afternoon during the clash. She called him at 1:38pm and again at 1:56pm, urging him to stay away from the clash. Imtiaz had assured her he was at the university health complex, caring for injured friends. He also spoke to his father at 2:02pm, but after that, his phone became unreachable. About an hour later, a CU teacher, also Imtiaz's cousin, called to inform the family that Imtiaz had been injured and taken to the hospital.

Upon hearing the news, Imtiaz's family rushed to Chattogram that same day and has been outside the ICU clinging to hope that he would recover.

The recovery of another injured student, Mamun Mia, gave some hope to the family.

Mamun, a final-year student of the Sociology Department at CU, was also admitted to the ICU on Sunday and underwent surgery on the head. As his condition improved, doctors decided to move him to a cabin.

Imtiaz's father, Ameer Hossain, expressed helplessness. He said they did not understand treatment matters and hoped the hospital and CU authorities would do their best for his son's recovery.



Global laws

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from countries in the Global South to offshore safe havens and many developed countries where stolen assets are welcomed and legalised by enablers, CA's Press Wing said in a statement.

“Sixteen billion dollars were annually siphoned off from Bangladesh during the autocratic regime,” he noted.

Yunus sharply criticised international banking and financial rules that “make it easy” for looted money to be parked in places like the offshore islands and many rich countries.

Valerian commended the interim government's efforts to recover stolen assets but stressed the need for more effective “international cooperation” and stronger financial regulations to stop money laundering.

“We need stronger international regulations and better enforcement,” Valerian said.

The chief adviser also condemned the “double standards” of some financial institutions for knowingly holding illicit funds.

Yunus urged TI to amplify its voice and help convene an international forum to enact binding international laws to stop stolen billions from finding safe havens.

Iftekharuzzaman, head of TI Bangladesh, said joint advocacy by the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and UK chapter of TI had contributed to freezing properties acquired by associates of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

Lamiya Morshed, senior secretary and coordinator of SDG affairs, was also present at the meeting.

Editors’ Council

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photo, we clearly mention it.”

Referring to the August 28 event at the DRU auditorium, the statement said a group of people suddenly entered and attempted to create a mob-like situation. The DRU later issued a statement condemning the incident, a position the Editors' Council supported.

The council further noted that steps have been taken to implement the Journalist Protection Act. The initiative was originally introduced during the Awami League government. It has been learnt that the interim government has moved to implement the law while keeping many of its provisions unchanged, it said.

The information ministry has sought opinions on the draft from the Editors' Council as well as other organisations.

According to the statement, such moves reflect the mindset of the previous government. “This repetition reminds us of earlier government's interference in independent journalism and unilateral initiatives,” it said.

Seven dead after migrant boat stranded in Med

AFP, Rome

Seven people were lost at sea and 41 others were brought to Italy's Lampedusa island after a migrant boat got into difficulty in the Mediterranean, German NGO Sea-Watch said yesterday.

The survivors, the majority of them Sudanese, had been at sea for six days before landing on Lampedusa late Tuesday. They were rescued by Sea-Watch's ship Aurora after refusing help from the Tunisian authorities, the NGO said.

Fugitives can’t run in national elections

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the Anti-Corruption Commission accepts the charges.

The Election Commission had opposed the proposal earlier, arguing that such a provision could be misused and that political consensus was necessary.

At present, anyone convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude and sentenced to at least two years' imprisonment is barred from contesting elections unless five years have passed since their release. Individuals convicted under the Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunals) Order, 1972, are also deemed ineligible.

Regarding the participation of leaders from banned political parties in the upcoming national election, Sanaullah said, “If a political party is prohibited from conducting activities, its leaders will not be able to contest the election under that party's name. As for independent candidates, time will tell how they will participate.”

However, the proposal has drawn mixed reactions from politicians and experts.

Justice MA Matin, a retired judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, said a fugitive must first surrender to the court to seek legal protection. Therefore, disqualifying fugitives from contesting elections would not be inconsistent with the law.

Communist Party of Bangladesh General Secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince said it is the right of a citizen to contest polls until proven guilty. “I believe it is entirely unethical to enact laws considering specific individuals or groups. However, those who are convicted should not be allowed to take part in polls.”

Revolutionary Workers Party of

Bangladesh General Secretary Saiful Huq said, “It seems to me that this decision has been made based on political considerations. It will not be sustainable and is certainly to be challenged in court.”

Prince and Saiful said that the “No Vote” option should be on the ballot in all constituencies.

PROPOSED CHANGES

“The commission will be able to take action against candidates who submit false information in their affidavits,” Sanaullah told reporters.

“The Election Commission will be able to take action following the investigation. Even if the candidate is elected, the individual concerned may be recalled from office at any time during their five-year term,” he added.

EC officials said the reintroduction of the “No Vote” option will ensure that nobody is elected uncontested. The option was last available in the 2008 polls, when about 3,82,000 voters chose it.

During the one-sided 2014 election, 153 of 300 lawmakers were elected unopposed, as most of the opposition, including the BNP, boycotted the election.

Earlier, 49 candidates nominated by the then-ruling BNP were elected uncontested in the February 15, 1996, election, which was boycotted by the Awami League, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, and other parties.

In the event of a tie between two candidates, a re-election will be held. The previous provision of deciding tied results was by lottery.

The amendment also recognised the army, navy, air force, and coast guard as law enforcement agencies during elections. Officials said that once armed forces members are defined as law enforcers, the EC will not need any additional order

to deploy them for election duties. Members of the forces will also have the power to arrest offenders.

Provisions have been included in the proposal to take action against candidates, political parties, and organisations if they use artificial intelligence or similar technologies to spread misinformation or defame someone.

The EC also proposed that the president and members of the managing committee of any educational institution located in the relevant constituency be disqualified from running in national elections.

Candidates will be required to submit details of their sources of income, at home and abroad, along with a statement of assets and liabilities for themselves and their dependents.

It has also proposed making it mandatory to submit a copy of the income tax return along with the nomination paper.

The commission proposed raising the nomination deposit to Tk 50,000, up from the current Tk 20,000.

Moreover, candidates will be allowed to spend up to Tk 10 per voter, with a maximum ceiling of Tk 25 lakh for electioneering.

According to the new proposal, political parties receiving donations above Tk 5,000 will be required to inform the commission and the information would be upload to the EC websites.

Other key proposals include: candidates contesting under an alliance must use the symbol of their own party; nomination papers cannot be submitted online and must be filed in person; and polling agents of a candidate must be residents of the same constituency.

LDC graduation: an economic cliff?

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MA Razaque, chairman of the Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID), has voiced particular concern. He argues that while Bangladesh has earned graduation, the real danger lies in wasted time and lack of urgency. “When it comes to reforms, the pace is painfully slow—and that is where the real risk lies,” he said.

There are some steps being taken. According to Anisuzzaman Chowdhury, special assistant to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, a new steering committee is working on policy formulation and identifying bottlenecks in critical areas such as garments, pharmaceuticals, and port operations. The committee meets weekly with industry representatives and makes visits to factories to understand challenges firsthand. Reforms have already yielded some progress: port operations have been streamlined so that pharmaceutical raw materials now clear in days instead of months.

Dormant regulatory bodies, such as the Drug Control Committee, have been revived, and the National Single Window, which links 19 government agencies, has become functional, issuing 40,000 certificates in just two months. Still, Chowdhury acknowledged that these efforts are not sufficient to overcome all the challenges in such a short time. He also noted that cash incentives to exporters, currently a lifeline for many, may not be permissible under World Trade Organisation rules once Bangladesh graduates, making it necessary to design new indirect incentives.

The greatest concern remains the loss of preferential trade benefits that have underpinned the country's export-led growth. At present, 73 percent of Bangladesh's exports enjoy duty-free access to 38 countries under the LDC framework. Nowhere is this advantage more important than in the European Union, which alone accounts for 48 percent of Bangladesh's exports.

Graduation threatens to bring an abrupt end to these preferences.

While there will be a three-year transition period in the EU and the UK, tariffs could rise to between 9.6 percent and 12 percent in the EU by 2029, 16 percent and 18 percent in Canada, and 7.4 percent and 12.8 percent in Japan. Economists estimate that the combined effect could reduce annual exports by as much as \$8 billion, roughly 14 percent of total exports.

To mitigate these risks, the government has introduced the Smooth Transition Strategy (STS), a comprehensive plan with five strategic pillars and 157 actions. The plan has received praise from the UN Committee for Development Policy for its scope and ambition.

Yet, implementation has been slow. Razaque points out that without a robust accountability framework, reform inertia will persist, leaving the STS as little more than words on paper. He argues that Bangladesh is not yet in a position to absorb the blows of lost preferential tariffs and subsidies, and that reducing the cost of doing business is essential if exporters are to find any competitive edge from within. He insists that securing trade agreements and qualifying for the EU's GSP Plus scheme are no longer optional but essential for survival. Intellectual property rights protection is another neglected area where Bangladesh could easily be caught unprepared, leaving local businesses at risk.

Progress on trade agreements has been particularly disappointing. Securing preferential access is a core element of the STS, yet little has been achieved in practice. Bangladesh has signed only one preferential trade agreement, with Bhutan in 2020. Negotiations with key partners, such as India, Japan, South Korea and China are ongoing, but none have yet resulted in a deal. Japan has even stated that it will only sign an Economic Partnership Agreement after Bangladesh graduates, leaving the country exposed during the critical transition. At the

same time, efforts to secure GSP Plus status in the EU remain bogged down in compliance requirements on labour rights, governance, and environmental standards.

The impacts of graduation will be felt unevenly across sectors. For the garment industry, which makes up more than 80 percent of the country's exports, the EU's three-year transition period under GSP Plus offers a small but crucial window to diversify markets and comply with new standards.

The pharmaceutical sector, however, faces an immediate shock. Under the WTO's TRIPS agreement, LDCs currently enjoy a waiver that allows them to manufacture patented medicines without registering them. After graduation, this flexibility will end, requiring local companies to register all patented drugs. The process is costly and time-consuming, and could result in significantly higher medicine prices.

Tapan Chowdhury, managing director of Square Pharmaceuticals, has warned that the country needs business readiness rather than simply celebrating the graduation milestone. Abdul Muktaadir, president of the Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries, has added that the industry, which has only recently begun producing its own raw materials, requires at least two additional years to prepare.

With time running short, groups such as the International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh are preparing to formally request a deferment of graduation to allow more time for preparation.

Razaque of RAPID has summed up the situation candidly. “Preparations for graduation have been quite limited, with both the government and the private sector falling behind,” he said. For Bangladesh, the achievement of graduation is real and significant, but unless urgent reforms are undertaken, the transition could well resemble an economic cliff.

Mohammadpur, Adabor

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still called “teen gangs”, as most started young.

Over the past years, they have grown from petty extortionists into extensions of Dhaka's underworld, intelligence sources said.

Leaders change frequently, but the pattern remains the same – every arrest opens the way for a new leader, often more violent than the last, they added.

Locals alleged the gangs also switch political patrons whenever necessary, seeking shelter from whoever is in power.

Khalidul Haq Hawlader, commanding officer of Rab-2, said since August 5, 2024, they arrested 884 suspects in Mohammadpur and Adabor, most linked to teen gangs.

“We identified at least 20 groups, with Kobji Kata Anwar's and Tunda Babu's outfits being the most powerful. Some gangs have 20-30 members, others as many as 60. Many have been arrested multiple times, only to return on bail and resume extortion with even more aggression,” he told The Daily Star.

“We see the same faces arrested two or three times. Once freed, they return stronger. We are trying our best to track and detain them,” Khalidul added.

Out of 20, nine gangs are largely active in Mohammadpur and Adabor. Besides Anwar's “Kobji Kata Group”, the gangs include “Killer Arman Group”, “Tunda Babu Group”, “Boma Group”, “Gittha Group”, “Kosai Group”, “Pataly Group”, “Bunia Sohel Group”, and “Arshad aka Ayesha Group”.

Md Shamsuddoha Sumon, additional public prosecutor of Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrates' Court, observed that the teen gang members often get bail because of a lack of specific complaints in the first information reports.

“Besides, victims of the incidents related to teen gangs are hard to reach in many cases, and police also fail to produce strong evidence,” added Sumon.

SM Jakaria, officer in charge of Adabor Police Station, however, dismissed the allegation, saying, “We properly produce the accused with substantiated evidence. We do not know how the teen gang members get bail.”

In the latest instance of teen gang brutality, a police team came under attack on Monday night. A constable is undergoing treatment at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases after being hacked that night.

The attackers also vandalised a police vehicle.

Locals said Roni and Jony, the siblings who now lead the “Kobji Kata Group” in Anwar's absence, masterminded the attack. The pair, along with their

Revisions done

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The earlier drafts of the charter were not split into two volumes.

Prof Riaz confirmed that the implementation process will not be included in the charter itself. “After getting feedback from political parties on how they want to implement the charter, and after consulting legal experts, we will submit our recommendations on the implementation process to the government.” He added that the commission will not extend its tenure beyond September 15 – its set deadline.

In a related development, Prof Riaz met with law adviser Asif Nazrul to discuss the finalisation of the charter yesterday.

A source within the commission said Prof Riaz briefed the adviser about the recommendations made by political parties regarding the charter's implementation. Some parties suggested mechanisms such as public assembly, referendum, constitutional reform session, presidential decree, or ordinances as ways to implement the charter.

The commission also held its own meeting yesterday to review the recommendations received so far and

associate Tushar, have been in charge since Anwar – also known as “Shooter Anwar” – was arrested by the Rab in February.

Police said the incident took place after a 999 call reported a young man and a woman being held hostage inside a garage in Adabor's Sunibir Housing. When police reached the spot, Roni, Jony and their followers attacked them with sharp weapons.

Following the incident, police launched a drive in the area and detained 102 suspects and recovered weapons and motorcycles.

Last night, DMP said main suspects Jony, 24, and Roni, 27, were arrested along with seven other members of the gang from Keraniganj and Savar early in the morning over the attack on police. Two sharp weapons were also recovered.

“They are involved in criminal activities like attacks on police, extortion, mugging, clashes, drug abuse, eve-teasing, abduction, demanding ransom and forceful occupation of properties,” the statement said.

Sources said the gang also attacked Nabinagar Housing in Mohammadpur and stormed two rickshaw garages the same night it assaulted police.

Rashed, the owner of one of the garages, said the attackers looted two rickshaws, hacked the garage manager and took away Tk 3,000 for refusing to pay extortion.

Kazi Rafique, OC of Mohammadpur Police Station, said they were not aware of the incident. Garage owner Rashed said he did not inform the police because he was out of Dhaka.

Beyond petty extortion and ransom, gang influence now extends into big land and property dealings.

A businessman from Mohammadpur said he bought a plot for Tk 3 crore three years ago. At the time, he paid Tk 10 lakh to a gang. Recently, the same men switched allegiance to another group and demanded another Tk 10 lakh.

“This is what terrifies us. No matter what happens, the threats remain. I already paid once, now they are demanding again,” he said, requesting anonymity.

Several other property owners and businessmen from Mohammadpur and nearby areas shared similar stories of repeated extortion under shifting gang-political alliances.

Ibne Mizan, deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Tejgaon Division, said, “Our operations often lead to the arrest of gang leaders. But we often hear new names from arrestees.”

“These teen gang members are mainly floating and have no permanent address, which is why it becomes difficult to trace them. But rest assured, we will bring them all to justice.”



In the scorching heat of Bhadra, a pigeon quenches its thirst from a pipeline. Yesterday, Sylhet recorded 35°C, which felt like 43°C. The photo was taken at Sylhet Railway Station.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

STUDENTS' UNION ELECTIONS

26 minority candidates among 179 in Jucusu polls

SAKIB AHMED

Among the 179 candidates contesting 25 posts in the Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union (Jucusu) polls, 26 are from minority backgrounds.

The election, scheduled for September 11 with 11,919 registered voters, is the first in 33 years since it was last held in 1992.

However, while the university is preparing to hold the much-awaited election, it has drawn little interest from minority communities.

Of the 26 candidates, eight are from indigenous communities, 13 from the Hindu community, three from the Buddhist community, and two from Christian backgrounds.



First Jucusu polls in 33 years set for Sept 11

Cyberbullying and online abuse cited as key barriers

Moreover, most of them are contesting from a single panel.

Seven indigenous candidates are contesting from "Sompritir Oikkyo", a panel backed by a faction of Chhatra Union, Biplobi Chhatra Maitri, the Indigenous Students'

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Brent Christensen next US envoy to Bangladesh

Ariful Islam new ambassador to US

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US President Donald Trump has nominated Brent Christensen, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, to serve as the next US ambassador to Bangladesh.



Brent Christensen

Tareq Md Ariful Islam

Meanwhile, Bangladesh has appointed Tareq Md Ariful Islam, a career diplomat, as Bangladesh's next ambassador to the US.

Brent Christensen, hailing from Virginia and holding the class of Counselor, has been chosen to assume the role of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Bangladesh, according to a White House statement.

The appointment is finalised after the Senate hearing.

The post of US ambassador remained vacant for more than a year after the

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Country sliding backward amid democratic delay

Says Khosru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP senior leader Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday said Bangladesh is gradually going downhill as it has failed to move to a democratic order even a year after the mass uprising.

"One year is actually a long time. The country should have transitioned to a democratic order through the electoral process long ago. Because of this delay, Bangladesh is going downhill day by day," he said while speaking at a seminar.

Historically, Khosru said, countries that quickly established a democratic system through elections after a revolution or mass uprising tended to fare better.

Khosru, a member of the BNP standing committee, said the situation

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Fishermen return from the Bay of Bengal after a good catch. They go to sea twice a day in small boats but face difficulties at other times of the year due to various reasons, including fishing bans. During the monsoon, however, they are managing good catches, with daily earnings ranging from Tk 1,200 to 5,000 by selling fish. The photo was taken at Rani Rashmoni Ghat in Chattogram city recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Ensure one-third seats for women in parliament

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Increasing parliamentary seats in line with the country's population and guaranteeing at least one-third women's participation through direct elections are crucial for effective representation, said speakers at an event yesterday.

To safeguard existing constituencies, they recommended forming each reserved women's seat by combining two general seats without disrupting the electoral bases already established by political parties.

Although each reserved constituency would be larger, the system is proposed to remain in force for only two to three terms, giving women candidates the opportunity to build their own constituencies and play a stronger role

in law-making and political decision-making, they added.

The observations came at a roundtable titled "Effective and Meaningful

- Speakers call for direct polls for women seats
- More seats needed for fair representation
- Women urged to contest both general, reserved seats
- Parties must act to ensure women's role in politics
- CEDAW compliance responsibility of govt

Representation of Women in Parliament: Direct Elections to Reserved Women's Seats", organised by the Members of

the Social Resistance Committee -- a platform of 71 women, human rights and development organisations -- at the CIRDAP auditorium in the capital.

The discussion was organised on the occasion of CEDAW Day (September 3), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, an international treaty aimed at ensuring women's rights and eliminating gender-based discrimination.

Nijera Kori coordinator Khushi Kabir delivered the keynote, urging that both men and women be allowed to contest general seats while reserved seats for women continue.

She proposed increasing the total number of parliamentary seats to 450, comprising 300 general seats and 150

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Disinformation threatens national stability: Hafiz

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Disinformation campaigns are targeting the interim government, state institutions, armed forces, politics and even the country's future to create confusion and anarchy, said Lt Gen (ret'd) Abdul Hafiz, special assistant to the chief adviser, yesterday.

He made the remarks at a seminar titled "Resilience in the Information Domain: Tools to Address Misinformation and Disinformation on Social Media" at the Military Institute of Science and Technology (MIST), jointly organised by the Armed Forces Division and MIST.

Addressing the event as chief guest, he stressed that digital content creators actively shape public opinion using algorithms that amplify narratives. "There is a constant battle for creating perception and shaping thinking," he said.

Citing research, Hafiz said falsehood spreads six times faster than truth as it triggers emotions like fear, anger or surprise.

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TK 75CR TAX EVASION ACC to sue two sons of S Alam Group chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has approved a case against 10 individuals, including two sons of S Alam Group Chairman Saiful Alam, over allegations of evading nearly Tk 75 crore in taxes.

Saiful's sons Ashrafur Alam and Asadul Alam Mahir, former deputy tax commissioner Aminul Islam, and seven officials of First Security Islami Bank are among the accused, said ACC Director General Md Akhter Hossain yesterday.

According to ACC, the accused colluded in forgery and fraud by using fake pay orders. They were supposed to pay Tk 125 crore in taxes to legalise Tk 500 crore of undisclosed income but instead deposited only Tk 50 crore, depriving the government of Tk 75 crore in revenue.

In October last year, three senior officials of the NBR's income tax division were suspended over allegations of receiving bribes and granting undue tax benefits to the two sons. The ACC later launched an inquiry based on those allegations.

Diarrhoea outbreak hits Natore

147 infected in 24 hours

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

A sudden outbreak of diarrhoea has struck Natore Municipality, infecting around 147 people in the 24 hours till 2:00pm yesterday.

As of yesterday, 128 patients were receiving treatment at Natore General Hospital.

The district health authorities have deployed a five-member medical team to provide treatment in the affected areas, and the district administration has formed a probe committee to investigate the incident, said officials.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Natore Civil Surgeon Dr Md Muktaadir Arefin said, "A few patients started coming from Tuesday night. Within hours, the number increased significantly. By this noon [yesterday], 147 patients had been admitted, of whom 128 are still undergoing treatment."

Of the admitted patients, 68 are women and children, the civil surgeon added.

To tackle the crisis, authorities have distributed 20,000 water purification tablets, along with oral saline and medicines, in the affected neighbourhoods.

"Primarily, we suspect that water contamination caused this outbreak. We have already informed the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research to conduct tests in the area," Dr Arefin said.

Two die of dengue, 445 get hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least two dengue patients died while 445 others were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of the deaths, one each were recorded in Dhaka South City Corporation and Barishal division.

With the new deaths and cases, the death toll rose to 127 while the total number of cases rose to 32,946.



Dharla erosion renders hundreds homeless

S DILIP ROY, *Lalmonirhat*

The Dharla River, flowing through Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, continues to swallow farmlands, homesteads and vital infrastructure every day, leaving hundreds of families destitute.

Severe erosion has now gripped around 11 kilometres of the river's right bank, with at least 10 points facing critical threat.

In Kurul and Shiberkuti areas, the river's erosion has reached dangerously close to the town protection dam. Locals fear that if the dam collapses, the entire Lalmonirhat town will face devastation.

To address the crisis, the Water Development Board has drafted a Tk 300-crore "Right Bank of Dharla River Erosion Protection Project" for Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

The Development Project

Proposal (DPP) is currently awaiting approval from the Ministry of Water Resources.

According to WDB estimates, the Dharla devours 500-600 bighas of farmland and over a hundred homesteads each year, causing



losses worth more than Tk 150 crore annually. Officials say constructing a permanent embankment along the 11-km stretch could significantly curb the damage.

"I have lost 12 bighas of farmland and my homestead to the Dharla," said Dinesh Chandra Sen, 70, a

farmer from Moghalhat area. "Now my family lives on someone else's land. The river has taken everything from us. Unless a permanent project is built, hundreds more families will lose everything."

Kasem Ali, 65, of Kurul area, said he lost 10 bighas of land over the past four years, with another two bighas disappearing recently. "Now I have only three bighas left, and even that is under threat," he said.

Contacted, Lalmonirhat WDB Executive Engineer Shunil Kumar said, "We have completed the field survey. The project is now with the Ministry of Water Resources and will go to the planning ministry next. Once approved and funded, work will begin immediately."

"If implemented, the project will significantly reduce the annual losses that riverside people face due to erosion," he said.

26 minority candidates

FROM PAGE 3

Association, and several cultural groups. This panel has also fielded six Hindu, three Buddhist, and two Christian candidates. Eight panels have announced candidates for the polls.

Minority candidates and student leaders say the lack of participation is mainly due to cyberbullying, ethnic and religious hatred spread through social media, and family restrictions.

According to the Indigenous Students' Association, around 150 Chakma, Tripura, Garo, Santal, Tanchangya, Marma, and Hajong students study at JU.

The Sanatan Students' Association said over 1,000 Hindu students are enrolled. There are also Buddhist and Christian students.

However, their representation in the Jucu election remains low.

Sukanta Barman, contesting for the post of education and research secretary, said, "A major reason for low indigenous participation is cyberbullying and the

spread of ethnic hatred."

Igimi Chakma, candidate for drama secretary and president of the Indigenous Students' Association, said she faced cyberbullying during the attacks in the Hill Tracts last year.

"I had to delete my Facebook account, as fake pages regularly targeted and abused us," she said. "In such an environment, how can students from minority communities feel encouraged to contest the election?"

She urged Jucu to be a democratic and inclusive body and called for a cultural platform for indigenous students, promotion of their languages and traditions, and official holidays for major festivals.

Simanto Bardan, a candidate for transport and communication secretary, said minority students are often harassed online whenever they raise their demands. "They are immediately tagged and labelled whenever they speak up," he added.

Doli Rani Roy, a mass communication and

journalism student and sports secretary candidate at Priluta Hall Students' Council, stressed the need for an environment that is safe for women and minority students.

"Every student should be able to raise demands regardless of religion, ethnicity, or politics. Whoever gets elected needs to ensure this," she said.

Rezwana Karim Snigdha, associate professor of anthropology at the university, said, "Not only in Jucu elections, but also in leadership positions of cultural and social organisations on the campus, we never see indigenous or minority students."

"The reason is that we have failed to build their political agency. The power structure excludes them, and that exclusion is clearly reflected in the Jucu election," she added.


Bangla Academy
Dhaka-1000

Memo No. Cronis-1547/2025/282/2/BA Date: 01.09.2025

Invitation for Auction

Auction is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) of following goods.

SL	Tender ID	Name of the auction	Last downloading date & time	Tender closing date & time
1	1147487	Auction of unusable offset printing plates.	15.09.2025 17.00	16.09.2025 16.00

This is an online Auction, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration required in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). The fees for downloading the e-Tender Document/Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@procure.gov.bd/Contact Number: 16575).


Samir Kumar Sarkar
Director
Dept. of Administration, Human Resource Development & Planning
Bangla Academy, Dhaka 1000

GD-1936

STATUTORY NOTICE

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION, DHAKA, (STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 1494 OF 2025**

IN THE MATTER OF: An application under section 12 read with section 13 of the Companies Act, 1994.

AND

Optique Smart Solution Pvt. Limited **Petitioner.**

VERSUS

The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms (RJSC) and another. **Respondents.**

Notice is hereby given in the effect that an application under section 12 read with section 13 of the Companies Act, 1994, was moved before the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh by the petitioner for alteration (addition of new sub clause) of the object clause of memorandum of association of the company namely "Optique Smart Solution Pvt. Limited" The Hon'ble Company Judge Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel has admitted the said application on **20.08.2025** and Hon'ble Court directed the petitioner to publish notices within 03 (Three) weeks and to submit affidavit in compliance within **21st October, 2025** from publishing the said notices. Any person interested in the said application may appear before the Hon'ble Court. A copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of charges.

Mohammad Jamil Khan, Advocate,
Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Hall Room No. 02 (Main), Supreme Court Bar Association Bhaban, Shahbagh, Dhaka-1000. Mobile: +88-01911809525.

Notice

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 1479 of 2025**

IN THE MATTER OF:
An application under Section 12 read with Section 13 of the Companies Act, 1994 for confirmation of the amendment of object clauses of Memorandum of Association.

AND

IN THE MATTER OF:
Bit Body Bangladesh Ltd, represented by its Managing Director Mr. Miles Jacob Penn. **Petitioner**

-VERSUS-

The Registrar, Joint Stock Companies & Firms, TCB Bhaban (6th Floor), 1 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka - 1215 and others. **Respondents**

Notice is hereby given that an application under Section 12, read with Section 13, of the Companies Act, 1994 has been filed and moved before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh for confirmation of the amendment of object clauses of Memorandum of Association of Bit Body Bangladesh Ltd., and for direction upon the Registrar, Joint Stock Companies & Firms (RJSC) to record the amended copy of the Memorandum of Association of Bit Body Bangladesh Ltd.

The Hon'ble Justice Mr. Ahmed Sohel, presiding over the Company Court, was pleased to admit the said application on 25.08.2025 and directed the Petitioner to publish notices of the application and file affidavit in compliance on or before 22.10.2025.

Any person interested in the said application may appear on the date fixed for hearing, either in person or through their advocate.

Copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of charges.

SAJED SAMI AHAMMAD
Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Barrister at Law (Lincoln's Inn, U.K.), Attorney at Law (New York, U.S.A.)
AHAMMAD, JONAED & PARTNERS
Suite # B1, House #11/A-1, Road # 41, Gulshan 2, Dhaka
Room # 5029, SCBA Annex Building, Ramna, Dhaka

Notice

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 1455 OF 2025**

IN THE MATTER OF:
An application under Sections 81(2) and 85(3) read with Section 183 and 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 for condonation of delay in holding Annual General Meeting of Banker's Club of Bangladesh Ltd for the years of 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 and to relieve the officers, directors, managers, auditors etc. from any liabilities arising out of default for not holding the Annual General Meeting of the Company for the years of 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 & 2024 within the time specified, was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division comprising His Lordships "Mr. Justice Ahmed Shohel" and his Lordship was pleased to admit the application on 21.08.2025.

AND

IN THE MATTER OF:
Banker's Club of Bangladesh Ltd, represented by General Secretary Shafiqul Islam Faquir Pintu

Versus

Registrar, Joint Stock Companies and Firms and another

..... **Petitioner**

..... **Respondents**

Notice is hereby given that an application under Sections 81(2) and 85(3) read with Section 183 and 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 for condonation of delay in holding Annual General Meeting of Banker's Club of Bangladesh Ltd for the years of 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 and to relieve the officers, directors, managers, auditors etc. from any liabilities arising out of default for not holding the Annual General Meeting of the Company for the years of 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 & 2024 within the time specified, was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division comprising His Lordships "Mr. Justice Ahmed Shohel" and his Lordship was pleased to admit the application on 21.08.2025 and directed the petitioner to file an affidavit in compliance along with Audit Report.

Anyone who is interested regarding the matter may appear in the hearing either personally or through appointed Advocate. Copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned.

Advocate subject to make payment of the prescribed fees.

Barrister Md. Anwar Hossain
Advocate, Appellate Division
Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Address- Room No. 2031 (Annex), Supreme Court Bar Association
Annex Building, Shahbagh, Dhaka-1000
Phone- 01716170196

Ensure one-third

FROM PAGE 3

reserved seats, each formed by combining two constituencies, with nominations replaced by direct elections.

She recommended this arrangement remain in effect for a maximum of two to three terms.

Dr Nilofar Chowdhury Moni, former BNP MP, criticised the continued uncertainty over nominations for women, noting that political parties have wasted time instead of implementing the 33 percent representation mandated by the RPO.

She emphasised that women can participate equally if patriarchal attitudes in politics are challenged.

Advocate SMA Sabur, acting president of Oikya NAP, demanded political parties take effective steps to increase women's representation.

Barrister Shamim Haider Patwary, secretary general of the Jatiya Party, noted that constitutional

guarantees of gender equality remain largely unimplemented.

Ruhin Hossain Prince, general secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, highlighted the importance of raising awareness among women voters.

Maleka Banu, general secretary of Mahila Parishad, said women's participation in politics, economics, and society remains marginal, and urged that women contest both general and reserved seats while building their own constituencies.

Moderator Dr Fauzia Moslem, president of Mahila Parishad, stressed that according to Article 7 of CEDAW, implementation of women's political participation is the government's responsibility.

Saiful Haque, general secretary of the Revolutionary Workers Party, and Bazlur Rashid, general secretary of BASAD, also spoke.

4,000 ASIs to join police force before polls: IGP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is working to recruit at least 4,000 assistant sub-inspectors (ASIs) before the upcoming national election.

Of them, 2,000 will be selected directly through competitive exams and 2,000 will be promoted from the ranks of constable, Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam told reporters after a meeting with Public Administration Senior Secretary Md Mokhles Ur Rahman yesterday.

Meanwhile, Mokhles at the briefing said civil service postings are not being made through a lottery, nor will they be. "While the issue of postings through a lottery has been discussed, it does not seem logical for implementation."

Responding to a question, he said all necessary steps have been directed to the field administration to hold the upcoming elections "as a role model".

Strict measures will be taken if anyone attempts to show bias.

Two bodies recovered from Lohalia river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Police recovered bodies of two men from the Lohalia river in Patuakhali yesterday.

The deceased are Tuhin Hawlader, 25, a resident of Patuakhali municipality, and Rezaul, 28, an auto-rickshaw driver in the area, said Patuakhali's Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Imtiaz Ahmed.

He also said, "Both bodies have been sent to Patuakhali Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy. Investigation is underway to uncover the circumstances surrounding their deaths."

OC Imtiaz said that Rezaul left home with his vehicle Monday morning but did not return. That night, police recovered his vehicle from Kashipur road and his body was found in the river yesterday morning, he added.

Unicef warns of fallout from education funding cuts

AFP, United Nations

Millions more children around the world could end up out of school by the end of 2026 due to a forecasted plunge in international aid for education, Unicef said Tuesday.

Official development aid earmarked for education is expected to drop 24 percent by next year compared to 2023, or \$3.2 billion, the UN agency said.

It said 80 percent of this decline is linked to three donor countries: the United States, Germany and France.

If these cuts become reality, Unicef estimates that around six million more children could end up out of school by the end of next year, raising the total from 272 million to 278 million.



Chinese militia members march during a military parade to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two, in Beijing, China, yesterday. *Inset*, President Xi Jinping stands in a car to review the troops during the military parade. PHOTO: REUTERS

World faces ‘peace or war’

Says Xi as Putin, Kim join him for massive military parade in Tiananmen Square

AGENCIES

Chinese President Xi Jinping warned the world was facing a choice between peace or war at a massive military parade in Beijing yesterday, flanked by Russia's Vladimir Putin and North Korea's Kim Jong Un in an unprecedented show of force.

The event to mark 80 years since Japan's defeat at the end of World War Two was largely shunned by Western leaders, with Putin and Kim - pariahs in the West due to the Ukraine war and Kim's nuclear ambitions - the guests of honour.

Designed to project China's military might and diplomatic clout, it also comes as US President Donald Trump's tariffs and volatile policymaking strain its relations with allies and rivals alike.

"Today, mankind is faced with the choice of peace or war, dialogue



or confrontation, win-win or zero-sum," Xi told a crowd of more than 50,000 spectators at Tiananmen Square, adding that the Chinese people "firmly stand on the right side of history".

Riding in an open-top limousine, Xi then inspected the troops and cutting-edge military equipment such as hypersonic missiles, underwater drones and a weaponised 'robot wolf'.

Helicopters trailing large banners

and fighter jets flew in formation during a 70-minute showcase that culminated in the release of 80,000 'peace' birds, reports Reuters.

In a post directed at Xi on Truth Social as the parade kicked off, Trump highlighted the US role in helping China secure its freedom from Japan during World War Two.

"Please give my warmest regards to Vladimir Putin, and Kim Jong Un, as you conspire against the United States of America," Trump added. The Kremlin said Putin was not conspiring against the US and suggested Trump was being ironic in his remarks.

Donning a tunic suit in the style worn by former leader Mao Zedong, Xi earlier greeted more than 25 leaders on the red carpet, including Indonesia's Prabowo Subianto who made a surprise appearance despite widespread protests at home.

Xi, Putin, Kim and Iran challenge rules-based order

Says EU's Kallas

REUTERS, Brussels

EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said yesterday the leaders of China, Russia, Iran and North Korea - who appeared together at a military parade in Beijing - represented an "autocratic alliance" challenging the rules-based international order.

"While Western leaders gather in diplomacy, an autocratic alliance is seeking a fast track to a new world order," Kallas, the European Union's high representative for foreign and security policy, told reporters in Brussels.

"Looking at President Xi standing alongside the leaders of Russia, Iran, (and) North Korea in Beijing today, these aren't just anti-Western optics: This is a direct challenge to the international system built on rules."

"We are experiencing deliberate attempts to change the international order," Kallas said, in a subsequent speech. "China and Russia also speak of leading changes together not seen in a hundred years and the revision of the global security order."

11 dead in US strike on drug-carrying boat from Venezuela

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump said US forces had attacked a boat carrying drugs to the United States Tuesday, killing 11 "narcoterrorists" from a gang he alleged was controlled by leftist Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro.

Trump posted a video online of an open-topped speedboat carrying a number of people traveling on a body of water before it exploded in a ball of flames.

The move is a potentially significant escalation in the standoff between Caracas

and Washington, after the United States deployed eight warships to Latin America in what it bills as a war on drug trafficking.

Trump initially announced at the White House that US forces had "shot out a boat... a drug carrying boat, lots of drugs in that boat" without giving details.

The Republican later posted a statement about the strike on his Truth Social network, along with the black and white video of the exploding boat. "Earlier this morning, on my Orders, US Military Forces conducted a kinetic strike ...No US forces were harmed, Trump said.

21,000 children disabled in Gaza war: UN body

24 Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes

AGENCIES

At least 21,000 children in Gaza have been disabled since the war between Israel and Hamas began on October 7, 2023, a United Nations committee said yesterday.

Around 40,500 children have suffered "new war-related injuries" in the nearly two years since the war erupted, with more than half of them left disabled, said the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Israeli military moved deeper into Gaza City yesterday, with soldiers and tanks pushing into Sheikh Radwan, one of the urban centre's largest and most crowded neighbourhoods.

At least 24 Palestinians, some of them children, were killed by the military across Gaza yesterday, most of them in Gaza City, according to local health officials.



India orders states

FROM PAGE 12

abuse, drug trafficking, racketeering in fake travel documents, and currency (including crypto currency), and cyber crime, said the order.

According to the order, designated border guarding forces and the Coast Guard shall take steps to prevent illegal immigrants from entering India by capturing their biometric and demographic details and uploading them to the designated government portal before sending them back.

No foreign national holding a valid employment visa for India may accept a job in the private sector involving power, water, or petroleum supply without prior permission from the civil authority, the order added.

According to a provision outlined in the recent order under the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, foreign nationals are prohibited from producing - or attempting to produce - any form of publicly exhibited media content in India without prior written permission from the central government. This includes feature films, documentary

films, reality television, commercial television serials, web shows or series, and any other mode or medium that may be specified by the government over time. The directive applies not only to direct production but also to any involvement in initiating or facilitating such content, and is subject to specific conditions set forth by the authorities.

Applying restrictions on mountaineering expeditions, the Indian home ministry said no foreigner or group of foreigners shall climb or attempt to climb any mountain peaks in India without obtaining prior permission in writing from the central government, and without specifying the route to be followed, the attachment of a liaison officer, and the use of photographic, and wireless communication equipment.

Besides, any foreigner will be required to obtain a permit to enter into or stay in any protected or restricted areas of India. Anyone of Afghan, Chinese, or Pakistani origins will not be allowed to visit such restricted areas, it said.

India's restricted areas include the

entire states of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Sikkim, parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan, among others.

The Indian home ministry also said that individuals may be denied permission to leave the country if their presence is required by any court, if they are suffering from diseases endangering public health or safety, or if their departure could harm relations with a foreign state.

Foreigners will also not be allowed to exit under specific orders issued by the Indian government or by any law enforcement authorities, or other government agencies.

The Bureau of Immigration shall maintain an updated list of foreigners denied entry into India or not granted permission to leave the country, added the order.

Keywords: India, foreigners in India, undocumented immigrants, immigrants in India, travel, India tourism, visit India, rules for foreigners visiting India, Indian home ministry



TITAS GAS TRANSMISSION & DISTRIBUTION PLC
(A COMPANY OF PETROBANGLA)
"Titas Gas Bhaban", 105, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue,
Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh.

Ref. No. 28.13.0000.000.034.07.0018.25/OTM-02Date: 03/09/2025

e-Tender Notice (OTM)
The e-Tenders have been invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of the Goods as follows :

Sl No.	Tender ID, Tender Invitation Reference No & Publishing Date	Description of Goods	Tender Last selling/ downloading Date & Time	Tender Closing & Opening Date & Time	Last Date & Time of Depositing Tender Security
1.	1148157, 28.13.0000.000.034.07.0018.25/Tire and Tube(RE), Date: 03-Sep-2025	Procurement of Vehicle Tire & Tube	17-Sep-2025 16:00 PM	18-Sep-2025 12:00 PM	18-Sep-2025 11:30 AM
2.	1148138, 28.13.0000.000.034.07.0018.24/Battery, Date: 03-Sep-2025	Procurement of Vehicle Battery	17-Sep-2025 16:00 PM	18-Sep-2025 12:00 PM	18-Sep-2025 11:30 AM

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


(Shah Md Al Mahmud)
Deputy General Manager (Purchase)

GD-1941



ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED
395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka-1208

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

EDCL invites **Two Envelope System** International Tender for Punch & Dies for Double Rotary Tablet Compression Machine for EDCL Gopalganj Plant on C & F©Dhaka by Air & Chittagong by Sea basis :-

S.L No.	Tender No. Date	Name of the Item	Cost of Tender Schedule	Last date of Closing & opening
01.	IMP/Punch & Die/SEM/18/ 2025-2026 dated 03-09-2025	Supply of varians types of Punch & Die (specification as per tender schedule): (Double Envelope System) 1. Punch & Die	TK. 1000.00/set Equivalent to US\$ 8.00 Non-refundable	Closing : 29/09/2025 At 11.00 AM Opening : 29/09/2025 at 11.15 AM

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of Essential Drugs Company Limited, Dhaka on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

The tender will be accompanied by an amount of Earnest Money in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order/ Bank Guarantee from any Schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favour of "Essential Drugs Co. Ltd." without which the tender will be considered as non-responsive.

EDCL authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

N.B: This Information is also available at our Website: www.edcl.gov.bd

Deputy General Manager
Procurement (CC)
For : Managing Director

Size : 5 Inch x 4 Culmn

Government of the People Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Upazila: Savar, District: Dhaka
Web portal: www.lged.savar.dhaka.gov.bd

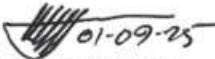
Memo No- 46.02.2672.000.14.001.25/ 1362Date: 01/09/2025

e-Tender Notice- 01/2025-2026

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System portal (OTM) (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) of the procurement of following Scheme listed below:

Sl No.	Tender ID	Name of Scheme	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
01	1144558	Construction of additional classroom Krisnopur Hasan Ali GPS under PEDP4. Package no: e-Tender/PEDP4/DHA/SAV/2023-2024/W2-06495	23- Sep-2025 16.00 hrs	24-Sep-2025 13.00 hrs	24-Sep-2025 13.00 hrs

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


(MD. MAYEEN UDDIN)
Upazila Engineer,
Savar, Dhaka
Phone- 02-224442695
Moliile-01708-161356
e-mail: ue.savar@lged.gov.bd

GD-1938

Who will answer for Habib’s death?

Stop systemic deprivation of workers, ensure their rights

We are outraged by the killing of a knitting worker at the Uttara Export Processing Zone (EPZ) of Nilphamari on Tuesday. Reportedly, workers of Evergreen Products Factory (BD) Ltd, a wig factory in the EPZ, were demanding termination benefits for several days after the factory authorities had laid off 51. Amid their protest, the authorities suddenly announced a two-day holiday, without paying workers’ salaries or termination benefits. Enraged, the latter blocked the nearby Nilphamari-Saidpur highway. As police, BGB, and army personnel were deployed to disperse them, a clash broke out, and at one point, law enforcers opened fire, injuring Habib and several others. However, Habib was reportedly not an employee of the factory in question; he worked at another factory. According to his elder brother, after finishing his night shift, he was leaving the EPZ when he was shot dead. That an innocent life was lost in a clash over rights is deeply unsettling, raising fresh concerns about how law enforcement agencies handle such situations.

Over the years, our workers, particularly in the apparel sector, have had to repeatedly resort to protests just to secure the most basic of rights. They often take to the streets over unpaid wages as many factories do not pay on time. During national festivals such as the two Eids, protests over unpaid dues have become a common sight. Sudden lay-offs have also become quite common. Unfortunately, when workers protest against such deprivation and arbitrary lay-offs, they almost always face heavy-handed responses from factory owners and law enforcement agencies. In the case of Evergreen Products Factory (BD) Ltd, the owners used the same tactic. The question is, why would they lay off workers without notice, and that too without providing them termination benefits? This is a clear violation of labour rights.

After the interim government came to power, it established the Labour Reform Commission with a pledge to uphold workers’ rights and welfare, and to eliminate the discrimination they systemically face. What has happened to those promises? Have we been able to guarantee minimum wage and other fundamental rights of our workers? The chairman of the labour reform commission recently voiced his frustration over the lack of progress in implementing its proposals. This is quite disheartening.

We urge the government to properly investigate the incident at Nilphamari EPZ and hold to account those responsible for killing Habib and injuring others. The owners of Evergreen Products Factory (BD) Ltd must also be held accountable for pushing the workers to a situation that ultimately led to casualties. In the new Bangladesh that was promised following the July uprising, in which workers had played a vital role, they must not face such violations and discrimination anymore.

A crucial step to restore judicial power

HC ruling raises hope of separation of powers but challenges remain

It is heartening to learn of a High Court ruling that the Supreme Court—not the president—will henceforth have the authority over the transfer, posting and discipline of lower court judges. According to a report, the court has scrapped Article 116 of the constitution, which had vested these powers in the president, as well as provisions of the Fourth and Fifteenth Amendments that upheld presidential control. The ruling thus restores the original 1972 provision of Article 116 that empowered the SC to oversee these activities. The court also ordered the government to establish a separate judicial secretariat. These changes, we must say, are quite significant and mark a crucial step towards ensuring judicial independence.

By restoring the highest court’s authority over lower court judges and magistrates, the ruling reaffirms the principle of separation of powers, which is essential for democracy. If implemented in letter and spirit, it can go a long way towards protecting the judiciary from political interference and strengthening checks and balances among various state organs. But the challenge, as always, lies in effective execution, without which the promise of this verdict may remain unfulfilled.

The court ruling followed a writ petition filed by several lawyers, and appears to be a nod to the relevant reform initiatives proposed by the Judiciary Reform Commission in early February. In its 352-page report, the commission, besides recommending the formation of a judicial secretariat and constitutional amendments to limit presidential powers in judicial appointments, had also suggested the creation of permanent High Court benches in all divisional cities, the formation of a permanent attorney service and an independent investigation agency, and enacting laws to ensure the transparent appointment of judges through a Supreme Court Judge Appointment Commission. Some of these proposals have already gained political consensus during discussions with the National Consensus Commission, including the decentralisation of HC benches and reforming the presidential clemency system.

The need for such reforms is compelling. Over the years, we have seen how deeply executive dominance has eroded the judiciary’s independence, compromised its functions, and undermined public trust, resulting in a culture of impunity and all sorts of macabre developments including mob violence. So ongoing reform initiatives, again if implemented in letter and spirit, may significantly reverse this trend and even extend judicial services to those previously underserved. One would, however, expect this process to unfold through an organised effort by the higher authorities, rather than through reactive measures such as verdicts on individual petitions. This point is further validated by the state’s reported stance on appealing the HC ruling at the Appellate Division, suggesting a conflict or difference that should not have existed.

Clearly, only with coordinated measures, a clear reform implementation timeline, and unwavering political will can the promise of judicial independence be fully realised.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Kodak camera patented

On this day in 1888, inventor George Eastman secured a US patent for his roll-film Kodak camera and trademarked “Kodak,” revolutionising photography. The lightweight, pre-loaded box camera made photography accessible to amateurs, and within a year, over 5,000 were sold.



Evolving Myanmar situation calls for a new Rohingya policy



Altaf Parvez is a researcher and political analyst.

ALTAF PARVEZ

This August marked eight years since the 2017 Rohingya influx into Bangladesh from the Arakan region. During this time, power changed hands in Bangladesh; many conferences were held both at home and abroad, but the Rohingya refugees could not be sent back. Instead, their arrival has continued. This raises the question: should Bangladesh rethink its Rohingya policy and strategy?

A chain of false hopes

From time to time, both during the previous government and after the mass uprising, false hope arose about Rohingya repatriation. In April 2023, a tripartite meeting was held in Kunming between Bangladesh, China and Myanmar. At the time, the Sheikh Hasina government said that by the end of that year, the Naypyidaw government would take back around 7,000 Rohingya on a trial basis. That never happened.

Earlier in November 2017, Bangladesh and Myanmar signed an agreement on the same issue. Bangladesh provided a list of eight lakh people who crossed the border, and Myanmar verified and gave clearance to an insignificant number of them. But not a single person was taken back.

In April this year, a key policymaker in Bangladesh announced that Myanmar had identified 180,000 Rohingya as eligible for repatriation, with an additional 70,000 awaiting final verification. This announcement sparked a wave of optimism, especially among members of a newly formed pro-government political party who created quite a stir on Facebook. The reality of what transpired in the ensuing months is known to all.

However, this year’s conferences on the Rohingya issue—one held in Cox’s Bazar in August, and the two upcoming ones in New York and Doha, in September and December, respectively—are creating another wave of optimism. They have had at least two positive outcomes. First, the Rohingya issue is regaining renewed international attention, at least to some extent. Second, some additional funds might become available for running the camps.

The fact is, amid the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, attention to the suffering of these displaced Muslims from Arakan has fallen sharply. These conferences will surely bring that back to the fore. Meanwhile, the sharp drop in camp funding is a major concern for Bangladesh. Through three consecutive conferences, Bangladesh will be able to inform the international community about the worsening financial crisis. That too is important.

But whether these conferences will pave the way for repatriation remains uncertain because the Rohingya’s return depends on internal and

international conditions. The situation in Arakan today does not suggest the possibility of a safe return or peaceful living for the Rohingya.

Right now, Rohingya armed groups are fighting with Arakan Army (AA) guerrillas. Earlier, some Rohingya were seen fighting for Myanmar’s armed forces against the AA. These incidents will only deepen the hostility between the Rakhine people and Arakan Muslims.

Many say the Rohingya can only return if they are granted ethnic recognition and citizenship rights. They are not included in Myanmar’s list of ethnic groups. As a result, they are excluded from the country’s citizenship laws. Even if the Myanmar government resolves these issues, the Rohingya’s return to Arakan will not be easy until the AA and the local Rakhine community accept them.



Even if the Myanmar government recognises the Rohingya as an ethnic community and gives them citizenship, their return to Arakan will not be easy until the AA and the local Rakhine community accept them.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

Since the situation in Arakan has changed drastically between 2017 and 2025, the Myanmar government alone cannot ensure their safe return. The situation on the ground suggests changing currents. Even if the AA agrees to take the Rohingya back in exchange for some material benefits from Bangladesh, unless the local Rakhine community is ready for a peaceful coexistence, the Rohingya will be forced to flee again. That has been happening repeatedly since 1978-79.

Against such a backdrop, it is worth considering how far the current fighting between the Buddhist Rakhine guerrillas and Rohingya helps improve the social environment across Arakan. If Rohingya leaders think they can secure dignity in Arakan through war, then Bangladesh must prepare for a different situation. Bangladesh may

face hostility from the AA in that case. The Rohingya issue will become more complex, and the AA may act in such a way or seek such allies that would be harmful to Bangladesh. Perhaps, Myanmar’s central government is also hoping for such a situation that would help cover up many of its past crimes.

A completely new reality on the southern border

Unfortunately, because of the Rohingya issue, Dhaka has not been able to move forward with other bilateral issues of economic interest with Sittwe or Naypyidaw. Yet, it was urgent to increase social and economic ties in all these directions. Instead of improving relations with neighbours, our foreign ministry has always been more focused on Europe and America. However, in reality, our security depends most on those next to us.

For instance, the AA now controls 14 of Arakan’s 17 townships (equivalent to Bangladesh’s districts). The remaining three are under siege and may fall at any time. For our security and economic interests, this situation demands serious attention. Soon, the AA may take full control of all 30,000 to 35,000 square kilometres of Arakan. This new reality is forcing Bangladesh to rethink past considerations of the southern border.

It is therefore essential to review our Rohingya policy. If necessary, the Rohingya issue should be kept on a separate table, and diplomatic, economic and military gains and losses in relation to Myanmar should be assessed.

After December, Myanmar’s internal situation will also look different. If the military junta puts on a civilian mask through a national election, it can change its current, apparently conciliatory stance on the Rohingya issue. For now, they show willingness to talk only to gather global support in favour of the upcoming election. They have not made any real policy or military concessions.

Still, if Bangladesh can use the upcoming conferences to secure recognition of the Rohingya’s citizenship rights from the junta, that

would be a step forward. Since returning Rohingya from Bangladesh to northern Arakan would actually help the junta in their fight against the Rakhines, they might agree. They could even grant citizenship rights without recognising Rohingya as an ethnic group. If that happens, Bangladesh could reasonably pressure the AA too.

China and India’s closeness a new factor

Bangladesh needs China’s cooperation on the Arakan issue. Beijing has a strong influence over both the AA and the Naypyidaw government. But whether Bangladesh will seek China’s help in this matter, or succeed in convincing them, depends on the next elected government. China will likely wait until Bangladesh’s elections. Still, the interim government might raise the issue with China during discussions on the Teesta project.

At the same time, China and India are currently enjoying warmer ties, which may be a favourable condition for Bangladesh. India also has major investments in Arakan, like China. So, both countries want stability there. They do not want Bangladesh’s relations with the AA to turn sour. Bangladesh’s diplomatic challenge is to get China and India to influence both Myanmar’s military and the AA.

The hidden cost of cashless convenience



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SAMIRA TASNIM

Once upon a time, budgeting was a conscious ritual. We carried cash, set limits before a trip or shopping spree, and carefully balanced our spending to ensure we did not exceed our means. Today, that discipline is quietly eroding—not because we earn more, but because we spend differently. The rise of digital payments has made money feel intangible and, with that, our sense of control has weakened.

From mobile banking apps to cards and e-wallets, we now have effortless access to our funds anytime, anywhere. This ease has made impulsive spending part of everyday life. Dining out, spontaneous shopping, and quick weekend trips no longer require planning. The tap of a finger is enough. But this new convenience carries hidden consequences.

Nobel laureate Richard Thaler’s theory of mental accounting offers a

useful lens that can help us understand our changing spending habits in the digital age. People tend to assign money to specific mental categories, such as “salary,” “bonus,” or “vacation fund,” and treat each category differently. While this can help organise finances, it often leads to irrational choices. For instance, a festival bonus may feel like “extra” money and be spent freely, even while the same person holds low-interest savings and racks up high-interest debt. These decisions become even more distorted when using digital money. Unlike cash, which we physically see and feel, e-payments reduce the “pain of paying,” making spending almost effortless. Without the physical cues of cash leaving our hands, we lose the awareness that once kept our budgets in check. As Thaler’s work in behavioural economics reveals, such biases can override

rational decision-making, causing us to overspend and ultimately lose control of our financial well-being.

Another worrying trend is the demonstration effect. When we see others spending, we feel pressured to do the same. Whether it is friends dining out, colleagues going on expensive trips, or influencers flaunting their latest buys, we subconsciously follow. This social mimicry disrupts rational decision-making and leads to overspending, even among those who cannot really afford it. This irrational behaviour is further amplified by the use of digital money, as it removes the immediate concern of managing liquid cash, making spending feel effortless and less consequential.

But the implications go beyond personal finance. On a broader scale, these habits influence the economy itself. As e-money accelerates, the velocity of money—that is, how quickly money moves through the economy—increases. People are spending more frequently, pushing up demand. When demand outpaces supply, prices rise, ultimately contributing to inflation. This is not just theoretical; it is a real challenge facing many economies today.

Digital wallets, BNPL (Buy Now, Pay Later) schemes, and credit lines through apps further reinforce this illusion

of affordability, pushing individuals deeper into unnecessary expenditure. We therefore need to find a way out. We must revisit the forgotten art of budgeting in this digital era, striking a delicate balance. We must decide for ourselves where digital money enhances our lives and where it silently harms them. For essential transactions such as bills, groceries, transport, and medical expenses, digital payments offer safety and convenience. But for leisure spending, such as shopping or eating out, it may help to switch to cash or at least pre-allocate a fixed digital spending limit. This creates a psychological boundary and reinstates some of the lost discipline.

Not all money should be equally accessible at all times. Setting personal rules such as “I will only use cash for dining” or “I will disable one-click purchases on weekends” can reintroduce mindfulness into our financial lives. Financial literacy is not just about knowing how to save or invest. In today’s digital age, it also means knowing when not to swipe, click, or tap. If we do not draw the line ourselves, technology will not do it for us. And while e-money may be invisible, its consequences, from broken personal budgets to rising national inflation, are very real.

We need better education infrastructure to prevent primary dropouts



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NAWSHAD AHMED

In Bangladesh, physical infrastructure is still a major challenge in ensuring a safe and child-friendly learning environment, as well as quality primary education in the country. Educational infrastructure includes school buildings, classrooms, teachers' rooms, furniture, water and sanitation facilities, playgrounds and boundary walls. According to the Annual Primary School Statistics (APSS) 2024, there were a total of 118,607 schools under which 65,567 (55.3 percent) were government primary schools, and the rest were kindergartens, NGO-run schools and religious schools, providing primary education in Bangladesh. There were 383,624 teachers in government primary schools in 2024, of whom 252,704 were female. Primary education in Bangladesh consists of six classes—pre-primary to grade 5—with a total enrolment of about two crore students in 2024 across Bangladesh.

According to the APSS 2024, 13,519 (20.4 percent) government primary schools in Bangladesh operate on a single-shift basis. This means that four out of every five schools (79.6 percent) continue to operate on a double-shift basis. Over the years, the student-teacher ratio has improved in government primary schools; it was 1:28 in 2023. However, classroom congestion (student classroom ratio among the division ranged from 28 to over 37), along with the high prevalence of double-shift schools, affects the academic performance, resulting in a high proportion of children dropping out.

The government is committed to converting all double-shift primary schools to single-shift schools. The objective is to improve quality, inclusivity and equity in primary education by increasing contact hours. In double-shift schools, learning time is short, creating inequality in the delivery of education. To address the weakness posed by the current double-shift system, the number of classrooms needs to be increased, as there is a huge shortage of classrooms. At the same time, the number of teachers in government primary schools must be increased.

In Bangladesh, between 30 and 32 lakh children are born every year. The net enrolment rate was 94.55 percent in 2024. The country is yet to achieve the 100 percent enrolment target. A total of 52,048 government primary schools are currently operating on a double-shift basis, and the number of classrooms must be increased to convert the remaining double-shift schools to single-shift schools, as per the standards set out in the Infrastructure Planning Guidelines adopted by the Directorate of Primary Education in 2018. The guidelines aim for a reasonable student-classroom ratio to prevent overcrowding.

Through the fourth Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP4), the government planned to build 50,500 classrooms, teachers' rooms and head teacher rooms, many of which are still under construction. The number of single-shift schools increased from 9,112 in 2017 to 13,519

in 2024. This is considered slow progress towards the targeted achievement of 100 percent single-shift schools in the country.

Over the past decade, Bangladesh has significantly reduced dropout rates in primary education, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). The dropout rate is a crucial indicator of success in primary education. Although the dropout rate decreased significantly between 2010

percent in 2024—may have been caused by early entry into the labour market. In that case, child labour in the country is likely to rise. Compared to boys, girls' dropout rate rose marginally from 12.32 percent to 13.36 percent between 2023 and 2024. For both genders, classroom congestion and the prevalence of a high percentage of double-shift schools can also be contributing factors to the increased dropout. These factors

infrastructure, including the construction of new classrooms, as well as the reconstruction, repair and maintenance of existing schools. This will impact the achievement of the desired academic outcome. The education sector budget received around 1.72 percent of GDP in 2025-26, which is much lower than 4-6 percent, recommended by the Education 2030 Framework for Action. It is a global document, adopted by UNESCO Member States in 2015, providing guidelines for the implementation of SDG 4. To achieve SDG 4 by 2030, the government must take all required measures to regain the progress made towards universal basic education, including raising the amount of educational stipend, involving students and parents in school planning and management, investing in all aspects of school infrastructure, prompt recruitment of teachers, and undertaking educational campaigns.

Particular attention must be given to primary school teachers' training to improve educational quality. The 67 primary training institutes (PTIs) and 505 upazila resource centres in the country play a vital role in enhancing primary school teachers' capacity, ensuring that new teachers are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively teach at the primary level. The PTIs are also involved in curriculum development, monitoring the quality of primary education, identifying areas for improvement and promoting the expansion of primary education access. However, many PTIs do not have enough training rooms and hostels. Some are housed in very old buildings that require reconstruction. The situation of upazila resource centres is similar, with many requiring additional training rooms and offices to run smoothly. Therefore, along with the primary schools, primary teachers' training centres and primary school education offices need proper infrastructure to work smoothly for the upliftment of primary education in Bangladesh.



Classroom congestion, a contributing factor for increased dropout, can significantly limit quality contact hours, leading to low academic performance. PHOTO: COURTESY

and 2024 from 39.8 percent to 16.25 percent, compared to last year (13.15 percent) the rate increased slightly. Boys have a higher dropout rate than girls across all grades. The increase in the dropout rate is alarming, meaning a significant portion of children are not completing the full primary education cycle. One reason for the high dropout rate cited in the APSS 2024 is rising living costs due to inflationary pressures, which leads to families prioritising short-term economic survival over continued schooling for their children. The sharp increase in the dropout rate among boys—from 14.12 percent in 2023 to 19.02

significantly limit quality contact hours, leading to low academic performance.

The high proportion of double-shift schools reflects challenges that should be overcome by increasing the primary education budget to convert all double-shift schools to single-shift schools, ensuring sufficient classrooms, and recruitment of more teachers. In the current fiscal year's national budget (2025-2026), planned education sector outlays constitute 12.1 percent of the total budget (Tk 95,644 crore), of which primary education has been allocated Tk 35,403 crore. This is not adequate for building sufficient educational

Strategic autonomy has become a survival necessity for us



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ALAUDDIN MOHAMMAD

For Bangladesh, the phrase "strategic autonomy" is no longer an abstract policy slogan—it is becoming a survival necessity. The country's economic structure, geographic realities, and political constraints form a tight web of dependencies that limit its ability to make fully independent choices. A closer look at the numbers shows the risks are not theoretical. They are real, measurable, and growing.

From a strategic standpoint, Bangladesh's position is shaped by the intersecting interests of major powers. The United States views the Bay of Bengal as a strategic node in its Indo-Pacific agenda, seeking closer defence and maritime cooperation. India, as the immediate neighbour with 4,096 kilometres of shared border, holds both leverage and overlapping security concerns, while China's deepening economic and infrastructure footprint, particularly through ports and energy projects, adds another layer of complexity. Russia, though less directly present, engages through defence sales and political alignment, while the EU's concern lies mainly in trade security and maritime stability, given its heavy import dependence on Bangladeshi goods. Other regional actors, including Japan and Australia, are also increasing engagement, recognising Bangladesh's strategic maritime location. This convergence of competing interests creates opportunities but also vulnerabilities, making autonomy increasingly urgent.

Bangladesh's economic base is alarmingly narrow. On the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index, it scores 0.88—almost 10 times the developing country average of 0.09. The RMG industry accounts for 80 percent of exports, when experts suggest no single sector should exceed 20 to 30 percent. With knitwear and woven garments included, textiles alone bring in over 85 percent of earnings. Buyers are equally concentrated: the EU, US, and UK take 70 percent of exports, well above the safe threshold of 50 percent designated for any one market or region. Such heavy reliance means that a downturn or policy change in these regions could shake

the economy far more than it should. Imports also deepen dependency. In 2024, China supplied 28.57 percent of imports—almost double the 15 percent safety limit economists recommend. In 2023, the trade deficit reached \$20.42 billion, or 4.6 percent of GDP—four times the 1 percent sustainability benchmark. With India, the imbalance is stark, amounting to a \$9.22 billion annual deficit that carries political weight.

Financially, the weak spots are evident. Bangladesh attracts only about \$3 billion in FDI a year—0.4 percent of GDP, well below the 2.5 percent benchmark and just a fraction of Vietnam's \$39 billion. Remittances contribute \$33 billion,

The cost of dependence is already high for Bangladesh. The trade deficit drains reserves, while heavy export concentration increases volatility during global downturns, especially given reliance on garments. Political leverage tilts away from Dhaka as water disputes undermine agriculture and energy imports limit industrial flexibility.

or 6.03 percent of GDP—twice the safe 3 percent limit—making the economy exposed to shifts in host nations' policies. Geographically, Bangladesh shares 76 percent of its borders with India and depends on the sea for 93 percent of trade, leaving it vulnerable to regional naval influence.

Water disputes with India add another dimension of risk. The two countries share 54 rivers, but between 1997 and 2016, Bangladesh received less than its treaty-mandated share in 65 percent of critical dry periods. In March-May alone, India fell short in 39 of 60 cases. Under the Ganges Water Treaty, dry seasons in 2010 and 2016 saw 44 to 49 percent less water than agreed. These shortages have tangible effects, reducing 20 percent of fisheries income and undermining about 5 percent of GDP linked to sea-

based activities.

Maritime security is equally weak. With nearly all trade conducted by sea, the vulnerability is stark. Over a recent five-year period, 411 fishermen were killed and 1,000 were injured by maritime criminals. Defence spending is just 1.4 percent of GDP, well below the regional average of 2.5 percent, leaving significant gaps in deterrence and rapid response.

Looking across the indicators, Bangladesh scores only 2 out of 10 in economic diversification, when at least 7 is needed. Its top 20 products make up 80 percent of exports, compared to 37 to 59 percent for countries such as China, India, and Vietnam. Energy dependency is another glaring weakness—80 percent of energy is imported, with security metrics rating the country at 2 out of 10. Diplomatic flexibility stands at 5 out of 10, against a target of 8, while institutional capacity for independent decision-making is just 3 out of 10, where 7 is desired. Trade diversification scores 4 out of 10, but should be at 7. On average, Bangladesh records a strategic autonomy gap of only 3.7 out of 10.

The cost of dependence is already high. The trade deficit drains reserves, while heavy export concentration increases volatility during global downturns, especially given reliance on garments. Political leverage tilts away from Dhaka as water disputes undermine agriculture and energy imports limit industrial flexibility. The imbalance with India also serves as a potential bargaining tool in bilateral negotiations. Security risks are equally acute: maritime reliance makes almost all trade vulnerable, and porous land borders combined with underfunded defence capacity create layered challenges that affect stability.

Credible analyses underline these risks. UNCTAD and the Harvard Growth Lab point to economic concentration, SIPRI highlights dependence on foreign defence supplies, the IEA and IEEFA stress imported energy reliance, while UN Comtrade and OEC reveal limited trade breadth. Studies from Springer and the Atlantic Council describe cautious multi-vector diplomacy that restricts policy manoeuvrability.

Regional examples show that alternatives exist. Vietnam once faced a similar over-reliance but broke out by diversifying exports and drawing in large volumes of FDI. Singapore, despite its small size and lack of resources, secured autonomy through trade diversification and strong diplomatic networks. South Korea transformed from an aid recipient into an industrial power

with independent decision-making capacity.

The broader picture for Bangladesh is troubling: notable economic fragility, significant geopolitical pressures, and a clear shortfall in strategic independence—hardly the profile of a nation fully steering its own course. Strategic autonomy, in this context, is not a lofty ideal but a necessity. It is about avoiding situations where

external forces—whether markets, neighbouring governments, or supply chain disruptions—can dictate national outcomes. It means loosening the chokehold of export and import concentration, strengthening institutions to make independent decisions, and ensuring defence and energy security.

The urgency lies in the compound nature of the risks. An economic shock

could coincide with a water dispute, or a maritime security crisis could erupt alongside an export downturn. For Bangladesh, the question is not whether to pursue strategic autonomy but how quickly it can achieve it. The data, in all its unforgiving precision, points to the same conclusion: dependence already comes at a high price, and the cost will only rise if the country delays transformation.

বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন ডিউটি ফ্রি অপারেশন পর্যটন ভবন, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৭। www.parjatan.gov.bd	
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২ সংস্থা	বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন
৩ আহ্বানকারী ইউনিটের নাম	ডিউটি ফ্রি অপারেশন্স
৪ তহবিলের ও ব্যয়ের উৎস	বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন এর নিজস্ব তহবিল
৫ আহ্বানকারী ইউনিটের জেলা	ঢাকা
৬ যে কাজের জন্য দরপত্র আহ্বান করা হলো	বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন এর আমদানিভাবে বন্ডেড পণ্যসামগ্রী চট্টগ্রাম বন্দর, চট্টগ্রাম এবং হযরত শাহজালাল আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দর, ঢাকা হতে ছাড়করণ।
৭ ক্রয় পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি
৮ দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২১/০৯/২০২৫ (অফিস চলাকালীন)
০৯ দরপত্র জমাদানের তারিখ ও সময়	২২/০৯/২০২৫ খ্রি. বেলা ২:০০ টা। যদি দরপত্র গ্রহণের দিন কোনরূপ সরকারি ছুটি ঘোষিত হয়, সে ক্ষেত্রে পরবর্তী কার্যদিবসে বর্ণিত সময়ে দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে। অসম্পূর্ণ বা ত্রুটিপূর্ণ দরপত্র সরাসরি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
১০ দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	২২/০৯/২০২৫ খ্রি. বেলা ০৪:০০ টা। মহাব্যবস্থাপক, ডিউটি ফ্রি অপারেশন্স, পর্যটন ভবন, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৭ এর অফিস কক্ষে দরপত্র দাতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) খোলা হবে
১১ দরপত্র বিক্রয়কারী কর্মকর্তার নাম ও ঠিকানা	ক. ব্যবস্থাপক, হিসাব (ভারপ্রাপ্ত), ডিউটি ফ্রি অপারেশন্স, বাপক, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৭ খ. উপব্যবস্থাপক (হিসাব), হোটেল অবকাশ, ৮-৩-৮৮, মহাখালী, ঢাকা-১২১৩
১২ দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবি ও ঠিকানা	ক. মহাব্যবস্থাপক, ডিউটি ফ্রি অপারেশন্স, পর্যটন ভবন, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৭ এর অফিসে সংরক্ষিত দরপত্র বাগ্ন এবং খ. ব্যবস্থাপক, হোটেল অবকাশ, ৮-৩-৮৮, মহাখালী, ঢাকা-১২১৩ এর অফিসে সংরক্ষিত দরপত্র বাগ্ন
১৩ দরদাতার যোগ্যতা	১. দরপত্রের সাথে নিম্নবর্ণিত দলিলাদি দাখিল করতে হবে: ক. হালনাগাদ ড্রেড লাইসেন্স; খ. হালনাগাদ সিএন্ডএফ লাইসেন্স; গ. হালনাগাদ ব্যাংক স্বচ্ছতার সার্টিফিকেট; ঘ. হালনাগাদ ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট; ঙ. হালনাগাদ আয়কর রিটার্নের সার্টিফিকেট; চ. প্রতিষ্ঠানের ঠিকানার সমর্থনে দলিলাদি/চুক্তিপত্র; ছ. বন্ডেড ওয়ারহাউজ এর মাশামাল ক্লয়ারেন্স কাজের ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ; জ. ঢাকা ও চট্টগ্রাম সিএন্ডএফ এজেন্ট এসোসিয়েশনের দর ও কমিশন প্রতিপালনে অঙ্গীকারনামা; ঝ. বিগত ০৩ (তিন) অর্থবছরে ০৩ (তিন) কোটি টাকার টার্নওভারের ব্যাংক প্রত্যয়নপত্র। ২. কাস্টমস, সিএন্ডএফ এজেন্ট এসোসিয়েশন অথবা অন্য কোনো প্রতিষ্ঠানের কাগজে তালিকাভুক্ত প্রতিষ্ঠান দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবে না।
১৪ দরপত্রের মূল্য	৫,০০০.০০ (পাঁচ হাজার) টাকা মাত্র (অফেরতযোগ্য)
১৫ দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবি ও ঠিকানা	মহাব্যবস্থাপক, ডিউটি ফ্রি অপারেশন্স, পর্যটন ভবন, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৭
১৬ অন্যান্য তথ্যাদি জানার জন্য যোগাযোগকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবি ও ঠিকানা	ব্যবস্থাপক (সংগ্রহ), ডিউটি ফ্রি অপারেশন্স, পর্যটন ভবন, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৭
১৭ পার্শ্বিক প্রাক্‌উরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ অনুযায়ী এই সিএন্ডএফ এজেন্ট মনোনয়ন কার্যক্রমে পরিচালিত হবে এবং বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন কোনো কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে এই কার্যক্রম সংশোধন ও বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।	
মুহাম্মদ আতাউর রহমান সিস্করী উপসচিব মহাব্যবস্থাপক, ডিএফও ফোন: ০২- ৪১০২৪২২৮ (অফিস)	
GD-1939	

Mondera set to show off her dance chops

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

With just two films under her belt, Mondera Chakroborty has already managed to gain a massive following on social media. Her soothing expressions and alluring screen presence have made her one of the most talked-about actresses.

"I have been in the industry since 2012, but I didn't do much work back then. When I started working in films, I thought that I would be doing a lot more. When my first film, *Kajol Rekha*, was released in theatres during Eid, I was really anxious about how the audience would accept me. But when I visited the halls, people showered me with immense love."

She continued, "Honestly, when I watch myself acting, I feel embarrassed. I keep noticing my flaws and feel like I'm not giving my best. Yet, when people come up and compliment my performance. It feels

like a true blessing." Mondera has been passionate about the art form since she was three years old.

"Dance has always drawn me in too. I have participated in numerous competitions, including *Channel i Shera Nachiye*. The last time I counted, back in 2014-2015, I had around 70 certificates. Although I don't get to practice much nowadays, I still want to continue dancing whenever I can," she revealed.

This year, Mondera is set to step onto the stage for her first-ever performance at the Blender's Choice–The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards. "I am really excited since this will be my first performance at a big event. My background is in classical dance, especially *Kathak*, which I've practiced for a long time. But people haven't really seen me perform much in Western styles. Maybe this time they'll get to see that," she said.

Recently, her glamorous birthday

photoshoot sequence went viral on social media. She spoke about it, "Simply cutting a cake felt too ordinary. In other countries, people often do themed birthday shoots, so I thought, why not try it too?"

Mondera's glamorous avatar is undeniable, but it can sometimes make it difficult for actors to land challenging roles. She, however, is determined to break that mould. "The two characters I played in *Kajol Rekha* and *NeelChokro* were both sweet and simple. They were different in their own ways, but as an actress, I know I can take on a variety of roles. I've even said in interviews that if I were offered the role of a villain, I would be able to pull it off perfectly. I want people to see me in a different light," she concluded.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Jaya Ahsan-starrer 'Fereshteh' set for theatrical release



Bangladesh-Iran co-production *Fereshteh*, starring Jaya Ahsan, is expected to hit local theatres this month, with September 12 being discussed as a possible release date. Star Cineplex and Lion Cinemas officials confirmed discussions are ongoing, while Lion Cinemas recently teased the release on its Facebook page.

Directed by Iranian filmmaker Morteza Atashzamaz, the film portrays the struggles and resilience of underprivileged families. The cast also includes Sumon Faruk, Rikita Nandini Shimu, Shahiduzzaman Selim, Shahed Ali, Shahin Mridha, and child artiste Sathi.

Jaya, who co-produced the film, has already received international praise for *Fereshteh*, which was completed in 2022 and screened at several global film festivals.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Guardians of the Gods'

The play *Guardians of the Gods* is a collaboration between Prachyanat (Bangladesh) and Unga Klara (Sweden), exploring childhood in an adult-ruled world. Written by Erik Uddenberg and directed by Gustav Deinoff, the play has toured 11 countries, giving voice to children's experiences as a powerful global theatrical project.

DATE: SATURDAY | SEPTEMBER 6, 2025
TIME: 7PM AND 8.15PM
VENUE: ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE DE DHAKA, DHANMONDI

Chanchal Chowdhury receives Bengal Int'l Excellence Award



Chanchal Chowdhury was honoured with the Bengal International Excellence Award at the fifth edition of the ceremony, held alongside the second Kolkata Ratna Samman at a Kolkata hotel on August 31.

He received the award for his outstanding contribution to acting from Bollywood actress Mandakini and entertained the audience by singing *Shada Shada Kala* on request.

The event, organised by Ad-Mrin Entertainment, also honoured Rituparna Sengupta, Laboni Sarkar, Abir Chatterjee, Kaushik Banerjee, Surajit Bandopadhyay, singers Lagnajita and Anik Dhar, filmmaker Gautam Ghosh, and footballer Dipendu Biswas.

On the work front, Chanchal is set to star in Bratya Basu's *Shekor* next and is also in talks for Amitabh Bhattacharjee's *Tridhara*.

NEWS

Inaugurated 20 days ago

FROM PAGE 12

BPC director (operations), said, "This is not a major issue. The pipeline was formally inaugurated as part of the handover process of the project. Once oil is supplied regularly through the pipeline, this problem will not persist."

The state-owned BPC spent around Tk 3,699 crore from its own coffers to complete the project. Bangladesh Army's 24th Engineer Construction Brigade is the project implementing authority.

The pipeline is expected to supply 27 lakh tonnes of diesel and save around Tk 200 crore annually by eliminating the hassle of time-consuming fuel transport via rivers, according to BPC officials.

It comprises two segments -- a 241.28km stretch from the port city's Patenga to Godnail via Feni, Cumilla, Chandpur, and Munshiganj, and an 8.29km segment from Godnail to Fatulla.

According to BPC officials, the anomalies were detected while fuel was transported from Patenga's Padma Oil and Jamuna Oil depots to Fatulla,

Cumilla, and Godnail during the trial runs in June-July.

The combined figure of the two state-owned distributors shows a total shortage of 3.39 lakh litres against the total supply of 3.34 crore litres of diesel, whose market value is Tk 3.45 crore.

Contacted, Mofizur Rahman, managing director of Padma Oil Company, and Qudrat E-Elahi, MD of Jamuna Oil Company, on Tuesday said they wrote to BPC regarding the issue.

According to a BPC official, the allowable wastage (loss) margin for pipeline fuel transport is 0.05 percent. As per the 2009 gazette, the allowable wastage during inland diesel transportation by ship is 0.17 percent.

BPC has established a wing named Petroleum Transmission Company (PTC) to operate the pipeline project. PTC Managing Director Raihan Ahmed told this correspondent yesterday that the 24th Engineer Construction Brigade is yet to hand over the project to them.

Project Director Colonel Sultan Mahmud said the handover process has already begun.

"The 250km-long project is being handed over in phases. By the end of this September, the project will be fully hand over to the PTC," said the PD.

Regarding the issues during the trials, he said, "Such technical issues can occur at the initial stage of any major project. Due to variations in temperature, pressure, and the density of diesel in this long pipeline, some problems may arise.

"Efforts are underway to resolve the issues. We are hopeful that through fine-tuning, the problems will be solved very soon."

The 250km pipeline crosses at least 22 rivers and canals, including 10 rivers, with large portions laid beneath the riverbeds. There are nine pumping stations along the pipeline.

Approved in October 2018, the project was initially scheduled for completion by December 2020 at an estimated cost of Tk 2,861 crore. However, construction delays led to cost escalation and deadline extensions -- first to December 2022 and then to December 2024.

SC ends uncertainty

FROM PAGE 12

Canteen, expressing satisfaction.

Farhad said, "In this case, no one has lost; since justice has been ensured, everyone has won. No conspiracy will be able to stop Ducsus."

Fahmida too said it was a matter of joy that the Ducsus was not postponed as that was not her objective when filing the appeal.

However, she told The Daily Star that there is still scope to challenge Farhad's candidacy. "I felt it was my responsibility [to challenge it], and that is why I did it. The rest, of course, is a matter for the court."

She said she still thinks that her appeal was valid as per the Ducsus constitution.

After filing her appeal, Fahmida

faced rape threats on social media from sociology student Ali Husen on Monday, which drew widespread condemnation.

Following a probe body's recommendation, the DU authorities yesterday suspended Ali Husen for six months.

Meanwhile, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, on its second day of protesting the rape threat, formed a human chain in front of the SC gate.

In the latest development, the university authorities decided to cancel the previously announced three-day closure centring the election. Instead, only polling day will be a holiday for the students.

Chief Returning Officer Prof Zashim Uddin said the number of polling booths has increased and the voting

hours have been extended as per students' demands.

Adding that they have prepared for a 100 percent voter turnout, he said, "As per our calculation, each voter will require eight minutes to cast their vote."

Additionally, the university authorities announced additional bus services for voters on polling day.

According to a press release issued yesterday, buses on all regular routes will run as per their usual schedule, while an extra trip will be added on four major routes -- Narsingdi (Wari-Bateshwar), Savar/Nabinagar (Hemanta), Bikrampur (Mawa), and Munshiganj (Idrakpur) -- to ensure the smooth commute of students traveling to the campus to vote.

Manifestos expose issues unresolved at DU

FROM PAGE 12

On food: most panels pledged subsidised meals. Pratirodh Parshad said it would not support private-owned canteens, instead vowing to establish university-operated cafeterias. The Shibir-backed panel did not mention direct subsidies but promised to introduce "special meal vouchers" for needy students.

On accommodation: all panels promised a "one seat per student" system at dormitories and vowed to end political exploitation of the seat crisis. Four panels also pledged to introduce "residential allowance" for those unable to secure dormitory seats. Chhatra Dal and Pratirodh Parshad did not include such initiatives.

On healthcare: Boishommo Birodhi Shikharthi Sangsad and Swatantra Shikharthi Oikya vowed to introduce insurance schemes to make specialised services affordable, while Oikyaboddho Shikharthi Jote proposed signing MOUs with private hospitals. Chhatra Dal and Pratirodh Parshad, on the other hand, promised to improve the university's own facilities.

However, food, accommodation, and health services are under the administration's jurisdiction, not Ducsus.

Three other panels are also contesting the central students' union and hall union elections scheduled for September 9.

According to the Ducsus constitution, its mandated functions include maintaining common rooms, providing indoor games, publishing journals and magazines, and arranging debates, cultural events, sports competitions, lectures, and social gatherings. Ducsus is also tasked with fostering social service

among its members through lectures, demonstrations, and exhibitions.

But candidates said they identified students' problems and placed their views on such issues because Ducsus also has a mandate to preserve and protect student rights.

On mandated duties, the most detailed plans came from Pratirodh Parshad. It promised to create separate practice rooms for students of dance, drama, music, and fine arts; revamp hall auditoriums; publish magazines; and organise traditional folk festivals. It also pledged to create a sports calendar, expand library facilities, and increase the number of common rooms.

Chhatra Dal promised to organise inter-hall and inter-department tournaments, youth festivals for cultural and creative activities, and promote student involvement in drama, short films, photography, drawing, and recitation.

The Boishommo Birodhi panel pledged to upgrade student clubs and turn TV rooms in dormitories into mini-cinemas, while Swatantra Shikharthi Oikya promised to renovate basketball courts, table tennis facilities, and the central field.

Notably, none pledged to organise debates, despite this being a core responsibility of Ducsus. Instead, they promised seminars, workshops, research activities, and career fests.

The manifestos also reflected aspirations to transform DU into a research-based, top-class institution. Currently, the university allocates only around 2 percent of its budget to research. Pratirodh Parshad pledged to increase this to 10 percent, while

the independent panel proposed 20 percent. The other panels did not specify figures but vowed to improve the situation.

Most panels also pledged to introduce a university-owned transport system with increased routes and trips; extend entry time limits for female dormitories; enhance campus security both on and off site; and protect the greenery of the campus.

Contacted, former DU Prof Abul Kashem Fazlul Haq said, "Since independence, no political party has focused on student issues. Instead, they used the crisis as a tool to mobilise political forces." He added that only the government's goodwill could resolve these problems.

We want ASEAN

FROM PAGE 2

"It is also important for us because the issue has become a burden for us... ASEAN should tell the rest of the world about the crisis we are facing," he added.

Charles Santiago said ASEAN parliamentarians visited Rohingya camps in 2018 and have since been following the issue.

"We are always trying to flag the Rohingya issue as an ASEAN issue. But I must confess, for the last two-three years we had been quiet because we were focusing on restoring democracy in Myanmar," he said.

The delegation also included Wong Chen, member of Malaysia's House of Representatives; Raoul Manuel, former member of the Congress, Philippines; and Chonlathan Supphaiboonlerd, the programme director of APHR.

Will base academic reforms

FROM PAGE 12

formed with the aim of building an overall student-friendly and inclusive campus, Nayem explained.

"We have been fighting for student rights for a long time. That is why I believe we will get strong support in the Ducsus election, and I am confident that the results on September 9 will reflect that."

Pledging to prioritise the fundamental issues faced by the students, he said, "There is no end to problems at Dhaka University. Making impractical plans over countless issues is futile. I will focus on ensuring four basic needs -- food,

education, accommodation, and healthcare.

"I will push for hall canteens to be run under the direct supervision of the university administration. I will also work to make the medical centre fully functional for 24 hours, set up medical corners in every hall, and establish pharmacies in hall areas."

A student of the Department of Communication Disorders, Nayem said his greatest strength was his communication with the students. "From my involvement in the struggle for ensuring students' rights, I can confidently say that I

will be better at dealing with issues professionally for students' rights. My engagement with students is stronger compared to other candidates, and I believe this is why students will vote for me."

However, he expressed concern over the Ducsus electoral environment. "The university administration is trying to give space to anti-liberation forces. Some panels and independent candidates have violated the electoral code, yet the administration has taken no action. There have even been attempts to give the incident of banner removal a political shape from a religious perspective."

Forming 'opposition union'

FROM PAGE 12

students' problems. As I live in the hall, I have first-hand experience of the issues, and I also know the problems non-residential students face. I want to work on these, and that's why I am contesting the election," he said.

Mahin added, "I want to initiate whatever is needed to build an ideal nation, starting from Dhaka University. My goal is to ensure equal opportunities for all students regardless of gender,

religion, or caste. Whenever needed, I will serve as the voice of the students."

On the election atmosphere, Mahin expressed concern: "The environment is not entirely satisfactory. Many have violated the code of conduct, yet the administration has taken no action. This has made larger political groups reckless. I think the level playing field has not been ensured. Still, I trust students to vote for the deserving candidate."

Expressing optimism about his chances, Mahin added, "I have always worked for students, and they know me well. I have not made flashy promises but realistic ones. I believe students will choose a candidate who offers practical solutions."

Mahin Sarkar was previously the joint member secretary of the National Citizen Party (NCP). The party expelled him after he fielded a panel in the Ducsus election without its approval.

Bamboo bridge only means for 10,000 people

S DILIP ROY

For more than three years, over 10,000 residents of eight villages in Phulbari upazila of Kurigram have been risking their lives daily by crossing the Nilkomol River on a single bamboo bridge.

The bridge connects Balatari and Chandrakhana villages under Phulbari Sadar union. Once, a wooden bridge stood there, but after it collapsed, no permanent structure has been built.

For 60-year-old farmer Ehsan Ali, the bamboo bridge is a reminder of heartbreak. His son Atikur Rahman, 36, fell from the bridge a year ago, was severely injured, and died after nearly a month of treatment.

"I myself have fallen twice and been hurt," Ehsan said. "All we get are promises. Nobody can say when a real bridge will be built."

Local college student Faruk Hossain, 19, also fell just a week ago. "I was injured, and my mobile phone was ruined. Accidents happen here almost every week. When the wooden bridge was here, it was safe."

Farmer Aktar Ali, 58, said, "For the past three years, we've been



building this bridge ourselves. Every year I provide around 50 bamboos, and others give labour. Even though I cross daily, it feels like I could fall any moment."

The bamboo bridge is the only route for people from Balatari, Chandrakhana, Jelepura, Kumarpara, Bamanatari, Abashon, Bairagipara, and Dashiara Chhara villages.

Contacted, Mamunur Rahman, Phulbari upazila engineer of the Local Government Engineering Department, said, "I visited the

site and have already submitted a proposal to build a 120-metre bridge over the river. I am pursuing approval from the higher authorities."

Phulbari UNO Rehenuma Tarannum said, "For the villagers' temporary movement, allocation has been made to build a bamboo-and wood bridge. Work will start very soon."

She said at the same time, LGED has been requested to build a permanent concrete bridge. The project proposal is awaiting approval and funding.

Govt must focus on urgent reforms

FROM PAGE 3

government's progress in promoting and protecting rights and democratic values in its first year in office.

During the visit, the delegation met the chief adviser, several advisers, and a cross-section of people, including students and rights activists.

"There is a sense of uncertainty and insecurity among many in Bangladesh," SAHR Co-chairperson Roshmi Goswami told the press conference.

"It is a unique moment in the history of Bangladesh. The uprising

was transformative, with a lot of aspirations and hopes for immediate change and a better future for all," she said.

Reading out a statement, SAHR Executive Director Deekshya Illangasinghe applauded the courage and energy of the youth who led the uprising against an authoritarian regime.

She also commended the interim government's swift formation of reform and consensus commissions.

However, she stressed the need for caution during this period of transitional justice, warning of possible residual influence from the

past.

She said the establishment of a truly egalitarian society will ensure that the vulnerable groups are protected.

She also said both the National Human Rights Commission and the Information Commission of Bangladesh remain "dormant" and must be urgently made functional to protect rights during the democratic transition.

Regretting reports of killings, arbitrary arrests, and intimidation of journalists over the past year, Deekshya said the right to information is a

cornerstone of democracy and cannot be curtailed.

She also expressed concern over the interim government's use of draconian laws enacted by the previous regime.

"The Cyber Security Act has been replaced with the Cyber Protection Ordinance, which still carries concerning provisions. In ushering in transformative change, the first responsibility of the interim government should have been to stop using these draconian laws," she said.

SAHR member Saroop Ijaz also spoke.

Brent

FROM PAGE 3

former ambassador Peter Haas resigned in mid-June last year. He served here about three years.

Since then, Helen LaFavre, deputy head of the US mission, and then Megan Bouldin, also deputy chief of the mission, had held the post of Chargé d'Affaires.

Tracey Ann Jacobson has been CDA at the US embassy in Dhaka since January 11 this year.

M e a n w h i l e , Ambassador Tareq Md Ariful Islam, who served as the permanent representative of Bangladesh to the UN Offices in Geneva, has been appointed the next ambassador to the US.

The post has remained vacant for months since Ambassador Asad Alam Siam was appointed foreign secretary in June.

A senior official at the foreign ministry told UNB yesterday that Tareq has moved out of Geneva to Washington DC.

Tareq served as Bangladesh envoy to Sri Lanka before his appointment as Bangladesh envoy to the UN offices in Geneva in June 2024.

Disinformation threatens

FROM PAGE 3

"Promote truth as a strategic asset of national power," he said. "The next war may not start with missiles. It may start with a manipulated video on your phone."

Lt Gen SM Kamrul Hassan, principal staff officer of the Armed Forces Division, said, "Misinformation and disinformation are no longer just social issues.

They are being weaponised to erode public trust, demoralise members of the armed forces, and interfere with democratic processes."

Prof SM Shameem Reza of Dhaka University said social media propaganda was eroding trust, fuelling instability and division, and risking democratic values. He warned that false content and deepfakes were

increasingly normalising violence and polarisation.

Prof Md Abu Yousuf, vice chancellor of Gazipur Digital University, Brig Gen Sufi Mohammad Moinuddin of the National Defence College, and Prof Md Mahbubur Rahman of the CSE department of MIST also spoke.

The seminar opened with a welcome address by Maj Gen Md Nasim Parvez, commandant of MIST.

Country sliding backward

FROM PAGE 3

is becoming increasingly difficult due to the absence of democracy and an elected government in Bangladesh.

He highlighted the growing gap between the interim government and the people, pointing out that there is no bridge between the two.

"We are witnessing a collapse in law and order, lack of security, and a business environment that's simply not viable. Factories are not receiving new investments because no one is willing to invest their time, money, or resources in this uncertainty," he said.

Despite hosting international summits and discussions, he pointed out that the country has failed to attract real investment.

Khosru said political parties must stop claiming credit for the mass uprising as a tool for their future politics.

"If we continue to fight over credit for the movement, Bangladesh has no future. The credit belongs to the people, to those who made sacrifices for the country, not to individuals," he said.

Khosru mentioned that true freedom fighters returned to their lives and work after the Liberation War.

"Those who fought on the front lines returned to their roles. Teachers went back to their schools, and students returned to their colleges. We need to move beyond the idea of using the freedom struggle for personal gain. It's time to focus on building the future of our country," he said.

PRAYER TIMING SEPTEMBER 4					
	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					

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Project Director

Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project

Directorate of Technical Education

Plot -F-4/B, Agargaon, Sher-E-Banglanagar, Dhaka-1207

www.asset-dte.gov.bd

Memo no.: 57.03.0000.051.07.880.254-2894

Date: September 02, 2025

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CONSULTING SERVICES – FIRMS SELECTION)

Bangladesh: Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project Credit No.: 6874-BD

Assignment Title: Selection of consulting firm for Fiduciary Review of the ASSET Project (Time based).
Reference No.: S88

The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The consulting services ("the Services") include conducting Fiduciary Review of the ASSET Project. The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment *can be found at the following website: www.asset-dte.gov.bd or can be obtained at the address given below.*

The Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project now invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The shortlisting criteria are:

- General Experience of the Firm (core business and years in business, details of business registration certificates, corporate documents).
- Experience in similar assignments of compatible size, complexity and technical specialty in the required area: Experience in Fiduciary review.
- Working experience in the development partner-funded projects will be an added advantage
- Corporate Capacity of the Consultant's organization.
- Key Experts will not be evaluated at the shortlisting stage.

Consultants are requested to submit, but not limited to, the following supporting documents in support of the above-mentioned criteria:

(i) Registration paper of the firm(s); (ii) Firm's brochures; and (iii) description of relevant assignments including nature, total cost, total input in terms of man month, employer, location of service etc.);

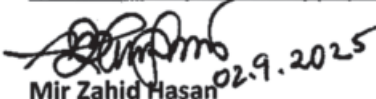
The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to *Section III, paragraphs, 3.15, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" July 2016 [Revised February 2020] ("Procurement Regulations")*, setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

Consultants may associate with other firms to enhance their qualifications but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a joint venture and/or a sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract, if selected.

The experience of sub-consultants will not be taken into consideration in the EOI stage. Please don't consider any sub-consultants at this stage. Each short-listed firm must show the rationale of association with the sub-consultant at the time of proposal submission and must be fully justified for due-diligence purpose.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the **Fixed Budget Based Selection (FBS)** method set out in the Procurement Regulations. Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours *ie. 09:00 to 17:00 hours (GMT+06:00).*

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by fax, or by e-mail) by September 18, 2025; 14:00 hours (GMT+ 06:00).


Mir Zahid Hasan
Project Director (Additional Secretary)
Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project
04th Floor, Directorate of Technical Education, Agargaon, Dhaka.
Phone: +880-2-410 24953
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বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় সংসদ সচিবালয়

কমন সার্ভিস


www.parliament.gov.bd

উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১.	প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম	:	বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় সংসদ সচিবালয়।
২.	অর্থের উৎস	:	জিওবি।
৩.	দরপত্র আহবানের বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বর ও তারিখ	:	নথি নং-১১.০০.০০০০.৬০৭.০৭.৮৭৮.২৫.১২৪৮ তারিখঃ ০২-০৯-২০২৫।
৪.	দরপত্রের ধরণ	:	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র।
৫.	প্যাকেজ নম্বর	:	নিরাপত্তা সামগ্রী ক্রয়।
৬.	কাজের সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ	:	বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় সংসদের নিরাপত্তা কাজে ব্যবহারের জন্য Binocular ও Under Vehicle Inspection Mirror ক্রয় সংক্রান্ত।
৭.	দরপত্রের সংখ্যা	:	০১টি।
৮.	সরবরাহের সময়	:	চুক্তি অনুযায়ী।
৯.	দরপত্রাদাতার যোগ্যতা	:	দরপত্র ভক্ষসিলের সাথে নিম্নবর্ণিত কাগজপত্র দাখিল করতে হবেঃ <div> <div>(১) দরপত্র ক্রয়ের মূল রশিদ;</div> <div>(২) ২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থ বছরের ট্রেড লাইসেন্স (সত্যায়িত);</div> <div>(৩) ২০২৪-২০২৫ কর বছরের আয়কর পরিশোধের সনদপত্র (কোম্পানীর ক্ষেত্রে তার সর্বশেষ আর্থিক বছরের পরিশোধিত আয়কর সনদ) (সত্যায়িত);</div> <div>(৪) বিন সার্টিফিকেট (সত্যায়িত);</div> <div>(৫) ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সার্টিফিকেট (বিজ্ঞাপন প্রকাশের তারিখ হতে দাখিলের সময়ের মধ্যে) (অরজিনাল);</div> <div>(৬) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের ক্ষেত্রে কমপক্ষে ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্র (সত্যায়িত);</div> <div>(৭) এনআইডি-র ফটোকপি (সত্যায়িত);</div> <div>(৮) প্রোপাইটার এর ০২ (দুই) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি;</div> <div>(৯) দরপত্র ভক্ষসিলের মূলকপি ও ডুপ্লিকেট কপি দাখিল করতে হবে;</div> <div>(১০) টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্টের মূলকপি ও ডুপ্লিকেট কপি পৃথকভাবে বাঁধাই করে আলাদা খামে জমা দিতে হবে; এবং</div> <div>(১১) দরপত্র ভক্ষসিলে উল্লিখিত অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী এক্ষেত্রে প্রযোজ্য হবে।</div> </div>
১০.	দরপত্র ভক্ষসিলের মূল্য	:	২,০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য)।
১১.	দরপত্র জামানত	:	দরপত্রের সাথে সহকারী সচিব, কমন সার্ভিস, বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় সংসদ সচিবালয় এর অনুকূলে ২২,০০০/- (বাইশ হাজার) টাকার পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/ব্যাংক গ্যারান্টি (ফেরতযোগ্য) দাখিল করতে হবে।
১২.	টেন্ডার ভ্যালিডিটি	:	দরপত্র দাখিলের দিন থেকে ১২০ (একশত বিশ) দিন।
১৩.	দরপত্র ভক্ষসিল বিক্রয়ের স্থান ও ঠিকানা	:	সহকারী সচিব (অর্থ-১), (দক্ষিণ-পশ্চিম ব্লক, লেভেল-৫, কক্ষ নম্বর-৫২৩) বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় সংসদ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা।
১৪.	প্রি-টেন্ডার মিটিং এর স্থান ও ঠিকানা, তারিখ ও সময়	:	সহকারী সচিব, কমন সার্ভিস, (দক্ষিণ-পশ্চিম ব্লক, লেভেল-৯, কক্ষ নং-৯২৪) বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় সংসদ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা এবং ২১-০৯-২০২৫ তারিখ সকাল ১১.০০ ঘটিকা।
১৫.	দরপত্র ভক্ষসিল বিক্রয়ের তারিখ ও সময়	:	০৯ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫ তারিখ সকাল ১০-০০ ঘটিকা হতে ২৯ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫ তারিখ অপরাহ্ন ৫-০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত (অফিস চলাকালীন)।
১৬.	দরপত্র দাখিল এবং খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	:	দাখিল : ৩০ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫ তারিখ, রোজ মঙ্গলবার, সকাল ০৯-০০ ঘটিকা দুপুর ১২-০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত। খোলা : ৩০ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫ তারিখ, রোজ মঙ্গলবার, দুপুর ১২-১৫ ঘটিকা। স্থান : উপসচিব (প্রশাসন-১) এর কার্যালয়, কক্ষ নম্বর-৭৪১, ব্লক-পূর্ব, লেভেল-৭ এবং জাতীয় সংসদ ভবনের মেইন অভ্যর্থনা কক্ষে রক্ষিত টেন্ডার বক্স।
১৭.	বিশেষ নির্দেশনা	:	কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন/সকল দরপত্র বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।
১৮.	টেন্ডার আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম, পদবি, ঠিকানা ও ফোন নম্বর	:	মোঃ আলী হাসান, সহকারী সচিব (কমন সার্ভিস), বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় সংসদ সচিবালয়, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭, ফোন নম্বরঃ ৫৫০২৮৯৮৮।

২। দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় সংসদ সচিবালয়ের www.parliament.gov.bd ওয়েবসাইটে পাওয়া যাবে।

জিডি-১৯২২


মোঃ আলী হাসান
সহকারী সচিব
ফোনঃ ৫৫০২৮৯৮৮

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

BRIDGING DIVIDES:

Aruna Chakravarti’s journey through Bengal’s hidden narratives

Review of ‘Rising from the Dust: Dalit Stories from Bengal’ (Om Books International, 2025), selected and translated by Aruna Chakravarti

MITALI CHAKRAVARTY

“You have done an excellent job. People who know English tell me that your translations are better than the originals,” said the late Sunil Gangopadhyay to Aruna Chakravarti on her translation of his writings.

This conversation took place at a Tagore Conference organised by the Sahitya Akademi in Kochi in 2011. By then, Aruna Chakravarti, an eminent writer herself, had bagged a Sahitya Akademi Award for her translation of Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay’s *Srikanto* (1917). She had started her journey into the world of translations by bringing Tagore songs to non-Bangali readers and then moved into prose translations, which include Sunil Gangopadhyay’s own novels.

Recently, she has put together and translated a collection of 12 short stories about the downtrodden from Bengal, *Rising from the Dust*. Some of these stories spread across the borders

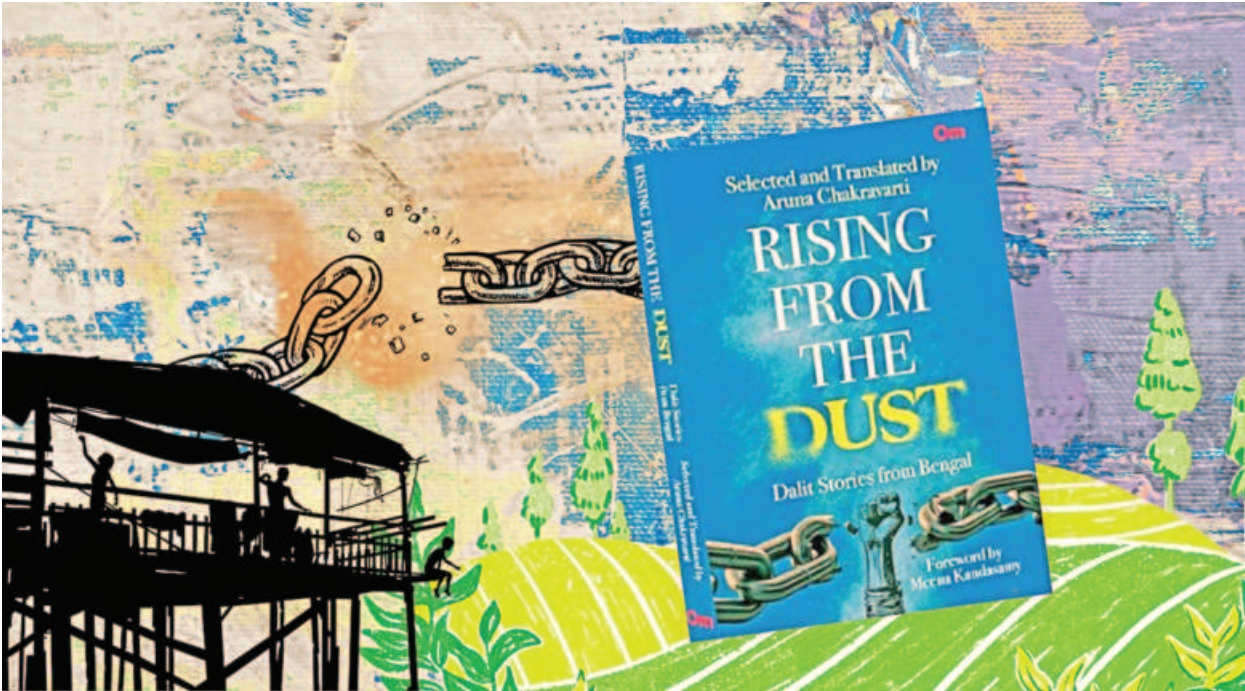


ILLUSTRATION: MAHMUDA EMDAD

Contemporary and historic issues are woven into these narratives to shake us out of torpor. While keeping the flavours of Bengal intact, these translations bring together the diverse cries of the suffering and downtrodden with their complex varied needs from a variety of backgrounds to a global readership. They cannot be put under a single label as the translator has pointed out in her note.

as, in those days, Bengal was united. The stories she has selected include erstwhile greats like Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Tarashankar Banerjee, Mahasweta Devi, and more modern voices like that of the late Prafulla Roy, the late Anil Ghorai, Manoranjan Byapari, Bimalendu Halder, Manohar Mouli Biswas, Nakul Mallik, and Kalyani Thakur Charal.

These narratives rip through our complacent bourgeoisie fabric to explore tribes like the Bedes, communities like Duleys, Vaishnavs, and many more heterogeneous groups—including refugees—that together create an image of rural Bengal with its plenitude and variety. And yet,

there are stories that are written by contemporary writers who themselves have risen from the dust to deluge the world with a flood of words begging for change. The narratives spanning time and contours are such that they create a sense of discomfiture in the reader, of dissatisfaction for the accepted societal norms.

Chakravarti with her selection uses translation to bridge cultures, bringing a myriad of colours within Bengal together for the reader. She has selected these stories with care. In an earlier interview, Chakravarti had claimed: “For me the most important consideration when taking up a translation project has been the literary value of the piece. I had to enjoy the process of translation and could only do so if I thought the subject worthwhile...The process also intensified my interest in Bengal and the evolution of its society, literature and culture. I was enthused to read and learn more.” Though Chakravarti lives outside Bengal—in New Delhi—her translations and writings revolve around Bengal. Her *Jorsanko* (Harper Collins, 2013) novels around Tagore and his family are perhaps the most wonderful recreation of his times and life in English. The stories in this collection are a reflection of what she claims to be of interest to her—

the evolution of society, culture, and literature.

The author has classics like Sarat Chandra’s “Abhagi’s Heaven”, where the discrimination faced by the Duleys is such that they are not even allowed a proper cremation. In Prafulla Roy’s “Snake Maiden”, her description of the dwelling place of Bedes, a tribe that deals with snakes and lives in harmony with nature, leaves one spellbound. Chakravarti translates: “When the first monsoon showers fall upon the earth, Sonai Bibi’s Bil awakes. Shaking off her torpor, she raises her face to the sky and drinks great gulps of pelting rain. Her contours change. She stretches and expands. Her newly awakened limbs unfurl and spread in all directions. To the north, south, east and west... all the way to the horizon. The river Meghna helps her. Swelling and frothing in a demonic dance she bursts her banks and makes her way into the fen. Wrapping her in a fierce embrace she turns her into a great sheet of waving water. Sensuous, joyous, seductive...”. Chakravarti skilfully recreates impactful dialogues with her linguistic prowess as can be seen in Mahasweta Devi’s “Nalini”. The oppressed Nalini—who was abandoned by her husband and works as a housemaid—goes against societal norms that would push

her deeper into pecuniary hardships. She rebels against the coercion of performing the last rites (sradha) for a spouse she had not seen in decades. She asserts her perspective with a barrage of questions, translated impactfully by Chakravarti: “Whose sradha must I spend my hard-earned money on? And why? Who’ll feed me if I lose my job? I’ll have to starve or beg in the streets.”

Rebellion against exploitation rings out again when Bimal Halder’s Chintay “Salt” rages against the false allegations made by the exploitative employer of her husband. She shouts when the employer suggests that her husband and his coworkers had run away with the equipment as they’d gone missing at work: “Of course, you don’t care if they are eaten by tigers and crocodiles. Why would you? What are you but an exploiter of your fellow human beings? A man of no morals. No feelings. Shameless! Selfish to the core!” And then she empowers other women to rise against such cruelty.

And yet, there are women who succumb to dehumanisation because of societal ills as in Tarashankar’s “The Witch” and Byapari’s “The Fortress”. While Shora from the Dom community is dehumanised and called a witch, Tarashankar offers us the beautiful Raikamal, a Vaishnavi, who rises above

castes and creeds to sacrifice her needs for her one true love despite societal criticism. Anil Ghorai’s “The Insect Festival” shows the unattractive Larani trying hard to put her beloved’s needs above her own. The stories selected are not only centred around the tensions generated by the conflicts among different strata of society but also are women centric.

In Nakul Mallik’s story, Chakravarti translates the plight of a contemporary young couple as the husband is declared an “illegal immigrant” and sent back to Bangladesh from India. The wife, pregnant and separated from her beloved, confronts the security at the Radcliffe line.

‘How will you go? Do you have a passport?’ The officer stood in front of her, barring her way.

“What passport?” Shefali cried out angrily. ‘I’m going to my husband. How dare you try to stop me?’

‘That’s not possible, Didi,’ the man said quietly, reasonably.

‘Your husband was an illegal immigrant from Bangladesh. We have sent him back from where he came. We’ve acted strictly on the orders of the government.’

‘My husband is an illegal immigrant you say!’ Suddenly a shriek tore out of Shefali’s lungs, so loud that sky, land and river reverberated with the sound.”

Contemporary and historic issues are woven into these narratives to shake us out of torpor. While keeping the flavours of Bengal intact, these translations bring together the diverse cries of the suffering and downtrodden with their complex varied needs from a variety of backgrounds to a global readership. They cannot be put under a single label as the translator has pointed out in her note. This is a collection that creates an awareness that clubbing people under a homogenised label is not an answer to actually healing social malaise. Perhaps, the first brave attempt of its kind. Kudos to Aruna Chakravarti’s selection, the brilliant translation and to the breadth of her outlook.

Mitali Chakravarty edits borderlessjournal.com and has published widely. Her latest book is *From Calcutta to Kolkata: City of Dreams-Poems* (Hawakal Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2025).

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

The imperfect art of leaving

On reading Katy Family (Jackleg Press, 2025) by Gemini Wahhaj

SABRINA FATMA AHMAD

In a recent conversation I had with a well-regarded photographer about his longitudinal study on a subject, he talked about Sufism and the structure of the raagas in classical music where a single refrain being repeated was actually an inward search for deeper meaning. It took me a while to sit with those ideas, but reading *Katy Family* made a few things click into place.

Gemini Wahhaj, is an award winning author and academic based in Houston, Texas. *Katy Family* is a compilation of 21 short stories published in various publications, mostly set in Katy, an oil-rich suburb of Houston, featuring immigrant Bangladeshis. This is a milieu she’s familiar with, having grown up in Bangladesh, moving first to Iraq with her family before putting down roots in America.

In ‘Gracious’, Nadiya, an engineer who escaped the classism of Dhaka perpetuates the same when she hires a Latina nanny for her child. ‘Patent’ explores the trajectory of Mirza, who achieves the American Dream, having aced his studies at BUET, obtaining a degree from an American university, getting a lucrative job in oil and gas, which comes with the glossy wife and kids and the fancy house in Katy, before reality catches up. In the same vein, the stories juxtapose the Bangladeshi yearning for escape against the immigrant isolation, with Katy providing the capitalist setting for the little dramas to play out on. It is a refreshing departure from the poverty-porn stereotype dogging the scene since Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* (Doubleday, 2003) ushered in a fresh



ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

wave of Bangladeshi Anglophone writers speaking to a global audience. The middle class characters speak to a much wider readership in Bangladesh; every voice could belong to someone you know.

Upon my first reading of the stories, I found some of the attitudes present in the

characters pretty dated, considering that in real life, in the present context—be it because of globalisation, capitalism, or the spread of social media—Bangladeshis as a whole don’t have that wide-eyed wonder about all things “Umrican” anymore and conversely, the diaspora is aware—if grudgingly—of

this. A closer reading reveals the author’s tongue-in-cheek use of the obliviousness of her characters to poke fun not only at the fanciful ideas that the deshi natives harbour about their “bideshi” relatives, but the snobbery with which the diaspora regards its abandoned homeland, and the insecurities

bubbling just under the surface. Gemini Wahhaj borrows a leaf from Kazuo Ishiguro, but adds enough cultural flavour to make her own version of this device.

Deftly woven into these intimate cultural snapshots are larger themes like racism and climate anxiety. The stories are ordered so that the reader begins with the lighter, wittier ones. In ‘The Lady Doctor’, Dr Hasina Rasheed is learning to navigate the unaccustomed social niceties of a dawlat in the States, and realises that she is completely out of her depth. In the titular ‘Katy Family’, a similar theme is explored, but from the perspective of a divorced man. The later stories like ‘Marker’ or ‘Two Mothers’ become more sinister, with death and madness stepping out of the wallpaper and taking pride of place in the narrative. ‘Camping’ directly addresses the environmental impacts of Big Oil, the greenwashing they participate in, and the hypocrisy required of the employees in order to carry on living with themselves. In the age where we all have tickets to a genocide livestream, but all have at least one probashi relative who is seriously mum on the subject, this one hit really close to home.

The prose feels like a little bit of a throwback, with the kind of vague descriptions favoured by English professors in the 80’s, but once one gets used to it, the book feels like a little time capsule from an era before smartphones and global franchises. And despite the sadness, the desperation, the feeling of being stuck that seeps through every story, the book feels comforting, like a long forgotten memory of home.

Sabrina Fatma Ahmad is a writer, journalist, and the founder of *Sehri Tales*.

Half the venue, athletes too many

RAMIN TALUKDER

Outside the Mirpur Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium, an unusual sight unfolded. Wrestlers were training under the open sky – sometimes on bare soil, sometimes on paved concrete – sweating it out while puzzled passersby watched as if the arena itself had spilled onto the streets.

But why are national athletes forced into such hardship? The answer is simple: there is no space inside.

The stadium has only 1800 square feet of floor area, a third of which is being used as a temporary camp by the Bangladesh Army. The rest is shared by four federations – fencing, wushu, wrestling, and judo. With the South Asian (SA) Games scheduled for early 2026, each discipline has a number of athletes in camp. The numbers tell the story: fencing has 45, wushu 46, wrestling 52, and judo more than 50. Over 190 athletes are crammed into just a few hundred usable square feet. The question now looms: How can international-level preparation be possible in such conditions?

This is not the crisis of a single sport. Bangladesh has over 50 sporting disciplines, but most lack their own venues. Athletes are constantly on the move – here today, somewhere else tomorrow. While local competitions are somehow managed, arranging long-term training camps before international events often turns into a logistical



nightmare.

Inside the Mirpur indoor, four mats are laid side by side, accommodating the four federations' joint camp. Each day, over a hundred athletes train together. But the lack of space makes it nearly impossible for anyone to prepare properly, creating a chaotic and unsafe environment.

When all four federations practice at once, clashes are inevitable. Arguments break out, forcing training sessions to stop midway.

Wushu player Biplob Rudra echoed this sentiment, saying, "When we train with weapons, there's always a fear that we might accidentally hit others practicing nearby. That creates mental pressure. We can't give our hundred percent. If the space was larger, we would feel less stressed and perform better."

To avoid this, athletes try to manage by coming in at different times. But with everyone needing the same, many federations are still forced to train in overcrowded conditions.

That is why the scene outside is often so different. Wrestlers, unable to find room inside, practice on hard concrete or bare ground. Wushu players jump and spin in open spaces. Even fencing and judo athletes are forced to "borrow" space from others. Such interruptions break training rhythm and frustrate athletes.

Pointing at the ropes marking the practice area, fencer Hasan Ali explained: "When an opponent attacks, I try to block with my sword, but the rope gets in the way. It stops us from doing it properly."

Only a sigh could be heard in the voice of wushu federation coach Mejbah Uddin. "Everything else is fine, but the space is the problem. It's too small. Yes, we

trained here and won gold in 2010, but now with four federations together, the trouble has multiplied. If we had our own stadium, the results would be even better. At the very least, we need more space," Mejbah said.

A sports village could be the answer to all the problems, according to fencing coach Abu Zahid Chowdhury.

"What we need is a proper sports village. How can you expect serious preparation in this environment? Training shoulder-to-shoulder, there's no continuity. And before such a big tournament, you can't expect good results from this."

However, wrestling federation's general secretary, Mejbah Uddin Azad, was more pragmatic.

"We have to work with what we get. There's no separate venue, though it would surely help. We always share venues with other federations. Here too, many athletes just sit on the side because of the space crunch. Some are forced to train outside. We have to split into two or three groups."

While scarcity of space is a global issue, what makes the situation here more disheartening is that Bangladesh does have a number of stadiums – though most remain unusable due to lack of proper maintenance.

With this being the reality – spaces available, but not functional – athletes who should be focused on their training, remain occupied with something that is out of their hands.

Such compromised training is not just limiting athletes physically but also weighing on them mentally. Their daily struggles are slowly dimming the fire within – yet these very athletes carry the dream of raising the national flag on the international stage.



Lionel Messi trains on Tuesday ahead of his final World Cup qualifier on home soil, with world champions Argentina set to face Venezuela at the Monumental Stadium in Buenos Aires on Friday morning (5:30am, Bangladesh time). Coach Lionel Scaloni recently urged fans to "enjoy him now, as much as possible," admitting that Messi's legacy is "unrepeatable." While Argentina are already through, Brazil have also sealed their ticket for next year's mega event and meet Chile under Carlo Ancelotti at Maracana on the same day (6:30am, Bangladesh time).

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Litton's Sylhet run SPARKS HOPE

ASHEFAQ UL-ALAM

For the record book, Bangladesh captain Litton Das' fifty against the Netherlands in the dead-rubber third T20I in Sylhet yesterday holds some significance. With it, the wicketkeeper-batter overtook Shakib Al Hasan for the most fifties, 14, in the format for the Tigers.

However, that's not the only record Litton made with his blazing 73-run knock off 46 deliveries at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium. In the same innings, he repeated a small personal milestone, something that would hardly be a footnote in his career but for Bangladesh and the batter could hold greater significance soon.

As a batter, Litton had a dream run in the just-

50 balls against Sri Lanka, but in the following series against Pakistan in the same month he could not get into double figures in three consecutive innings.

His latest innings was far from spotless. He was dropped twice: first in the fourth over by Shariz Ahmad at the deep mid-wicket boundary when he was on 37, and then by Tim Pringle in the 13th over when he was on 68.

Moreover, he missed a chance to reach the triple-figure mark, as when he got out there were still 35 balls left



SCORES IN BRIEF

Bangladesh:

164/4 in 18.2 overs (Litton 73, Jaker 20*, Sohan 22*; Kyle Klein 3-53)

Result:

Match called off due to rain

Player of the series:

Litton Das

Bangladesh take series 2-0

➤ Litton Das hit his 14th half-century in T20Is, overtaking Shakib Al Hasan as the holder of the most number of fifties in the format for Bangladesh.

➤ Litton hit four sixes in his 73-run knock against the Dutch, and is now the joint-highest six-hitter for Bangladesh in T20Is alongside Mahmudullah Riyad with 77 maximums.

concluded series. The 30-year-old hit a couple of half-centuries, scored his runs at a rate exceeding 155, and made 145 runs in total, his best ever tally in a bilateral series. Moreover, as he only got out once in the series in the final game, his series average stands at a staggering 145.

But the stat arguably the most important for Bangladesh is that this is the first time in over five years that the right-hander has managed to put together two 50-plus scores in one bilateral T20I series. He has done it only once before in his career, against Zimbabwe at home back in March 2020, when he made 59 and 60 not out in back-to-back games in Mirpur.

Litton's entire career is full of incredible highs followed by a series of duds – a pattern he has seemingly inherited from other supremely talented cricketers from Bangladesh's previous generation.

In July, for instance, the 30-year-old had hit 76 off

in the innings. However, considering how the pitch had seemingly slowed down following a rain interruption, and Litton kept on trying to up the ante in spite of it, this missed opportunity can be forgiven.

Even though the opponents were far from equal to Bangladesh in terms of strength, Litton consistently scoring runs for Bangladesh, and that too with an attacking approach, should be considered a net positive for the Tigers heading into the Asia Cup, which begins on September 9 in the UAE.

Although the innings had little impact on the game, which got called off following a second rain interruption with the hosts on 164-4 in 18.2 overs, if this series could spark a consistent scoring streak for Litton heading into the Asia Cup, something special could be in the offing for the Tigers in the event.



Novak Djokovic celebrates after a hard-fought four-set win over Taylor Fritz in the US Open quarterfinals yesterday, marking the victory with a dance for his daughter's birthday. "I know my best tennis will be required, but I'll rise to the occasion," said the 38-year-old, who now faces hot-favourite Carlos Alcaraz, fresh from a commanding straight-sets victory over Jiri Lehecka, in Friday night's much-anticipated last-four affair.

PHOTO: AFP

SHORT CORNER

Under-23s begin Asian Cup Qualifiers with a defeat

Bangladesh's bid to qualify for the final round of the AFC U-23 Asian Cup got off to a disappointing start, as the men in red and green suffered a 2-0 defeat to hosts Vietnam in their Group C qualifier at the Viet Tri Stadium on Wednesday. A 15th-minute strike from Nguyen Ngoc My and an 83rd-minute header from substitute Le Viktor were enough to dash Bangladesh's hopes of securing a positive result against the 2018 runners-up.

No Hamza, Shamit as booters reach Nepal after seven-hour flight delay

Bangladesh team reached Kathmandu on Wednesday night for two FIFA friendly matches against the hosts on September 6 and 9, without Hamza Choudhury and Shamit Shome as well as Fahamedul Islam and Cuba Mitchell. The flight was delayed by seven hours due to a technical failure and the team spent the whole day at a lounge inside the airport.

There is a new No.1 ODI all-rounder

Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza has taken the top spot in the ICC Men's ODI all-rounder rankings, moving to the summit thanks to back-to-back strong performances against Sri Lanka in Harare. The effort helped Raza move past Afghan pair Mohammad Nabi (292 points) and Azmatullah Omarzai (296) to a rating of 302, with his batting performance also moving him up nine spots to 22nd in the ODI Batting Rankings.

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CHATTOGRAM-DHAKA PIPELINE

Inaugurated 20 days ago but no fuel delivered

MD NAZRUL ISLAM, Ctg

Diesel supply through the Chattogram-Dhaka Fuel Pipeline is yet to start, almost 20 days after its launch, as the authorities proceeded with inauguration despite having issues during trial runs.

Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, adviser to power, energy, and mineral resources ministry, opened the 250km pipeline on August 16.

Officials now say its commercial operation has stalled due to discrepancies found during trial runs, specifically mismatches between the amount of diesel supplied and received.

Acknowledging the issues, Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) Chairman Md Amin Ul Ahsan yesterday told The Daily Star that they instructed the project implementation authority to investigate the matter.

“Commercial diesel supply through the pipeline cannot begin until the problem is resolved. We have asked the authorities to solve the problem urgently so that such issues do not recur in the future,” said Amin.

However, the BPC chairman told this newspaper on August 5 that after several successful trial runs of diesel supply, they set August 16 as the commissioning date.

Responding to the question why the pipeline was inaugurated despite having issues, AKM Azadur Rahman,

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The Gulshan-1 intersection sees chaotic traffic and jaywalking despite an automatic signal system for vehicles and pedestrians. Drivers illegally turn towards Kamal Ataturk Avenue, forcing police to put up a rope barrier, while pedestrians cross even on green signals. The result: gridlock. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

India orders states to set up detention camps

Biometric info now required for Indian visa

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

All Indian states and union territories were asked to set up designated detention camps for undocumented immigrants apprehended in India and restrict their movement pending deportation.

An order was issued by the Indian home ministry under the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, effective from September 1.

It said a foreigner applying for any Indian visa will be required to provide biometric information to the issuing authority before the visa is granted.

The home ministry order also said foreigners may be refused entry into or stay in India if they are convicted on charges of being a member of a banned outfit, anti-national activities, espionage, rape and murder, acts of terrorism, human trafficking, child trafficking, child

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

DUCSU ELECTIONS

SC ends uncertainty, polls to be held as scheduled

Student suspended over rape threat to candidate

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday cleared the way for holding the Dhaka University Central Students' Union election on September 9 as per schedule.

The apex court upheld its chamber judge's previous order that stayed a High Court directive halting the Ducusu election till October 30.

A seven-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed, passed the order after hearing a petition filed by the DU authorities challenging the HC order.

Md Shishir Manir, legal counsel for the DU authorities, told The Daily Star that following the SC order, there is no legal bar for holding the Ducusu election on the scheduled date.

Fahmida Alam, candidate for Liberation War and Democratic Movement Affairs secretary from the "Aporajeyo '71-Adommo '24" panel, filed an appeal challenging the candidacy of SM Farhad, president of DU Islami Chhatra Shibir and the general secretary candidate of the Oikyabaddho Shikkharthi Jote panel.

She alleged that Farhad was involved with the now-banned Bangladesh Chhatra League.

After the SC passed the order, the Shibir-backed panel and Boishommo Birodhi Shikkharthi Sangsad panel held separate press briefings at Madhur

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Will base academic reforms on the ideals of '71 and '24

VP candidate Nayem Hasan tells Star

SHARIF M SHAFIQUE

If elected vice-president in the upcoming Dhaka University Central Students' Union election, Nayem Hasan has pledged to focus on academic reform grounded in the spirit of 1971 and 2024.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Nayem, the VP candidate from the "Aporajeyo '71-Adommo '24" panel, said, "Since the uprising, there have been attempts to create a controversy over the Liberation War, or 1971. Efforts are being made to pit 1971 and 2024 against each other.

"I would say both are equally important for us. One was the struggle for national liberation, the other was the fight against fascism. We were all comrades in the 2024 movement. There's no scope to single out anyone as a so-called 'July warrior.' What we need now is educational reform based on the ideals of 1971 and 2024. This is the work I want to do if I win the Ducusu election."

The panel, composed of three left-leaning student organisations – Chhatra Union (faction), Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, and JSD Chhatra League BCL – was



SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Forming 'opposition union' will make Ducusu work better

GS candidate Mahin Sarkar tells Star

SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK

If elected, Mahin Sarkar, general secretary candidate of the independent panel "DU First" in the upcoming Ducusu elections, has pledged to form a shadow opposition union with defeated candidates, which may serve as a pressure group to make the student body more effective.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Mahin, a former coordinator of Students Against Discrimination, blamed the absence of such pressure bodies for Ducusu's ineffectiveness.

He said, "I think past Ducusus were ineffective as they could not fulfil students' expectations. Candidates are making the same promises they made in 2019, proving that no real work has been done. This happened because there was no opposition union. If elected, I will establish one with the defeated candidates, ensuring an all-party structure to reform student politics."

Mahin said students had witnessed his contribution during the July uprising.

"I want to restructure student politics by somewhat minimising it. Since my first year, I have observed



SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Manifestos expose issues unresolved at DU for years

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The manifestos of the panels contesting the Dhaka University Central Students' Union elections lay bare how the university is still mired in long-unresolved problems even after more than a century of its founding.

NEWS ANALYSIS

From improving food quality and accommodation to expanding healthcare services, six major panels pledge to address issues that have plagued student life for decades. Similar promises were made during the 2019 Ducusu elections -- held after a 28-year hiatus -- but those largely went unfulfilled.

The six panels with similar pledges are: Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal; Islami Chhatra Shibir-backed "Oikyabaddho Shikkharthi Jote"; left-leaning alliance-backed "Pratirodh Parshad"; Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad's "Boishommo Birodhi Shikkharthi Sangsad"; Bangladesh Chhatra Odhikar Parishad-backed "Ducusu for Change"; and independent panel "Swatantra Shikkharthi Oikya".

Analysing each of their manifestos, The Daily Star found ensuring Ducusu and hall elections every year to be the most common pledge. Some of the other pledges are beyond Ducusu's jurisdiction, though each panel has presented different methods of implementation.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

World's largest sand battery switches on

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The world's largest sand battery has been inaugurated in Finland, capable of storing vast amounts of energy generated from renewable sources like solar and wind.

The 13-metre-tall structure, which is situated in the southern municipality of Pornainen, is able to store up to 100 MWh of energy – enough to power roughly 10,000 homes for a day.

The thermal storage system, developed by Finnish firm Polar Night Energy, works by heating up low-grade sand with excess electricity produced through renewable energy.

The sand can then store this heat at temperatures of around 500C for weeks at a time until the grid requires electricity again.

When required, the sand battery releases hot air, which is used to warm up water for the local heating network.

The hot water is used to heat homes, offices, a school and a swimming pool in the Kankaanpää region, replacing the area's old woodchip power plant and reducing carbon emissions by around 70 percent.



Setting tyres on fire, members of Gono Odhikar Parishad demonstrated at Paltan intersection yesterday afternoon, protesting the attack on party President Nurul Haque Nur. The protest caused severe traffic congestion in the area.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

AL leader found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Police have recovered the body of a local Awami League leader from beside an embankment in Ashashuni upazila of Satkhira.

The deceased, identified as Bijon Kumar Dey, 62, of Paithali village in Buddhata union, was president of the ward-8 Awami League unit and also involved in shrimp fry trading.

According to his younger brother, Nirmal Dey, Bijon left home around 5:00pm on Tuesday for Paithali Bazar. When he did not return by 10:00pm, his son, Pranab Dey, tried to reach him by phone but found it switched off.

Yesterday around 9:00am, locals spotted a body near the embankment in neighbouring Chumuria village and informed the family. Pranab rushed to the spot and identified the body as his father's before alerting police.

Sub-inspector Abdur Rahim of Ashashuni Police Station said the body was recovered and sent to Satkhira Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy after an inquest report was prepared.

Officer-in-Charge Shamsul Arefin said, "Primary evidence suggests it was a murder. There were injury marks on both of his legs." He added that a case is expected to be filed soon by the victim's son.