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Referendum likely on PR for upper house

NCC prepares proposal, revises three contentious commitments

MD ABBAS

The National Consensus Commission is set to propose a referendum on how the upper house of parliament would be formed.

Several sources close to the commission confirmed this to The Daily Star last night.

A commission member, on condition of anonymity, told this paper that they are likely to suggest the referendum be held either before the next general election or at the same time as the polls.

The sources said the commission is not considering a referendum for the implementation of constitution-related amendments. However, some matters will be recommended for implementation through ordinance or government order, while others will require constitutional amendments, they said.

Initially, the commission had planned to send the July Charter to political parties first and decide later on the charter's implementation process. However, it is now preparing to send the charter and its implementation plan to political parties and the government.

The implementation plan will be finalised on Sunday following consultations with legal experts, as the commission has already received the feedback needed from the political parties.

Prof Ali Riaz, vice-president of the commission, said, "At first, we

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A residential area has sprung, erasing hillocks, in Sylhet city's Baluchar area. Under the Awami League regime, a syndicate of land grabbers demolished at least 10-15 hillocks in the area to develop it. More than 100 families now live in this landslide-prone zone. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Gazipur gets a new seat, Bagerhat loses one
EC finalises delimitation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahead of the 13th national election next year, the Election Commission yesterday finalised the boundaries of the 300 constituencies, with 46 seats in 16 districts redrawn.

In the final list, the commission has added a new parliamentary constituency in Gazipur district and reduced one in Bagerhat.

So, Gazipur will have six parliamentary seats while Bagerhat three in the upcoming election to be held in February.

The 46 redrawn seats are: Panchagarh-1 and 2; Rangpur-1 and 3; Sirajganj-1 and 2; Pabna-1 and 2; Bagerhat-1, 2
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Disqualified until proven innocent

Draft ICT ordinance says if charged, one cannot contest polls, hold public office and govt job

BAHARAM KHAN and
SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Any individual formally charged at the International Crimes Tribunal will be barred from holding public office or contesting local or national elections.

Such individuals will also be disqualified from holding or seeking government jobs.

With these provisions, the latest draft amendment to the International Crimes Tribunal Ordinance, 2025, received final approval at an advisory council meeting chaired by Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday.

This marks the third attempt to amend the ordinance during the interim government's tenure.

Under the amended draft, such individuals cannot hold or contest positions as MPs, or as members, commissioners, chairmen, mayors, or administrators of any local government body or institution. The provision does not apply to those acquitted of the charges.

A summary, signed by Law Secretary Liakat Ali Molla, sought to justify the amendment, saying it was necessary to make the ordinance more effective.

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"If action can be taken against someone merely because charges have been brought, then what is the point of having a trial?"

Shahdeeb Malik,
Eminent jurist

NON-PERFORMING LOANS IN BILLION US DOLLARS

	2023	2024	Change (%)	% of total loans
Bangladesh	15.8	20.27	28.3	20.2
India	69.41	56.31	-18.9	2.5
Sri Lanka	4.35	4.58	5.3	12.9
Pakistan	3.58	3.9	8.7	6.3
Nepal	1.23	1.68	36.5	4.6

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and WASIM BIN HABIB

Bangladesh now has the highest non-performing loan (NPL) ratio in Asia, with defaults surging to 20.2 percent of total loans in 2024, according to a new Asian Development Bank report.

The \$20.27 billion stock of distressed assets marked a 28 percent jump year-on-year, underscoring that Bangladesh has the region's "most fragile banking system", said the report titled Nonperforming Loans Watch in Asia 2025 and published last month.

"Bangladesh stood out as a regional outlier,"

it said, adding that the country's NPL ratio rose by 11.2 percentage points in just one year.

In contrast, other South Asian countries -- India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka -- reduced their NPL ratios last year, while Nepal recorded only a marginal increase of 0.9 percentage points.

India, the region's largest economy, cut its NPL ratio to 2.5 percent from 3.4 percent, helped by sweeping banking reforms.

According to the ADB, the five South Asian countries collectively accounted for \$86.74 billion in NPLs in 2023, which was 12.4 percent

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AUG 21 ATTACK CASE
SC upholds
Tarique, Babar's
acquittals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday upheld the High Court verdict that acquitted BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, former state minister Lutfuzzaman Babar, and 47 others in two cases filed over the August 21 grenade attack on an Awami League rally.

On August 21, 2004, the gruesome grenade attack was carried out on the rally at Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka, leaving at least 24 people killed and 300 injured.

Then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, who later ran the country as the prime minister for 15 years and was forced to flee on August 5 last year amid an uprising, narrowly escaped the attack.

The two cases -- one for murder and another under the Explosives Substances Act -- were lodged after the incident was considered to be one of the most sensational political crimes in the country's history.

Yesterday, a six-member bench of the Appellate Division, led by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed, dismissed the state's appeal challenging the HC verdict.

With the apex court judgment, Tarique has got acquittal from all the cases in which he had been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment, and therefore, there is no legal bar for him to contest elections, his lawyer Zakir Hossain Bhuiyan told The Daily Star.

The lawyer, however, could not instantly say in how many cases Tarique had been convicted and sentenced by courts.

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A battery-run three-wheeler, overloaded with sugarcane, plies the busy Dhaka-Barishal highway in Barishal's Kashipur area. Such vehicles are illegal on highways. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Reforms cannot be sustained in a climate of violence

Says TI chair François Valérian

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

François Valérian, chair of Transparency International, has said that Bangladesh cannot sustain reforms or fight abuse of power "in a climate of violence, harassment and threats against journalists and civil society activists."

Speaking at a press conference at the TIB office at the Midas Centre in Dhanmondi yesterday morning, he expressed concern over "rising attacks" on journalists, saying that free and safe reporting is essential to break the "culture of secrecy" that fuels corruption.

Valérian said that the estimated \$16 billion siphoned from Bangladesh annually under the previous regime has caused long-term destruction of public services and widened inequality.

"If this money were not stolen, poverty could be reduced much more efficiently," he said.

Defending the participation of Transparency International Bangladesh in the reform commissions, he said that the watchdog must "engage with power and criticise power" to help build the "new Bangladesh" after last year's uprising.

He has lauded Bangladesh's civil society for its role in the downfall of the "authoritarian and massively corrupt regime" last year, calling it an inspiration at a time when authoritarianism is rising globally.

The TI chair said reforms initiated since August 2024 must be sustained under strong civil society monitoring to prevent abuse of power.

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FEASTING ON FRIDAYS

Dhaka's rich breakfast traditions

RBR

The Friday menu, whether for breakfast or lunch, has always been a lavish affair for the people of Dhaka.

The bowl of cereal or a hard toast is swapped with hot parathas fried in ghee, julienned potatoes fries, spicy omelettes with cheese, and sweet semolina halwa, or perhaps, puffed-up luchis with aloo dum and dim er halwa (potato curry, and an egg dessert).

The most elaborate morning spread, in my opinion, is beef bhuna and thick laal atta roti that is spiced up with onions and chilli (brown flour savoury soft tortilla), and finished off with a hot cup of gur er cha (tea with molasses). Bengali families are spoilt for choices, and a well-planned, sumptuous home-cooked weekend breakfast is undeniably the best.

Then again, it is a Friday morning, and the lady of the house is equally entitled to stay in bed a little longer, with her tea. Getting all flustered with cooking is not exactly an ideal option to relax on a Friday morning.

So, if there isn't a rich breakfast at home, then the second-best option is going out for breakfast.

Dhaka has numerous lovely breakfast options. The posh cafes in Dhaka, like White Canary Café, North End Coffee Roasters, and Bistro E offer an elaborate English breakfast menu: sausages, eggs (fried, poached, or scrambled),



grilled tomatoes, mushrooms, baked beans, marmalades, and buttered toasts and bread. My most sinful choice for such a breakfast is the soft brioche French toast with a seasonal fruity compote.

But for the Bengali Babus that we are, our quintessential nashta or breakfast is always from a local sweetmeat shop like Bismillah Misti Mukh & Bakery Ltd, Bonoful, or Muslim Sweets across the road.

The choice includes fresh seasonal vegetables mash or labra, tempered with dry chilli, fenugreek, cumin, mustard seed in mustard oil, and infused with an earthy depth of hing (asafoetida), served with hot paratha

and roshogolla. An alternative to this menu is the chunky vegetable stew with pea lentils cooked in clarified butter or ghee, and soft omelettes with lots of onions, green chilli, and mint, and a glass of chilled matha, a popular Bangladeshi yogurt-based drink.

The deep-fried luchi, mixed vegetable bhaji, and bhundia, a fun dessert of fried chickpea flour bubbles dipped in sugar syrup from the legendary Medina Mishtanna Bhandar in Lalbagh, have always been a crowd pleaser. This menu has been going strong for the last 50 years.

Sweetmeat breakfast has put Deshbandhu Sweetmeat, Alauddin Sweetmeat, and Medina Mishtanna Bhandar in the spotlight.

I remember walking down the quiet alley, early in the morning, from our house in Purana Paltan to the corner

around the North-South road, where the legendary Maranchand sweetmeat shop was located. You could smell the hot parathas and labra from afar. Packed in brown paper bags, I used to walk back home with Mashi, our nanny.

On the way back, she would pick madhabilota flowers for me and collect a slab of home churned butter, made by a single mother of four children, who was our neighbour. My father vouched for her products. At times, he would stop by her kitchen, on his way back home from work, to collect a pack of salted or sugared cchana or curdled milk. I just had to share this anecdote because Dhaka in the 70s was like a quaint suburb. And mornings were dreamy, pollution free, and safe.

Anyway, coming back to Friday breakfast, I must add that from times gone by up until now, old Dhaka has remained a sought-after place for breakfast.

Hajir biryani in Alauddin Road sees queues from 6:00Am. Basically, it is a meal of beef tehari cooked in mustard oil, and their parcels are wrapped in a packet of dried jackfruit leaves. This is indeed legendary and till date, it remains so.

Chicken soup, the local version of white sauce broth with chicken pieces, bone marrow stew, or nihari and paya, is a legacy of old town's Mughal settlements, served with soft butter naan and oil-free parathas. These breakfast items are yet to be dethroned from our list of favourite breakfasts aside from a homely one.

However, dunking hot parathas, bakarkhani, and toast biscuits in a piping hot cup of sweet milk tea is still my all-time favourite Friday breakfast.

Referendum likely on PR for upper house

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thought of sending only the July Charter, but later we realised that it might create misunderstandings. Therefore, we have decided to send both the charter and the implementation plan. The plan, however, is intended for the government."

He said the charter and the plan could be sent to the parties on Sunday night or Monday morning.

A source, requesting anonymity, said the implementation plan would not carry a specific timeframe, but the commission would seek a pledge from political parties to implement the charter.

According to several commission members, the commission aims to have the July Charter implemented during the tenure of the interim government.

Meanwhile, the commission has revised three contentious commitments which several parties had objected to.

One of the pledges was that the July Charter would take precedence over the constitution and existing laws. Jamaat and the NCP agreed to this, but the BNP and some other parties opposed.

To address the objections, the commission brought changes to the wording. The revised version will say that where constitutional amendments are required to implement the reforms -- such as the prime minister's term limits, presidential powers, or appointment of the Election Commission -- the charter's recommendations will take priority over existing provisions.

In short, the charter will prevail over provisions, not over the constitution as a whole.

Gazipur gets a new seat, Bagerhat loses one

FROM PAGE 1
and 3; Satkhira-2, 3 and 4; Manikganj-2 and 3; Dhaka-2, 4, 5, 7, 10 and 14; Gazipur-1, 2, 3, 5 and 6; Narayanganj-3, 4 and 5; Faridpur-2 and 4; Shariatpur-2 and 3; Brahmanbaria-2 and 3; Cumilla-1, 2, 6 and 10; Noakhali-1, 2, 4 and 5; and Chittagong-7 and 8.

The EC Secretariat yesterday issued a circular in this regard. The notification was published in the form of a gazette later at night.

The commission held hearings for four days from August 24 after receiving claims, objections, recommendations, and opinions on draft boundaries, EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said in the notification. The draft was published on July

30. A total of 1,185 objections and 708 recommendations were submitted afterwards.

The hearings were held on the redrawing of boundaries for 84 constituencies in 33 districts.

The boundaries were finalised after a review of the information and arguments presented during the hearings, and making necessary amendments to the constituencies, Secretary Akhtar said.

According to the law regarding delimitation of constituencies, the boundaries of Jatiya Sangsads constituencies should be redrawn based on the population distribution from the latest census, while keeping administrative units intact for convenience.

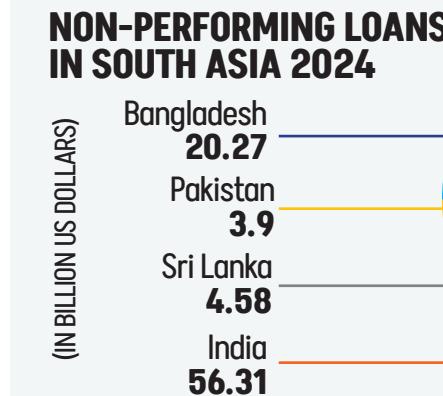
Bangladesh tops

FROM PAGE 1
of Asia's total, marking a decline from the previous year.

Bangladesh stood out for its worsening trend, with default loans rising to \$15.80 billion in 2023. Its NPL ratio steadily mounted over the last five years, climbing from 7.7 percent in 2020 to 9 percent in 2023.

The ADB said this pointed to structural weaknesses in credit underwriting and resolution.

Economists attributed the surge to years of regulatory laxity, political interference, and the legacy of the past government.



They noted that loan classification rules had long been relaxed under political pressure, masking the true scale of defaults. The Bangladesh Bank has recently begun disclosing the actual picture, which, they warned, means the reported volume of bad loans is likely to rise further.

Zahid Hussain, former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office, said that before the political changeover in 2024, loan classification rules were kept relatively lax. The previous government repeatedly rescheduled loans of large conglomerates, masking the true extent of defaults.

He added that Bangladesh Bank also withheld the actual picture of distressed assets. "The situation has now shifted, with the central bank beginning to disclose the real state of non-performing loans. But as loan classification rules tighten, the reported volume of bad loans will likely rise further," he told The Daily Star.

Citing India's example, Hussain noted that while it once struggled with a mountain of bad loans, sweeping banking reforms helped bring defaults under control.

Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (Sanem), also cited India as an example, saying the country managed to bring the situation under control through strict enforcement of rules and regulations.

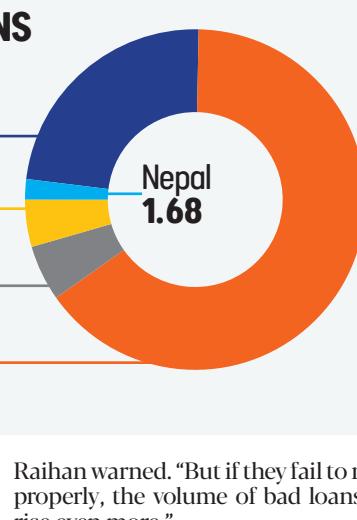
In Bangladesh, he said, the banking sector saw a notable shift after the new

governor took office at Bangladesh Bank.

He added that even Nepal now manages its loan portfolios better than Bangladesh, while the governance structures in Sri Lanka and even Pakistan are comparatively stronger.

Raihan also said that under the previous government, classification criteria were repeatedly altered to understate defaults, while politically connected business groups borrowed heavily -- some of them fugitives and embroiled in corruption.

"I'm not sure if all of their loans have been classified as defaults yet,"



Raihan warned, "But if they fail to repay properly, the volume of bad loans will rise even more."

WHAT CAN BE DONE

Raihan argued that reforms must continue and go beyond the central bank, requiring stronger laws, better coordination across ministries, and above all protection from political interference. "The next elected government must be fully committed to carrying these reforms forward," he said.

The ADB report said Asia's NPL market has seen remarkable progress in recent years, but it remains crucial to prepare for potential downside scenarios. "Progress has been uneven across countries, underscoring the need for tailored approaches to NPL management," it said.

The report warned that a prolonged global slowdown, exacerbated by trade disputes and geopolitical conflicts, could trigger new waves of NPLs in Asia, especially in highly leveraged corporate sectors and economies reliant on external trade and commodity exports.

To navigate these challenges, it suggested strong regulatory frameworks, efficient market structures, and proactive policy interventions.

The ADB said continued efforts to enhance judicial efficiency, improve market transparency, and foster investor participation will be key to developing a more effective and integrated secondary NPL market across Asia.

SC upholds Tarique

FROM PAGE 1

Replying to a query, lawyer Zakir hoped that the BNP acting chairman would return home in November or December this year.

Earlier in the day, while delivering the verdict, the SC expressed doubts whether the accused had made the confessional statements voluntarily.

The apex court also expunged the HC's observation suggesting that the home ministry could conduct a fresh investigation. Additionally, it directed the authorities to free if any accused is still in jail in connection with the cases.

In the judgment, the SC said, "The circumstances under which the confessional statements of the accused were obtained have given rise to serious doubt about their voluntariness, inasmuch as the alleged mastermind of the offence, Mufti Abdul Hannan, was produced before the magistrate to record a second confessional statement long four years after making the first and at a time when he had been in a condemned cell for a prolonged period. The remaining accused gave their statements before the magistrate after being in police custody for a long time, as discussed above."

"Furthermore, the confessional statements of three accused were recorded by a single magistrate on the same day, with unusual haste in gross violation of the prescribed rules. The prayers of most of the accused for retraction of their confessional statements on the ground of inhuman torture on the persons and their unauthorised detention in custody by the law-enforcing agencies without the order of a magistrate and the aforesaid circumstances have rendered the confessional statements

highly doubtful as to their voluntary nature."

After the verdict, principal defence lawyer SM Shahjahan told reporters, "Justice has been served, and the Appellate Division has further ensured it. We are grateful."

Another defence lawyer, Mohammad Shishir Manir, said it has been proved that the accused were not involved in the incident.

"We sympathise with the victims, but no one can be punished without evidence."

In his reaction, BNP's Law Affairs Secretary Kayser Kamal said, "Out of political vengeance, [deposed prime minister] Sheikh Hasina implicated Tarique Rahman in the cases. The Supreme Court verdict has proved that Tarique Rahman is innocent. It has also proved that Sheikh Hasina never wanted justice for the killings, including that for Ivy Rahman's."

On December 1 last year, the HC acquitted all 49 accused, including Tarique and Babar, overturning trial court verdicts that had convicted and sentenced them for the grenade attack on the AI rally.

The state later filed the appeal with the Appellate Division, challenging the HC verdict.

A section of lawyers including SM Shahjahan, AM Mahbub Uddin, Md Bodruddoza Badal, Md Ruhul Quddus Kazla, Emdadul Haque Azad, Kayser Kamal, Jaaid Bin Amjad, Gazi Kamrul Islam, Salaz, Zakir Hossain Bhuiyan, Siddique Ullah Miah, and Md Maksud Ullah appeared for the accused while Additional Attorney General Abdul Jabbar Bhuiyan, deputy attorneys general Abdurrahman Al Mahmud, Md Jahirul Islam Sumon, and Md Asad Uddin represented the state during hearing of the appeal.

Reforms cannot be sustained

FROM PAGE 1

Saying that no country can ever claim to have solved the corruption problem, he stressed the need for accountability and judicial independence.

Valerian urged Bangladesh to enact a beneficial ownership transparency law to trace stolen assets and called for stronger international cooperation to return laundered money.

He said he found "genuine commitment" from the chief adviser, chief justice, and regulators to make the transition succeed, adding that the sacrifices of last year's uprising "cannot have been in vain".

Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB, said that Bangladesh loses at least 3.4 percent of its GDP every year due to money laundering, which fuels inequality and hampers development.

A total of \$234 billion has been

laundered in the past 15 years.

Some of this money has been frozen abroad, but bringing it back is a very complicated and lengthy process, he added.

"Our priority should be to prevent money laundering, because prevention is far easier and more effective than recovery," he said.

He added that some reforms in the banking sector have reduced the scope for large-scale money laundering, but trade misinvoicing remains a major challenge.

Iftekharuzzaman also clarified that his participation in the Anti-Corruption Commission reform body was fully independent and funded by the TIB itself, not by the government.

"Our goal is to ensure the ACC's effective independence and accountability," he added.

ACC moves for Interpol red notice for Hasina, Joy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has initiated a process for the issuance of Interpol red notices against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her son Saeed Wazed Joy, accused of corruption in the allocation of six plots in the Purbachal New Town Project.

On Wednesday, ACC investigators sent two letters to Police Headquarters, addressed to the Inspector General of Police (IGP), requesting action. The letters stated that despite arrest warrants issued by a court, Hasina and Joy remain abroad. To ensure justice, steps should be taken to trace their whereabouts and facilitate their return to Bangladesh to face trial.

Copies of the court order, arrest warrants, first information report (FIR), charge sheet, and a draft red notice form were attached to the letters in support of the request. According to officials, the police will forward the letters to the home ministry, which will then approach Interpol.

Media reports indicate Hasina has been in India since August 5, 2024, following her ouster in a mass uprising, while Joy resides in the United States. Other family members are also living abroad.

The ACC began probing the alleged plot scam last December and filed six cases on January 12. Besides Hasina and Joy, the accused include Hasina's daughter Saima Wazed Putul, sister Sheikh Rehana, Rehana's son Radwan Mujib Siddiqi, and daughters Tulip Rizwana Siddiqi and Azmima Siddiqi.

According to the ACC, while in power, Hasina and her family abused authority by securing 10-katha plots each in Sector 27 of the Purbachal housing project, despite being ineligible.

On July 31, Dhaka's two special judge courts framed charges against 23 individuals in the six cases and ordered trials to begin.

Judge overturns Trump funding cuts to Harvard

AFP, New York

A US judge ordered the Trump administration on Wednesday to



PHOTO: PID

Feb polls crucial for democratic transition

Says Gwyn Lewis, calls on Professor Yunus

UNB, Dhaka

United Nations Resident Coordinator Gwyn Lewis met Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday and affirmed that the UN fully supports the upcoming general election in Bangladesh.

"It is crucial for the country's democratic transition," Lewis said during the meeting at the state guest house Jamuna.

The two discussed ways the UN could assist in ensuring a "transparent, free, fair and peaceful" electoral process.

A major topic of discussion was the upcoming national election, according to Chief Adviser's Deputy Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad Majumder.

The resident coordinator reiterated the UN's commitment to support the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Two lines of bikes have been parked on this footpath in the Tejgaon area of the capital yesterday, leaving little to no space for pedestrians. This illegal parking is a public nuisance and prevents people from easily accessing the footpath to move through the nearby areas safely.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Govt to help with travel docs if Tarique decides to return: Touhid

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain yesterday said the government would extend necessary support regarding travel documents if BNP Acting Chairperson Tarique Rahman decides to return to Bangladesh.

"The matter [of returning] depends on his [Tarique's] own decision, but we will address the issues related to his travel documents or passport when it is required," he told reporters at the foreign ministry.

Responding to a question, the adviser said he had no information on whether the BNP leader had applied for a passport at the Bangladesh High Commission in London.

Touhid said Tarique must first decide on his return.

On another query, the adviser said there had been no update yet on Dhaka's request to New Delhi regarding the extradition of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

He noted that no second request letter has been sent so far.

Relying to a question about international election observers, Touhid said a pre-election exploratory mission from the European Union had already visited Bangladesh.

STUDENTS' UNION ELECTIONS

Campaigns ramp up as DUCSU polls draw closer



Candidates for the DUCSU elections campaigned vigorously yesterday, with only three days left before the campaign period ends. However, today and tomorrow are holidays, so Sunday marks the final day of campaigning.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

DU CORRESPONDENT

Candidates for the elections to the DUCSU and hall unions had a busy day of campaigning yesterday, with only three days left before the campaign period ends.

According to the election schedule, today and tomorrow will be holidays, and Sunday will be the last day for campaigning.

The elections are scheduled for September 9, and campaigning must conclude 24 hours before the elections.

Yesterday, the university administration met DUCSU candidates running for vice president, general

secretary, and assistant general secretary posts to discuss the latest developments.

Meanwhile, candidates visited various faculties to engage with non-residential and female students, while in the evening, they went door-to-door at male dormitories.

The Islami Chhatra Shibir-backed panel held its projection meeting at Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall, while Chhatra Dal organised their meeting at Samsun Nahar Hall.

The Boishommo Birodh Shikkharthi Sangsad panel, of Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad (BGCS) panel did not hold any meeting yesterday.

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**A safe campus for female students
Vows JUCSU GS candidate Tanzila Hossain Boishakhi**

SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK

Tanzila Hossain Boishakhi, general secretary candidate from the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal-backed panel in the Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union election, has pledged to eliminate gender discrimination on the campus if elected.

"All my life, I have been conscious about rights – both mine and others'. I could never tolerate injustice," she told The Daily Star.

"Since coming to Jahangirnagar University, this tendency has only grown stronger. I know this campus well, I know its problems, and I want to work on them. Even before JUCSU, we protested these issues and tried to keep the administration under pressure," she said.

"But JUCSU represents students' direct mandate, which will make it easier to secure rights," she added.

She said her decision to contest comes from the belief that facilitating real change is only possible from a position of policymaking.

"Women in our country hesitate to enter politics because the field is harsh for them. I want to be a role model – showing that one can move forward despite obstacles if they have the qualifications."

If elected, Boishakhi said her priority would be to institutionalise democracy on the campus.

"JUCSU is the symbol of democracy here. We aim to ensure JUCSU elections take place every year. There will be conspiracies to stop it, but we will resist and guarantee regular elections."

She also pointed to structural imbalances between teachers and students. "Teachers cancel



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DHAKA FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 5, 2025
BHADRA 21, 1432 BS
The Daily Star

3

RECOVERY OF LOOTED FIREARMS

Announcing rewards brings no fruition

RAFIUL ISLAM

Despite the home ministry's announcement of significant rewards 10 days ago, no actionable information has been provided to the police regarding the firearms looted during last year's July uprising.

Around 1,300 firearms remain missing, looted from various police stations and outposts across the country in July and August of 2024.

Police officials suspect that many of the stolen firearms were sold to criminals and are now being used in illegal activities.

Some individuals involved in the looting are believed to have disposed of the weapons and ammunition in rivers and other water bodies, fearing legal repercussions.

Shahjada Md Asaduzzaman, additional deputy inspector general (operations) at Police Headquarters, said, "We are yet to receive any information from police units about individuals coming forward with details on the looted firearms and ammunition after the reward announcement."

He assured that police operations against illegal firearms and drugs are ongoing.

Police officials and experts have emphasised the need for a coordinated effort to recover the firearms, highlighting the potential risks they pose, especially

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Saifuzzaman, wife sued for laundering Tk 1,200cr to Dubai

UNB, Dhaka

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has filed a money laundering case against former land minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury and his wife Rukhmila Zaman on charges of siphoning off Tk 1,200 crore to Dubai.

CID's Special Police Superintendent (Media) Jashim Uddin said the case was filed with Kotwali Police Station in Chattogram.

Additionally, five to seven unidentified people have also been named in the case.

During the investigation, the authorities found that Saifuzzaman allegedly purchased 226 flats in various areas of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) between 2016 and 2023.

These locations include Al Barsha South 3rd, Barsha South, Barsha South 4, Thaniya 5th, Jaddaf, Haifa 6th, Gulf Commercial, Khariran, Yalayes 2, Burj Khalifa, Jabil Ali, World Island, Zabeel 2nd, Marsa Dubai, Me'aismi the First, Nad Al Sheba First, and Wadi Al Safa 3.

The total value of these properties is estimated at 33,56,57,168 dirhams.

Additional information revealed two more properties under the name Q Gardens Boutique Residences - Block B in Al Barsha South 3rd, valued at 22,50,369 dirhams.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 8



Some individuals have illegally set up a makeshift stable and are keeping horses under the Major Hanif Flyover in the capital. These horses are often used to pull carriages on weekends, and they are rarely fed adequately for such strenuous activity. Their long hooves also suggest they are not properly cared for or regularly groomed. The photo was taken yesterday.

Hasina's 'ghost cohorts' remain in admin: Rizvi

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Brahmanbaria

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi has said that although Sheikh Hasina has fled the country, her "ghost and cohorts" still remain embedded in the administration, working to create unrest and destabilise the government.

Speaking to reporters in Brahmanbaria yesterday, Rizvi alleged that these elements are plotting to ensure the failure of Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus and to prevent free and fair elections.

He said, "Those responsible for Sheikh Hasina's cruelty, repression, and bloodshed have been given green signals from the passport office to leave the country. Such criminals should not get such clearance, but those embedded in

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

Travel ban issued on GM Quader, wife

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued a travel ban on Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader and his wife Sherifa Quader in connection with corruption allegations brought against them.

Judge (in charge) Md Ibrahim Miah of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after ACC Deputy Director Rezaul Karim, who is leading the inquiry team, submitted an application.

In the application, the ACC official said the couple amassed a huge amount of money by abusing their power and through illegal means. He also said they learned from a source that the couple was attempting to flee the country. If they flee, the inquiry into the allegations brought against them might be hampered, he added.

SC acquits Tuku, Mir Nasir in graft cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday acquitted BNP leaders Iqbal Hasan Mahmood Tuku, Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin and his son in two separate corruption cases.

A five-member bench led by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed delivered the verdicts following appeals filed by the trio challenging High Court rulings that had upheld their convictions.

The ACC filed the cases in March 2007. Tuku, a BNP standing committee member and former state minister, was accused of concealing wealth information and amassing illegal assets.

A special court sentenced him to nine years in prison and fined him Tk 50 lakh. The HC acquitted him in 2011, but the ACC appealed, leading to a series of rehearings.

In a separate case, Nasir Uddin, former state minister, and his son Mir Mohammad Helal Uddin were accused in March 2007 of acquiring illegal wealth and hiding property information. A special court sentenced Nasir to 13 years and Helal to three years in prison.

The HC quashed their sentences in 2010, but in 2014 the Appellate Division ordered a rehearing. The HC in 2019 reinstated the convictions, before the SC overturned them in its latest ruling.

AR Raihan, lawyer for the BNP leaders, confirmed the acquittals to The Daily Star. Lawyers Zainul Abedin, Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal, Raghib Rauf Chowdhury and AR Raihan represented the appellants during the hearings.

A safe campus

FROM PAGE 3
classes at will, frequently leave for Dhaka, and even teach at private universities without accountability. Political lobbying is prioritised over merit during recruitment. We will work to restore balance and introduce a teacher evaluation system so they feel the need to improve their quality."

Addressing the struggles of female students, she said safety is a serious concern.

"Since August 5, we've seen women face moral policing and online harassment. The rules are discriminatory -- male students can move in and out of halls at night, but women cannot leave after 11:00pm. Why should this discrimination exist? Ceiling fans are withheld in women's halls on the assumption that girls might die by suicide. How can such kinds of thought persist in 2025?" she continued.

"Rooftops and balconies

remain locked in women's halls, canteens close early, and access to urgent medical care involves excessive bureaucracy," she added. "There are no sports facilities for girls. I will work to eliminate these inequalities."

Boishakhi also criticised the poor state of campus facilities. "JU is a residential university, yet shops close early or lack essentials. Sanitary napkin vending machines look appealing, but none are functional."

"Transport is inadequate, the medical centre is in poor shape, ambulances are unavailable, and library rules are ignored. I'll work to solve these problems. Besides, I will work to set up complaint cells in every institute so students can raise issues for us to address," she also said.

Regarding the election atmosphere, she said students are enthusiastic, but the administration is uncooperative.

Feb polls

FROM PAGE 3

Bangladesh Election Commission ahead of the polls scheduled for February. During the meeting, Lewis praised the strong cooperation between the UN and the interim government, as they discussed a broad range of topics on Bangladesh's development priorities and reform agenda.

They also explored avenues for expanded UN support to advance the government's reform initiatives.

Preparations for the upcoming UN General Assembly meetings in New York and the Rohingya conference later this month were also reviewed.

Both of them expressed deep concerns over the sharp decline in international funding for Rohingya humanitarian efforts, which is already affecting education and other critical services in the camps.

Will put students'

FROM PAGE 3

essential to align JU with the demands of the future world. As a research-based university, JU needs more allocation for research. I will also work to make students more career-oriented."

Zitu said students already know they can rely on him in any crisis. "I led crucial movements like the July uprising and continued my activism afterwards. After 33 years, Jucusu is finally happening. If elected, I will make every effort to keep Jucusu functional and hand over power to the next leadership through elections."

On the election atmosphere, he said, "So far, everything is good, and we are hopeful. But we are concerned about security. The administration promised to ensure proper security across the

campus after announcing the manifesto. Yet, we see former students entering and joining campaigns, which violates the code of conduct. Outsiders are also moving around freely. We hope these issues will be resolved."

"I was in the JU committee of [now banned] BCL, but I joined the anti-quota movement on July 1 last year. On July 15, BCL members attacked me, and I had to be hospitalised. That same night, I resigned officially. I led the July movement in Jahangirnagar and pressed the one-point demand. The rest is known to all."

Finally, Zitu said, "Whoever gets elected, from any panel or as independents, must work together, regardless of party affiliation. Everyone should prioritise students' interests and build a student-friendly campus."

Announcing rewards brings

FROM PAGE 3

confidential. ahead of the upcoming general elections.

On August 25, Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury announced rewards for information leading to the recovery of the looted firearms. The highest reward of Tk 5 lakh

was offered for the recovery of a light machine gun, Tk 1.5 lakh for a sub machine gun, Tk 1 lakh for a Chinese rifle, Tk 50,000 for a pistol or shotgun, and Tk 500 for each bullet.

More than 1,300 firearms and over 2,50,000 rounds of ammunition remain missing, with many reportedly now in the hands of police headquarters.

Police officials said recovery efforts have included regular operations, waterbody searches, and interrogations of suspects linked to the looting. However, progress has been slow due to a lack of reliable leads. "We are seeing a lack of cooperation from the people. We hope the reward announced by the home ministry will motivate witnesses to come forward," said an official of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.



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বিজ্ঞপ্তি

অঞ্চলী ব্যাংক পিএলসি. এ অফিসার (ক্যাশ) পদে (Job ID-10183) ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয় (বিএসপিএস), বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক কর্তৃত ২০২১ সাল প্রতিক অফিসার (ক্যাশ) পদে ৪৫৫ (চারশত পঞ্চাশ) জন প্রার্থীকে প্রথমিকভাবে নির্বাচিত করা হয়েছে। নির্বাচিত ৪৫৫ জন প্রার্থীর মোল নম্বর, নাম, পিতার নাম ও নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত নির্দেশাবলী সম্বলিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি অঞ্চলী ব্যাংক পিএলসি.-এর ওয়েবসাইট www.agranibank.org -এ প্রদর্শন করা হয়েছে।

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Pashchimanchal Gas Company Limited

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E-Tender Notice

Ref. No: 28.18.0000.000.067.07.0002.24/Marker-Post

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

Tender ID No.	Package No. & Description	Tender Publication (date & time)	Last Selling (date & time)	Closing and Opening (date & time)
1143119	Package No: 28.18.0000.000.067.07.0002.24. Package Description: Supply and Placement of Marker Post for High Pressure Gas Pipeline at PGCL Franchise Area.	04-Sep-2025 10:00 AM	21-Sep-2025 04:00 PM	22-Sep-2025 12:00 PM

These are online Tenders, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for last selling/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 (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

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Engr. Shahjahan Al Mamun
General Manager (Operation), C. C.



Neglect leaves 647km of Patuakhali roads in ruins

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

At least 647 kilometres of roads under the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) in Patuakhali have become unfit for use due to years of neglect, causing immense suffering to commuters.

LGED officials said repairing these roads would require Tk 452 crore, but only Tk 4.62 crore has been allocated this year, enough to repair just 66 kilometres.

According to the LGED office, Patuakhali has a total of 12,338 kilometres of rural roads, of which 3,114 kilometres are paved. Of those, 647 kilometres are now in a dilapidated state. Among them, 150 kilometres are in Sadar upazila, 120 kilometres in Bauphal, 85 kilometres in Galachipa, 72 kilometres in Mirzaganj, 70 kilometres in Dashmina, 65 kilometres in Kalapara, 45 kilometres in Rangabali, and 40 kilometres in Dumki.

The Bauphal-Patuakhali road, especially the 3.5-kilometre stretch from Boga College Gate to Dhouravanga, is in the worst condition, with the asphalt layer gone and countless potholes dotting the surface.

Altaf Mahmud, a local resident, said thousands of people depend on this road daily, but no initiative has been taken for its repair.

Bauphal Upazila Engineer Md Borhan Uddin Molla said a proposal of Tk 9.5 crore for road repairs has been sent to the LGED headquarters.

In Kalapara, the six-kilometre road from Tegachhia ferry terminal to Tulatali intersection is severely damaged, with over 75 percent of its surface washed away. "This road has been discussed many times in meetings, but no repairs have been carried out," said Mezbha Uddin Khan, chairman of Mithaganj union.

Similarly, in Dashmina, the 10-kilometre stretch from Amtala to Mollahat to Betagi Sankipur union is in disrepair.

Upazila Engineer Md Mokbul Hossain admitted no repairs had been done since the roads were constructed.

In Galachipa, 19 kilometres of the 21-kilometre road from Kalagachhia to the upazila town is broken, while the 10-kilometre road from Charkajal to Charbishwas and the eight-kilometre road from Ulania Bazar to Chiknikandi are also in critical condition.

Upazila Engineer Jahangir Alam said nearly half of Galachipa's 408 kilometres of rural roads are severely damaged.

Patuakhali LGED Executive Engineer Md Hossain Ali Mir said,

"Repair and maintenance have not been done for years. The annual allocation is insufficient. We need Tk 452 crore to make 647 kilometres of paved rural roads usable, but we received only Tk 4.62 crore, which can cover just 66 kilometres."

Journo's body found hanging

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Police recovered the body of a local journalist, hanging from a tree, in the seaside Jhau forest of Cox's Bazar yesterday morning.

Locals spotted the body around 9:00am inside the Jhau forest near the golf course along the beach. Images later circulated on social media identifying the deceased as Mohammad Amin Ullah, 25.

"Police sent the body to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy," said Cox's Bazar Sadar Model Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Elias Khan.

A bus ticket from Chattogram to Cox's Bazar dated September 3 was found in his pocket, the OC added.

Amin's uncle, Md Zakaria, said he was a guard at Friendship Hospital in Balukhali and worked as an Ukhiya upazila correspondent on the side for a news portal.

Zakaria alleged that Amin might have been killed over drug related reports. He also claimed that Amin went missing two days ago after leaving home.

Three die of dengue, 363 get hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least three dengue patients died while 363 others were hospitalised in the 24 hours till yesterday morning, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of the deaths, two were reported from Dhaka South City Corporation and one from Chattogram division.

With the latest figures, the total number of dengue related deaths has risen to 130, while the total number of cases has climbed to 33,309.

Among the total cases, 31,631 patients have so far been discharged, including 24,070 from outside Dhaka. Currently, 1,548 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country, of which 1,040 are from outside Dhaka.

China's Xi holds talks with North Korea's Kim

AFP, Beijing

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Kim Jong Un met for talks in Beijing yesterday, state media reported, while the North Korean leader is in China on a rare foreign visit.

Xi told Kim of China's enduring support for ties with Pyongyang. "No matter how the international situation changes, this position will not change," Xi said.

China attaches "great importance to the traditional friendship between China and the DPRK and (is) willing to maintain, consolidate and develop China-DPRK relations," state news agency Xinhua reported, using the acronym for North Korea.

Kim and Russia's



People inspect damaged bulldozers, excavators, and other vehicles following Israeli airstrikes on an industrial complex that services heavy construction machinery in the coastal town of Ansariyah, southern Lebanon. The strikes, carried out Wednesday night, killed at least five people, according to the health ministry and state media.

PHOTO: AFP



Vladimir Putin flanked Xi at a massive parade of Chinese military might on Wednesday in Beijing, where underwater drones, massive missiles and laser weapons were showcased to the foreign leaders.

China is North Korea's most important ally, their relationship forged in the bloodshed of the Korean War in the 1950s.

Chinese state media said Kim and Xi met for talks in Beijing's Great Hall of the People.

China's foreign ministry said earlier the talks would be "an in-depth exchange of views on China-DPRK relations and issues of common concern," using the acronym for North Korea.

"China is willing to work with the DPRK to strengthen strategic communication... (and) deepen the exchange of experience in governance," spokesman Guo Jiakun said.

Trump pledges to pursue Russia-Ukraine peace

CBS News reports; Putin vows not to back down in Ukraine

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump said he remains committed to pursuing a peace agreement between Russia and Ukraine despite uncertainty over the prospect of face-to-face talks between Russia's Vladimir Putin and Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky, CBS News said in a report published yesterday.

"I've been watching it, I've been seeing it, and I've been talking about it with President Putin and President Zelensky," Trump said in a phone interview with CBS News on Wednesday. "Something is going to happen, but they are not ready yet. But something is going to happen. We are going to get it done."

Trump earlier on Wednesday said he plans to hold talks about the war in Ukraine in coming days after his Alaska summit with Putin in August failed to achieve a breakthrough.

Meanwhile, European leaders yesterday spoke to Trump after holding a summit with Zelensky on security guarantees for Kyiv in the event of a peace accord to end Russia's three-and-a-half war

against Ukraine.

The guarantees by the so-called coalition of the willing, which remain under wraps but are expected to include ramped-up training for the Ukrainian army and deployment of troops by some European states, have angered Russia.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday he would carry on fighting in Ukraine if a peace deal cannot be reached.

Putin also said he was ready to meet with Zelensky if the Ukrainian president came to Moscow but that any such meeting had to be well prepared and lead to tangible results. Ukraine's foreign minister dismissed the suggestion

of Moscow as a venue for such a meeting, reports AFP.

Trump told CBS News he is unhappy with the carnage between Russia and Ukraine but will keep pushing for a peace agreement.

"I think we're going to get it all straightened out. Frankly, the Russia one, I thought, would have been on the easier side of the ones I've stopped, but it seems to be something that's a little bit more difficult than some of the others," he said.

Trump has been frustrated at his inability to get a halt to the fighting, which began with Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, after he initially predicted he would be able to end the war swiftly when he took office in January.

Trump also said on Wednesday that he watched China's "beautiful ceremony" marking the end of World War Two, where Putin was seen alongside Chinese President Xi Jinping and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

"I understand the reason they were doing it, and they were hoping I was watching, and I was watching," Trump told CBS News.

Disqualified until proven innocent

FROM PAGE 1

In February, the Electoral Reform Commission recommended barring individuals accused of serious human rights violations from participating in elections if the ICT accepts the charges.

However, the proposed amendment to the ICT ordinance will disqualify an individual from running in any election even before the tribunal takes cognisance of the charges.

Speaking to The Daily Star, eminent jurist Shahid Malik said the provision goes against the basic principles of criminal law and citizens' rights.

"Merely bringing an allegation against someone does not make them guilty. That completely contradicts the core ideas of the constitution, human rights, and the very purpose of a fair trial."

He asked, "If action can be taken against someone merely because charges have been brought, then what is the point of having a trial?"

He added, "You cannot declare anyone guilty without first giving them the opportunity to defend themselves... Only those who are blind to human rights and liberty could propose such provisions."

Earlier in the day, briefing reporters at the Foreign Service Academy, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said the provision had been incorporated under section 20(c) of the International

Crimes Tribunal Act, 1973.

Shafiqul told The Daily Star that the government had consulted legal experts before amending the ordinance. He said formal charges are only filed against individuals accused of crimes against humanity if investigations produce sufficient evidence.

"Crimes against humanity cannot be compared to ordinary offences, which is why the government has introduced such an amendment," the press secretary added.

Chief of the Electoral Reform Commission Badiul Alam Majumdar said, "Those accused under the ICT Act cannot be treated like ordinary offenders; they are dangerous criminals.

According to article 47(A) of the constitution, some of their rights are already curtailed. From that perspective, such measures warrant consideration."

So far, the International Crimes Tribunal has taken cognisance of formal charges against 62 individuals in five cases over crimes against humanity committed during the July uprising.

Among the accused are deposed prime minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, and former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, who has since testified before the tribunal as a state witness.



UN staff held in Yemen suspected of spying for Israel

Says Houthi official; projectile falls into Red Sea near ship off Yemen

AGENCIES

UN staff arrested by Yemen's Houthi rebels earlier this week are suspected of spying for Israel and the United States, a Houthi official told AFP yesterday on condition of anonymity.

At least 11 United Nations workers were detained on Sunday after an Israeli air strike killed the Houthi's prime minister and about half of his cabinet last week.

"Those who were arrested from among the United Nations employees are accused of spying for the American and Israeli aggression," the official said.

"Whoever has the accusations against them confirmed will be referred to trial."

The detainees included workers from the World Food Programme and Unicef, which provides aid and support for children. Dozens of other people were arrested on Saturday "on suspicion of collaborating with Israel", a Yemeni

security source told AFP at the time.

The arrests came after Houthi prime minister Ahmed Ghaleb Nasser al-Rahawi, nine ministers and two cabinet officials were killed in the Israeli air strike last Thursday, reports AFP. It marked the highest profile assassination in a series of Israeli reprisal attacks against the Iran-backed Houthis during the Gaza war.

Meanwhile, a projectile has fallen into the Red Sea near a vessel off Yemen, where the Houthis have been launching attacks on shipping since the start of Israel's war in Gaza, a British maritime agency said yesterday.

The vessel and crew were safe and proceeding to their next port of call, according to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations agency, which received a report of the incident 178 nautical miles northwest of the port of Hodeidah. It did not specify when the attack occurred.

BALTIC SEA REGION

Sharp rise in GPS jamming in aviation

Says Sweden pointing finger at Russia

AFP, Stockholm

GPS interference affecting aviation over the Baltic Sea region has risen sharply since 2023 and now occurs almost daily, Sweden's Transport Agency said yesterday, pointing the finger at Russia.

The number of interference incidents with global navigation satellite systems (GNSS), such as GPS, in Swedish airspace has risen from 55 in 2023 to 733 this year as of August 18, according to new data presented by the Transport Agency.

"We have done analyses over a longer period and collected data. We can conclude that the interference is originating from Russian territory," Andreas Holmgren, in charge of aviation issues at the agency, told AFP.

The interference includes both spoofing (false positioning) and jamming (disruption of signals).

It was initially limited to the eastern areas of Sweden's airspace, over international waters.

But it has now "spread both geographically and in scope... occurring over a larger area over



both land and sea in Sweden", Holmgren said in a statement.

"This is serious and is a security risk for civil aviation, not least given the extent, duration and nature of the interference," he added.

The jamming also affects maritime navigation and critical infrastructure using GNSS, the agency said.

In early June, Sweden and five other Baltic Sea countries -- Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland -- raised the issue with the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), of which Russia is a member state.

The ICAO Council "expressed grave concern over the situation and demanded that Russia comply with its international obligations and ensure an immediate end to the interference", the agency said.

Despite this, the interference "in the Baltic Sea region has instead increased", it added.

The countries now intend to raise the issue with the ICAO's general assembly this autumn.

A plane carrying EU chief Ursula von der Leyen was hit by GPS jamming as it readied to land in Bulgaria on Monday, and Russia was suspected to be behind the incident, the European Commission said.

The plane was able to land safely. The incident came as Western powers discuss new aid to Ukraine as it fends off Russia's invasion.

Thailand set for vote on new PM

Royal officials reject request by ruling party to dissolve parliament

AFP, Bangkok

Thai royal officials rejected a request by the ruling party to dissolve parliament, the country's acting prime minister said yesterday, clearing the way for a vote that could select his successor.

A power vacuum has consumed Thailand's top office since last Friday, when the Constitutional Court sacked prime minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra over an ethics breach.

A coalition of opposition MPs has backed conservative construction magnate Anutin Charnvirakul to take the top office, with a vote scheduled for today.

Paetongtarn's Pheu Thai party -- still governing in a caretaking capacity -- had attempted to dissolve the legislature and block the vote, submitting its request to the palace.

Both the ICAO and the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) have issued statements condemning the jamming.

The ICAO has called for member states to take action to address the issue, and the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has issued a statement condemning the jamming.

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Don't leave urban poor in the cold

Govt must rebalance social safety allocations to tackle urban poverty

The paradox of Bangladesh's rapid urbanisation is becoming increasingly evident. Despite a continuous influx of people into towns and cities, social protection schemes remain largely rural-focused, leaving the urban poor and vulnerable dangerously exposed. These schemes are insufficient and misaligned with the country's demographic and internal migration realities, according to a new report from the think tank Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID).

Towns and cities—home to a burgeoning population grappling with the acute challenges of joblessness, housing insecurity, and rising living costs—account for only one fifth of the total beneficiaries of government social protection schemes, as per RAPID. While these programmes were originally created to combat rural poverty and vulnerability to natural disasters, they have failed to evolve at the pace of the nation's development. As a result, the exclusion rate for extremely poor households in urban areas stands at a staggering 64 percent, far exceeding the national average.

This imbalance is visible across key areas. For instance, education stipends at both the primary and secondary levels overwhelmingly benefit rural households. The same applies to allowances targeting widows, deserted women, persons with disabilities, and elderly citizens, with over 80 percent of recipients in most of these schemes residing in rural areas. There are exceptions, of course, such as pensions for retired government employees and allowances for freedom fighters, which have a larger share of urban recipients, but even then, rural beneficiaries remain significant. This is a serious policy gap, and it is widening.

While the government acknowledges the problem and claims to have plans to address it, the scale of the challenge is immense. The 23 schemes currently designated for the urban poor account for a mere four percent of the total social protection budget, while programmes for rural areas claim 27 percent. The government's own assessment suggests it is spending about \$1 billion annually on social protection in urban areas, yet the actual need is estimated to be seven to eight times that amount.

Besides funding constraints, the social protection programmes are often undermined by targeting errors and inadequate benefit levels, diminishing their impact on poverty. Resources are often misdirected, failing to reach the most vulnerable. To bridge this gap, the government must undertake a substantial policy shift, recognising that the face of poverty is changing as rural populations migrate to urban centres following natural disasters and river erosion. With its 560 urban centres, including 330 municipalities and city corporations, the country needs to rebalance its strategy to acknowledge the growing urban poverty. A modern social protection system requires a comprehensive, data-driven approach that aligns spending with these new realities and the evolving needs of both its rural and urban populations.

Assault, harassment of journos must stop

No visible step has been taken to ensure their safety

It is a shame that harassment and violence against journalists persist in the country despite the ousting of Sheikh Hasina's authoritarian regime that had taken the suppression of press and speech to unprecedented extremes. According to an estimate by the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS), violence against journalists doubled in August 2025 compared to the previous month, with at least 72 journalists affected. Among them, one was murdered, 33 were injured, five assaulted, 11 threatened, and one arrested.

Such incidents have been quite recurring. Just weeks ago, we called for better protection and safety for journalists following the killing of Asaduzzaman Tuhin and the brutal assault on Anwar Hossain in Gazipur; both were on duty when attacked. Such attacks were not just by miscreants; there were also mob attacks on media houses and journalists. The most glaring example is the incident that took place inside the Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) on August 28, where a mob pounced on speakers at a roundtable. But instead of arresting the disruptors, police detained journalist Monjurul Alam Panna under the Anti Terrorism Act, along with former Awami League MP Abdul Latif Siddiqui and Dhaka University professor Sheikh Hafizur Rahman Karzon. What is even more concerning is that a TV journalist covering Panna's case in court was assaulted by several lawyers on Thursday.

The hostility being shown towards journalists goes beyond the physical. Their integrity is also continuously questioned, and their work often vilified. At a meeting on Wednesday, the Editors' Council rightly condemned the August 28 incident, and expressed concerns that the government's proposed Journalist Protection Act, drafted during the AL era, might retain provisions that undermine press freedom. It goes without saying that journalists were among the most affected groups during the AL regime.

While it appears that space for dissent has opened under the interim government, the reality for journalists remains grim. A suicide note left by senior journalist Bibhuranjan Sarker last month exposed the harsh conditions media professionals face. They continue to feel pressured to comply with various political parties, security forces, and corporate entities. No tangible steps have been taken to secure their safety, job security, or create an environment where they can work without fear of assault, harassment, or intimidation. The media reform commission's report, which proposed changes that could positively impact the community, also remains unimplemented. We, therefore, urge the government to expedite efforts to implement these recommendations so that journalists' safety and professional freedom can be safeguarded.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Mother Teresa dies

On this day in 1997, Mother Teresa, who was awarded the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize for her charitable work with the poor, especially in India, passed away in Calcutta (Kolkata) at age 87.

EDITORIAL

Why are we trying to make the election uncertain?

Partisan interests are being pushed above those of the people



THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher of
The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

Once again, our politics is back at the stage where it has mostly been: self-destructive. As before, our political parties are trying to impose their partisan interests above those of the people. Once again, all sorts of untested demands are being made, threatening language is dominating what otherwise should be a discourse, and, most sadly, the most vital institution of democracy—a free and fair election—is being made uncertain. Many of us knew it, some of us allowed our optimism to ignore it, but now the chief adviser himself is warning us against it.

During a meeting with some political parties on Tuesday, Prof Muhammad Yunus warned that "those who do not want the interim government to reach the stage of election will obstruct the process in every possible way... Their utmost efforts will be to foil the election and create such a situation that the election cannot be held."

Are we back to square one? If so, why? Why are we falling into the same old trap, getting entangled in the same web of confusion and self-interest? Sadly, we are repeating the mistakes we made before—playing with the polls.

If we are to make any progress, we have to learn from our past mistakes, and most relevantly, learn from Sheikh Hasina's. We don't miss a single opportunity to term her regime fascist, in many ways deservedly so. But then why don't we think twice when we try to repeat some of her fascistic actions? Arbitrary arrests, keeping people imprisoned for months (in many cases, for nearly a year) without an inch of progress in investigation, stigmatising anyone who disagrees as the "enabler of fascism," endorsing mob violence—the list goes on. We justifiably condemned past politicisation of bureaucracy, but now we are replacing officials who are loyal to the other side. It is just a change of guards and beneficiaries, not of the system.

Our focus today is on the demand to ban Jatiya Party and partners of the Awami League-led 14-party alliance. Gen Yahya Khan banned the Awami League (AL) when he launched Operation Searchlight and started the genocide in March 1971. In 1972, all religion-based parties including Jamaat-e-Islami were banned. The Purbo Banglar Sarbarha Party and Purbo Banglar Communist Party, two Maoist extremist parties, were banned under the Special Powers Act, 1974. In January 1975, with the formation of

Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BAKSAL), all political parties including the AL were banned. In 2005, Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) was banned. Four days before her fall, on August 1, 2024, Sheikh Hasina banned Jamaat and Islami Chhatra Shibir, which were reinstated by the interim government; both are now big players in our politics.

Have these bans ever worked? Should such a practice be allowed to continue? The recent ban on AL's activities took place surrounding former President

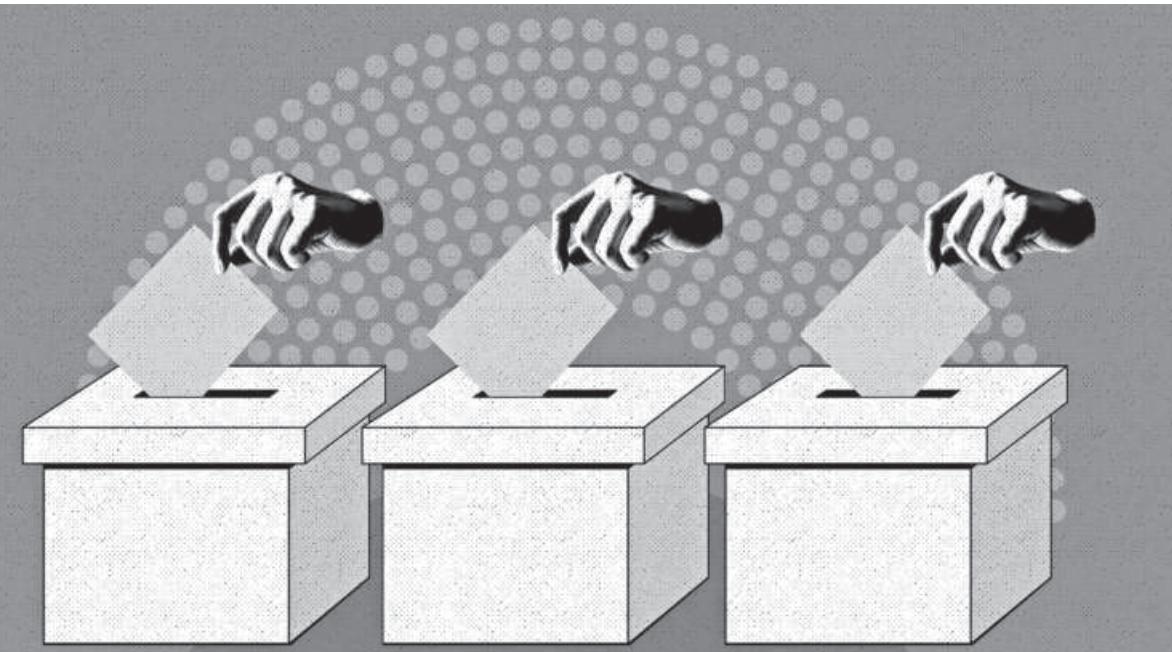
as opposing us banned? JP has been a political party for many years. It was the ruling party under its founder HM Ershad and a major opposition party during both Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina regimes.

Let us recall here that a grand alliance of political parties led the mass movement in the 1980s and toppled Ershad—who was the supreme villain to all—and his party from power in December 1990. But the grand alliance did not ban Ershad, who contested from prison and won seats from five constituencies, or JP, which got 35 seats in the parliament that followed.

If there are specific evidence against JP leaders and those from the AL-led alliance who took illegal and undue benefits from the former prime minister, then let specific and evidence-based charges—not the type that we regrettably see now—be brought against them, let a fair trial take place and punish them accordingly.

democracy and have seen how we have been prevented from establishing it by parties too focused on power rather than national interests. Every political party has the freedom to make their own calculations and forge alliances to win an election, and strengthen their position within parliament. But to demand the ban of a party or parties just so that the opposition's vote don't get registered is no less anti-democratic.

All political parties must understand that the best option for Bangladesh today is to hold a proper, free and fair election and move towards a representative government with an elected parliament as the repository of people's will. An election is not only necessary to chalk out our political future but also to determine our economic march forward. Without the election, there will be no confidence-building, which is a precondition for both domestic and foreign investment.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

Abdul Hamid's trip to Thailand for health reasons. Rumours spread that Hamid's trip on medical grounds was a ploy and that he would try to revive AL from outside the country. The former president returned to the country, now basically bed-ridden, proving that the rumours were baseless and contrived. But AL stands functionally banned.

Now, as the election time appears clear, the demand for banning Jatiya Party (JP) has been raised. The reason: because the JP allowed the Hasina regime's "legitimacy" by participating in the elections. For the same reason, the parties that were under the fold of the AL-led alliance must also be banned, as the claim goes.

Is this how we are going to hold an inclusive, free and fair election, one that Prof Yunus said would be the best in our history? So we want an election with the parties whom we see

The point we are making is that the demand for banning JP and members of AL-led alliance during Hasina's regime will not only discredit our claims to rebuild democracy, but also destroy the credibility of the scheduled February 2026 election.

Some observers believe that the demand to ban JP and others is not springing from love for justice and fairness, but from cool-headed political calculations of occupying the opposition's chair in the new parliament. Those who are demanding the ban calculate that the JP may emerge as the main opposition. So nipa that prospect in the bud.

We are pointing this out not because we have any love for JP, a party that triggered corruption in the early 80s and one we always found to be opportunistic and devoid of ethical values, but because we love that prospect in the bud.

And without investment, there will be no job creation. Remember the quota movement, which was related to jobs, and which laid the foundation for the July uprising. Lack of jobs will only perpetuate the deep resentment and frustration that afflict our youth. Many indicators show that we are slipping backwards in areas where we registered impressive growth before. Our employment is falling, poverty is rising, quality education is sliding, crime and lack of security rising, and women's rights backsliding.

Those who are working to prevent the election should question themselves as to how the people will be empowered without one. There is only one way to start the rejuvenation process, and that is to give power to the people so that they can determine who will govern us and be answerable to us.

The internet is making us reactionary



Nawshin Flora
is a writer and poet based in Dhaka.

NAWSHIN FLORA

Once upon a time, the internet was a beautiful place to foster connections with strangers, engage in forums dedicated to niche interests, and discover critical information. That version of the internet has long been dead. Today, the internet, and social media in particular, has become a poisoned well for our psyche, doing more harm than good. What was once a medium for connecting with like-minded people and sharing tidbits of our lives has turned into a nightmare for our safety with the rise of the surveillance state. Everything we cherished about the internet of our childhood and teenage years has faded into obscurity.

In this hyper-fast technological era, where two days offline means missing an entire discourse, it has become rare for us to look up from our dopamine-inducing devices and notice what's happening around us. We now live in a perpetual present, with no respite for our minds. Boredom has vanished, replaced by constant distraction as

we chase the next easily accessible dopamine hit. Our hands are conditioned to reach for our phones the moment we wake. We share every milestone, hundreds of photos from family holidays, and every scrap of information that makes us who we are.

Getting addicted to things has always been easy for us, whether opium, gambling or internet use. Validation on social media is a low-hanging fruit, yet many of us are desperate for it and often mistake it for genuine connection. "Touch grass" has become an insult because so many of us live inside our phones, our identities reduced to pixels on social media platforms, searching for connection with someone thousands of miles away. We yearn to belong to a group to deflect from the horrors of modern life. As a result, an entire generation has grown up seeing the internet, and being online, as integral to life itself. There is now an urgency to take on an online persona and maintain it offline, to the point

that many struggle to remember who they were before social media became mainstream. What do we really gain from this? Connections? Opportunities? A sense of belonging?

The most unnerving part of today's internet is that it makes us reactionary. Social media algorithms are designed to keep us hooked with small doses of dopamine, while flooding our timelines with news designed to anger or upset us. The idea that we must have opinions on everything under the sun is pernicious, uncharitable, and leaves little space for nuance, particularly as the lines blur between the virtual and the real in a world of growing surveillance. Not every breaking story warrants a reaction. In fact, it is unnatural to feel five different emotions in the span of 60 seconds. Increasingly, we cannot even sit with our emotions anymore.

Social media often brings out the worst in people, with the anonymity of many platforms fuelling hostility towards strangers. Consuming hate-filled content poisons our hearts with apathy towards those who may not look or think like us. Engaging only with news and content that affirm our beliefs, while attacking those who challenge them, sets us up for failure. The internet becomes an echo chamber, fuelled by the aggressive algorithms of tech companies, for whom users are nothing more than free products generating endless data to sell to third parties. This dynamic

makes people oblivious and insensitive to cultural norms and realities outside their own bubbles. We already see its consequences: consent for mob violence is manufactured online, with truth distorted and marginalised groups targeted.

Overconsumption of mindless content has already shortened attention spans and deteriorated cognitive function—so much so that the 2024 Oxford Word of the Year was "brain rot," describing the intellectual decline of the chronically online. On top of this, the rise of AI-generated images has worsened the disinformation crisis—no one knows what is real anymore. Worse still, the phenomenon of "AI chatbot psychosis" has fuelled a surge in mental health crises. People with no history of illness are suffering psychosis and breakdowns, while for those with serious mental health conditions, interacting with AI chatbots is proving even more dangerous.

While social media remains a useful tool for staying informed and for community organising, its drawbacks now far outweigh the benefits. We have allowed a device designed to erode cognitive function to steal our time. The profit margins of companies like Meta and X depend on users having knee-jerk reactions to the mildest transgressions. So, before we lose the last remaining shred of our sanity, perhaps it's time we log off and reconnect with people in real life.

Threatening to gang-rape is not just vile, it's a crime



NO STRINGS ATTACHED

Aasha Mehreen Amin
is joint editor at *The Daily Star*.

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

A Dhaka University student has been suspended for six months for advocating online that a female student, a candidate in the upcoming Dhaka University Central Students' Union (DUCSU) elections, be "gang-raped." His dangerous comment drew some like-minded individuals (read potential rapists) to agree with him and make the same statement.

Ali Husen's Facebook status threatened to organise a "march for gang rape" against BM Fahmida Alam, who represents the left-leaning panel "Aparajeyo '71, Odommo '24", because she had filed a writ petition against the nomination of SM Farhad, a general secretary candidate from the Islami Chhatra Shibir-backed United Student Alliance.

Following her writ petition, the High Court on September 1 stayed the DUCSU election process until October 30. However, an hour later, the Appellate Division's chamber judge overturned the stay order. This was when Husen posted his disgusting status that encouraged others to join in the misogynistic parade.

It would be easy to dismiss this as a one-off incident in which a male student expressed anti-woman sentiments, but we all know that it is far more complex and insidious than that. Ali Husen was using an age-old weapon to humiliate and "cancel" a young woman for daring to challenge a man, even having the audacity to stand as a candidate. Many students might have been angry that Fahmida had filed the writ petition, which could result in the postponement of the DUCSU elections. But embedded in a threat of sexual violence involving multiple rapes is a subtle design to

venom spewed by various religion-based groups against the Women's Affairs Reform Commission, calling for its disbandment and hurling abuses at its members, was enough proof of the "political will" to make sure women's place in society remains unequal and marginalised. More disappointing was the total silence from the interim government led by a known champion of women's empowerment and which has at least

of the discussions. So were women—not a single one was seen in the photographs or video footage of the discussion sessions. Perhaps because it was obvious that most of the proposals would be met by vehement opposition. When it came to women's reserved seats, all parties agreed that the existing 50 seats would be kept and that they would keep five percent of nominations for women in the next elections. Oh, what a token few) or through more malignant strategies—by attacking them online with fake images, lies, and direct threats. Men have physically assaulted women on a launch, in the streets, on campus, and on the beach, all in the name of moral policing. The recent violent attacks on Chittagong University students by locals was sparked by the alleged assault of a female student by the security guard of the building she lived in because she had come home late, after 11pm. According to her, when she tried to enter through the gate of the building, the guard shoved and kicked her. On Monday, a female student of Jahangirnagar University was pushed off a moving bus by the helper as soon as she mentioned the name of her university as her destination. Women pursuing higher studies seem to be an irritant for some, triggering violent acts. It is as if there is a systematic strategy to just remove women from all public spaces.

Thus, for Ali Husen and his kind, threatening to "gang-rape" a woman does not seem to be a crime, which it definitely is. It is a way to "teach unruly women a lesson," to hopefully erase them from the public sphere.

His six month suspension as punishment is shocking. Do the university authorities think that after six months he will stop believing that gang rape is justified in certain circumstances? Is there any guarantee that he or his followers will not post such statuses or even follow through with these threats? Did anyone think of the security of Fahmida and other female students who may now be targeted by Ali Husen's fans?

Threatening sexual violence is nothing less than a crime. It constitutes "criminal intimidation to cause injury or grievous hurt" (under Penal Code, 1860), and is also an offence under the Cyber Protection Ordinance, 2025. There is no scope to take such threats lightly. From January to July this year, 123 gang rapes were reported in Bangladesh, according to Ain o Salish Kendra. This man and anyone else who publicly post or air such statements must be taken into custody and punished under the law. Most importantly, they should not be garlanded and cheered for their criminal act.



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

create an environment that would remove women from the public sphere, in this case from an election.

This attempt to "invisibilise" women from public forums has become a common trend advocated by rightist groups. The

three women advisers who are well-known feminists. During the National Consensus Commission's laborious dialogues with the country's political parties, the reform proposals of the Women's Affairs Reform Commission were conspicuously kept out

concessions to half of the population! Should we, the lowly women, all jump with joy? Oh, sorry, not allowed.

In the field, women student leaders of the July uprising were sidelined either by being kept out of the forums or parties (except for

The uneasy geometry of US-China-India-Russia relations



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SYED RAIYAN AMIR

The just-concluded Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, held in Tianjin, China from August 31 to September 1, was crafted as a spectacle. Chinese President Xi Jinping, flanked by Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sent a clear message that Beijing intends to redefine the balance of global power. Xi's call for "true multilateralism" and a "Global Governance Initiative" was an unmistakable swipe at Washington and its post-World War II dominance. The setting and choreography echoed an old ambition: to create a counterweight to US influence by deepening ties across Eurasia and the Global South. Yet, beneath the theatre, the summit only reinforced a reality highlighted by decades of history and scholarship: great powers cooperate where convenient but hedge relentlessly, and every relationship is laced with tension (and obviously, complexity).

The SCO has grown quietly since its founding by China, Russia, and Central Asian states over two decades ago, with India's accession in 2017 giving it additional credibility. Beijing used the summit to roll out proposals that could redraw parts of the global order, including an SCO development bank, AI research hubs, and new financial assistance packages. Xi invited member-states to join China's lunar exploration efforts and promised over \$1.6 billion in combined

loans and grants. These initiatives underline Beijing's intent to construct parallel systems—finance, technology, and space partnerships—that give states options outside US-centric frameworks. Russia and India, both managing Western pressure in different ways, see these alternatives as leverage rather than loyalty pledges.

Still, the SCO's rising profile does not make it a cohesive bloc. History cautions against reading too much unity into summit photographs. Odd Arne Westad's *The Cold War: A World History* and Henry Kissinger's *World Order* show how triangular diplomacy—from Richard Nixon's opening to China in 1971 to the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907—was always about balance, not alliance. The Tianjin meeting fits this tradition: a forum where powers that often distrust one another explore cooperation under pressure, much like how the US and UK abruptly realigned financial leverage during the 1956 Suez Crisis. The Tianjin summit offered both symbolism and substance, but neither changed the competitive undertones shaping the participants' strategies.

Energy is the core of today's geopolitical geometry. Russian oil, discounted since the Ukraine war, has become a crucial piece of India's economic puzzle. Despite temporary disruptions caused by sanctions compliance and narrowing discounts, Russian crude

still accounts for roughly a third of India's energy imports. Indian refiners exploit market arbitrage, blending Russian supplies to manage domestic prices without breaching sanctions outright. This trade relies on shadow fleets, reflagged tankers, and insurance arrangements routed through Dubai and Hong Kong—systems that thrive in legal grey zones. The set-up shows how politics and markets are interconnected: Washington can tighten sanctions, raising risk premiums, but energy flows rarely stop; they simply reroute.

Overlaying this is Washington's tariff and tech-control strategy, which has evolved into an informal industrial policy. In 2024, the US raised Section 301 tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, semiconductors, and renewable energy products, and by mid-2025, similar tools were being used to discourage Russian energy dealings. These moves don't completely sever trade but force companies and governments to calculate the political cost of every shipment. Each deal now comes with a compliance surcharge, illustrating Zbigniew Brzezinski's *The Grand Chessboard* in a new form: supply chains and financial systems, rather than military bases, are the contested terrain.

India's posture is central to this geometry. As Ashley J Tellis argued in "India as a Leading Power," New Delhi is determined to be neither an ally nor a junior partner, but a "leading power" in its own right. India simultaneously buys Russian oil, strengthens its defence ties with Washington, and hardens its technological base against China—all while keeping border tensions manageable, till the tariff hits hard. Tanvi Madan's *Fateful Triangle* highlights how India's strategic culture prizes autonomy, yet autonomy becomes harder to sustain when sanctions, tariffs, and export controls raise the costs of hedging. India's challenge is to ensure that

the benefits of multi-alignment outweigh its risks, particularly in critical areas like semiconductors and telecommunications, especially IT, where US influence remains overwhelming.

The Sino-Russian partnership, while closer than at any point since the Cold War, is asymmetrical. Alexander Lukin's *China and Russia: The New Rapprochement* explains how this dynamic was accelerating even before the Ukraine war: Moscow has leaned heavily on China for capital, technology, and diplomatic cover, and that dependence deepens with every pipeline and yuan-settled transaction. Beijing, meanwhile, calibrates its support carefully, avoiding steps that might provoke a devastating Western sanctions campaign. Graham Allison's *Destined for War* offers context here: even rising powers willing to challenge the status quo often act cautiously to avoid triggering uncontrollable escalation.

These dynamics make the idea of a China-India-Russia "trilateral" misleading. While the SCO and BRICS create opportunities for coordination, none of these powers is willing to trade autonomy for alignment. Even Moscow, once the primary advocate for the RIC (Russia-India-China) format, now relies more on Beijing than on multilateral structures. New Delhi, scarred by its 2020 border clash with China, sees limited strategic upside in a bloc that could constrain its options. Practical cooperation is therefore limited to opportunistic deals—oil, fertilisers, payments corridors—rather than a cohesive strategy.

The US, for its part, is not aiming to sever every tie between these powers, but to control key chokepoints in finance, supply chains, and technology standards. By combining tariffs, export restrictions, and "friend-shoring" partnerships with Europe, Japan, South Korea, and Southeast Asia, Washington

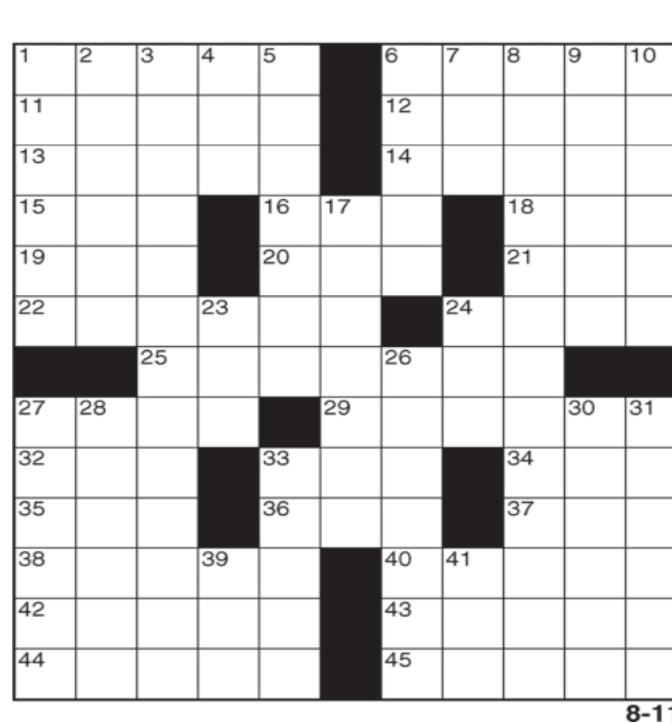
is building resilience in sectors that Beijing could weaponise. The US strategy is not about crushing rivals outright, but about sustaining a favourable balance of power long enough to shape global rules.

Therefore, three scenarios illustrate the possible future paths. The first is "managed transactionalism," where oil trades, payment systems, and diplomatic coordination persist without formal alliance commitments. The second is "tariff-tech bifurcation," where intensified US sanctions and controls force India to reduce Russian energy dependence, accelerate supply chain splits, and raise costs globally. The third is "crisis compression," triggered by a border skirmish or Taiwan incident, which would sharply polarise choices and push Moscow closer to Beijing while disrupting global markets. Historical precedents from Kissinger's diplomacy to Westad's Cold War analysis remind us how quickly crises can redraw alignments and understandings.

What Tianjin revealed most clearly is that 21st century geopolitics is shaped less by ideological blocs and more by overlapping bargains. India's energy imports will shift only when discounts no longer offset risks. China will keep Moscow afloat, but on terms that reinforce Beijing's leverage. Russia will trade pride for survival if necessary, while the US will tolerate some trade flows as long as it controls key technologies and financial arteries. Sanctions increasingly resemble tariffs. Tariffs act like standards, and standards decide who reaps future profits.

Far from a united anti-US front, this is a world of transactional diplomacy where every major power maintains quiet understandings with Washington, even as they challenge it. The SCO summit was a vivid reminder that summits can project power but cannot erase the structural interdependence at the heart of global politics.

ACROSS
1 Stand up
6 Kathy of "Misery"
11 Abate
12 Media mogul Winfrey
13 Grassy expanses
14 Get more out of
15 Can, neighbor
16 Rink makeup
18 Needle feature
19 Uno doubled
20 Young fellow
21 Cargo unit
22 Inflame with love
24 Swindles
25 Action movie sound
27 School event
29 Choice word
32 Summer sign
33 Butter unit
34 Outback bird
35 Lend a hand
36 Letter after zeta
37 Bar staple
38 Mumbai's nation
40 Inspired
41 PC linking system



TUESDAY'S ANSWERS



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Nandita Das to serve as Busan Film Festival jury member



Actor and filmmaker Nandita Das has been named to the seven-member competition jury at the 30th Busan International Film Festival (BIFF), where acclaimed Korean director Na Hong-jin will serve as jury president. BIFF 2025 introduces a new competition category with the Busan Award, to be presented in five sections including Best Film and Best Director.

Das, known for performances in *Earth, Fire, and Water*, as well as directing *Firaaq, Manto*, and *Zwigato*, joins an illustrious jury lineup. Members include Hong Kong actor Tony Leung Ka-fai, Iranian filmmaker Marziyeh Meshkini, Korean-American director Kogonada, Indonesian producer Yulia Evina Bhara, and Korean actor Han Hyo-joo. The winners will be announced at the festival's closing ceremony in Busan.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

In just its fourth year, the Blender's Choice – The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards has already earned a reputation as the country's most beloved digital awards. Over the years, many have been honoured with awards, while trailblazing performers have left their

mark with unforgettable dance, music, and stand-up comedy acts. However, the backbone of the awards is arguably the anchoring – four hosts who carry the entire programme.

Rafsan Sabab and Naziba Basher are two stalwarts who have been with the awards since the first season, joined by the likes of Sunerah Binte Kamal, Yash Rohan, Azra Mahmood, Amin Hannan Chowdhury, and Aisha Khan. This year, they will be joined by two more industry veterans, neither of whom

has ever hosted an award show before. What's more, for one of them, it will be their first stage appearance of the year.

One thing is for certain: their charisma will completely change the awards' outlook. The catch is, you'll have to wait until September 7 to find out who they are!



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Bulbul Ahmed's daughter pays homage to his legacy with 'Mohanayoker Gaan'



On the 84th birth anniversary of iconic actor, director, and producer Bulbul Ahmed (1941-2010), his eldest daughter, Tahsin Farzana Tilottoma, has launched the second season of her musical tribute *Mohanayoker Gaan*.

Presented by Selen Tea, the series honours Bulbul Ahmed's enduring legacy through six timeless songs from his films. The first track of the new season, *Duti*

Mon Jokhon from the film *Songini*, has already been released.

The inaugural season, introduced in 2023, featured six of Ahmed's most celebrated songs. Season two continues that heartfelt tradition, blending cinematic history with a daughter's personal homage to one of Bangladesh's most beloved screen legends.

NEWS

Rights groups condemn

FROM PAGE 12
irresponsibly allowed these incidents to occur, but has endangered the minimum human rights of the people."

It added that "a mobocracy is running in the country" with either the indifference or the support of the interim government.

The committee also mentioned the brutal mob killing of cobbler Ruplal Robidas and his cousin in law Pradip Robidas in Rangpur's Taraganj.

The statement added that when houses of religious minority communities were attacked, looted and set on fire because of a Facebook post in the same district's Gangachara upazila, police arrested the Facebook user instead of the attackers – thus directly supporting the attack.

Furthermore, it said, "In Lalmonirhat, elderly barber Paresh Chandra Shil and his son Bishnu Chandra Shil were beaten by a mob under false accusations of blasphemy, and instead of arresting the perpetrators, police arrested Paresh and Bishnu, legitimising the mob."

In Dhaka, mobs cornered a discussion meeting on the Liberation War and later, the police, instead of

arresting the terrorists, arrested 16 people – including freedom fighters, university teachers and journalists who were the discussants – and then sent them to jail in an anti-terrorism case."

The committee added, "When multiple incidents of mob attacks have endangered people's lives and property, the chief adviser's spokesperson, by identifying mobs as 'pressure groups', effectively expressed support towards them and mocked the people."

It said that the current judicial system has normalised filing cases against those tagged with "League" and keeping people in jail without trial. "The right to bail of identified war criminals is being protected, but when Bawm citizens die in prison, the court does not recognise their right to bail."

The law enforcement's inaction in protecting the students of Chittagong University and Bangladesh Agricultural University from organised mob attacks was "astonishing", the platform added.

The HRFB statement was signed by Hamida Hossain, president of Naripokkho; Sultana Kamal, Supreme

Court advocate; Raja Devasish Roy; Z I Khan Panna, Supreme Court advocate and chairperson of Ain o Salish Kendra secretariat and acting convener; Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation; Zafir Hossain, chief executive of Nagorik Uddoyog; Sara Hossain, honorary executive director of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust; Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum; Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh; Fauzia Moslem, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad; Shamsul Huda, executive director of Association for Land Reforms and Development; and Khushu Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori, among others.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Rights Committee's statement was signed by Anu Muhammad, retired professor of economics at Jahangirnagar University and human rights activist; Samina Lutfia, associate professor of sociology at Dhaka University and social activist; and activists Harun ur Rashid, Maha Mirza, Mahtab Uddin Ahmed and Marzia Prova.

The judge left the courtroom briefly due to the chaos but returned at 3:25pm. After the hearing, the court rejected Monjurul's bail application.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Siam said, "Several lawyers attacked me in front of the judge without any reason. I demand justice for this incident." Muktadir said, "The police were present but did not intervene."

Lawyer Muhiuddin denied the allegations against him. "I did not assault anyone inside the courtroom," he told The Daily Star.

Dhaka Bar Association General Secretary Syed Nazrul Islam said he went to the spot and tried to calm both sides. He said no official investigation committee has yet been formed.

Survivors desperately searching for family members sifted rubble, carried bodies on woven stretchers, and dug graves with pickaxes in the wait for aid to arrive.

Video showed trucks, some laden with sacks of flour and others carrying men with shovels, travelling to remote villages on higher slopes. Authorities also airdropped dozens of commando forces at sites where helicopters could not land.

Meanwhile, Court Reporters' Unity, Law Reporters Forum and Supreme Court Reporters Forum condemned the incident.

Does asking for forgiveness absolve

FROM PAGE 12

The ex-IGP stands accused in a case over crimes against humanity during the July uprising. His co-accused include deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal. Mamun has pleaded guilty and become an approver in the case.

State defence counsel Md Amir Hossain, who represents Hasina and Kamal, completed a cross examination yesterday, after the tribunal recorded Mamun's testimony earlier on Tuesday.

Amir asked Mamun whether he was among the police officials awarded the Bangladesh Police Medal and President Police Medal for "ballot-stuffing on the night before the 2018 national election".

Mamun said he was but could not recall on which grounds.

The defence counsel further pressed: "When you became aware of the election irregularities, did you instruct your subordinates not to comply?" Mamun replied, "I did. Some followed my instructions, others did not."

Amir then said, "By following illegal orders, you also committed a crime."

At that, prosecutor Mizanul Islam responded, "He has already admitted to his crimes and asked for forgiveness."

Amir shot back, "Does seeking forgiveness absolve one of their crimes?"

Mizanul replied that the tribunal would take that question into consideration.

Act to avert mass hunger

FROM PAGE 12

on the Rohingya issue, which would enable high level discussions and the development of a unified action plan reflecting the shared responsibility of all member states.

APHR reasserts that ASEAN has ignored the root of the crisis, and now it is already at a critical stage."

Its member Raoul Manuel of the Philippines said Rohingya youth cannot remain trapped without access to peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Asked about the APHR position on the Myanmar election due in December, Santiago said the proposed election is largely rejected by progressive human rights MPs, as it is seen as impossible to hold an election in a "war zone" where the government only controls 40 percent of the land".

"It is critical for the Rohingya people to unite now to ensure they are part of any future election or political process; otherwise, Bangladesh will be left with the problem."

APHR also suggested holding a high-level meeting involving ASEAN,

Speaking to journalists later, the defence counsel said, "Former IGP Mamun admitted to his crimes and asked for forgiveness. But murder cannot be forgiven. Even if he admits the crime, he should still be tried ... I want to prove he is not innocent."

During cross examination, Mamun also revealed he had been given two contractual extensions after his service tenure ended. While he accepted the first, he was reluctant the second time.

"Despite my refusal, I was re-appointed IGP to conceal internal feuds within the police, especially involving officers from Gopalganj."

He also testified that during initial core committee meetings at the then home minister's residence, no order to shoot was issued. "The order to open fire on peaceful protesters came later."

When Amir claimed that around 700 police officers were killed during last year's uprising, Mamun replied he was unaware of any such figure.

Amir then retorted, "Then you were an unfit IGP..." – a claim Mamun rejected.

According to Police Headquarters, 44 policemen were killed during the July uprising.

Mamun further said the SWAT (special weapons and tactics) unit had obtained snipers before his appointment as IGP but, to his knowledge, those weapons were not

used during last year's movement.

Before the lunch break, Amir requested the two-member tribunal of Chair Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder and Judge Md Mohitul Hoque Anam Chowdhury to adjourn the cross examination until Sunday. But the tribunal chair rejected the plea, saying the court is already burdened with a huge caseload.

At the post-lunch session, Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder was not present. An hour after it began, the defence counsel appealed for adjournment again, citing headache and illness. Judge Mohitul Hoque sought the prosecution's opinion.

Prosecutor Mizanul said it would be better to have it completed yesterday, and the judge issued an order accordingly.

As the session resumed, Amir argued that Hasina and Kamal had not instructed the use of drones, helicopters, or lethal weapons against protesters, to which Mamun replied, "They gave instructions."

When Amir asked if such orders were issued in writing, the ex-IGP admitted, "No."

The defence counsel then said, "So during the July uprising, crimes were committed by your subordinates under your command without written orders."

Mamun denied this allegation as well.

Fashion legend Armani dies

FROM PAGE 12
worked until his final days, dedicating himself to the company, the collections, and the many ongoing and future projects," the company said.

Armani had cancelled his menswear show in Milan this year due to health reasons. He also missed the Paris Armani Prive show on doctors' orders. "In 20 years of Armani Prive, it's the first time I'm not in Paris," he said in a statement sent to AFP in July.

"My doctors advised more rest, even though I felt ready."

He added that he had "followed and overseen every aspect of the show remotely", stressing: "I approved and signed off on everything you will see."

The Italian icon was credited with inventing red-carpet fashion, but also moved into a younger and less expensive range through Emporio Armani, and opened luxury hotels.

His death came just weeks ahead of celebrations marking 50 years of his eponymous label.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

BLENDER'S CHOICE – THE DAILY STAR OTT & DIGITAL CONTENT AWARDS

Who will join Naziba and Rafsan as hosts?

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

BLENDER'S CHOICE

The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards 2024

The fourth edition of Blender's Choice – The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards will celebrate excellence in digital entertainment. Artists, performers, and filmmakers will be honoured across 27 categories – including 15 Popular and 12 Critics' awards – culminating in a festive evening of stellar performances and recognition of outstanding contributions to the OTT industry.

DATE: SUNDAY | SEPTEMBER 7, 2025

TIME: 6PM ONWARDS

VENUE: BANGLADESH CHINA FRIENDSHIP CONFERENCE CENTER (BCFCC)



MOULVIBAZAR IN SYLHET

Sand lifting rampant despite crackdown

MINTU DESHWARA

Illegal sand mining continues unabated across several upazilas in Moulvibazar, despite a series of raids and jail sentences.

The unlawful extraction, primarily occurring under the cover of night, is wreaking havoc on the environment and posing significant risks to local communities.

Over the past 11 months, at least 50 raids have been carried out in Srimangal, Kamalganj, Kulaura, and Sadar upazilas. Authorities have seized over 40 million cubic feet of sand, which was later auctioned for more than Tk 17 crore, according to upazila administration sources.

Yet, enforcement efforts have failed to deter illegal miners. Environmental degradation, including riverbank erosion and road damage caused by overloaded sand transport vehicles, continues to plague the affected areas.

Bamboo barriers and red flags set up by the administration to block access to quarries have largely been ignored.

A leaseholder was fined Tk 1 lakh for illegally extracting sand from the Manu River in Kulaura upazila. The operation, conducted on September 2 by Md Anisul Islam, assistant commissioner (Land) and executive magistrate of Kulaura, found sand being extracted beyond the designated lease boundary, specifically from a restricted area near Salon Bridge.

Md Saikat, operating on behalf of the leaseholder, was fined Tk 1 lakh under the Sand Quarry and Soil Management Act, 2010.

Srimangal upazila, home to the highest concentration of silica sand deposits in the district, has seen the most enforcement activity. In the past 11 months, 16 cases were

filed in connection with illegal sand extraction.

Mobile courts conducted seven operations, seizing 71,285 cubic feet of sand and auctioning the material three times. On August 30, 100 cubic feet of silica sand were seized from Bhurburhia quarries in Shantibag.

Earlier that week, the administration stopped sand extraction near the Gopala Chhara bridge, confiscating 500 cubic feet of sand from the Kalibari area in Raghunathpur.

sand from Chaitraghat Balumhal on the Dhalai River.

Kamalganj UNO Makhon Chandra Sutradhar said, "Our drive against illegal sand mining is ongoing."

Government records show Moulvibazar has 52 listed silica sand quarries. Of these, 33 are approved by the Bureau of Mineral Resources Development, with 31 located in Sreemangal alone. There are also 26 general sand quarries on rivers, including leased sites on the Dhalai and Manu rivers.



Additionally, illegal ghats in Sindurkhan union's Sikka and Dobagao areas were shut down, with Tk 50,000 in fines imposed on August 19.

Sreemangal UNO Md Islam Uddin said, "We are monitoring the situation strictly and will take legal action against the violators."

Kamalganj upazila saw 21 raids during the same period, with Tk 13 lakh in fines collected from offenders. The raids on August 23 and 31 led to two individuals being fined Tk 1 lakh each for extracting

Kulaura UNO Md Mohiuddin reported the seizure of 29.641 million cubic feet of sand from Salon of Tilagaon union, Konimura, Harichak, and Sadhanpur of Hajipur union.

The seized sand, valued at Tk 13 crore, was sold at a public auction for Tk 16.94 crore on August 31 after overcoming legal complications.

Contacted, Deputy Commissioner Md Israel Hossain said the government's campaign against illegal sand mining is ongoing. "We are determined to stop those responsible," he said.

Ex-BUR VC denied bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Prof Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah, former vice-chancellor of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, was denied bail and sent to jail yesterday after completing a five day remand in a case accusing him of embezzling Tk 4 crore from a university development project.

The Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka rejected his bail petition.

Judge Md Sabbir Faiz passed the order after Anti-Corruption Commission Assistant Director Minhaj Bin Islam, the investigation officer, requested his confinement until the probe is completed.

The ACC filed the case on June 18 against five people, including Kalimullah.

PRAYER TIMING

SEPTEMBER 5

Fazr Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN 4-35	12-30	4-30	6-20	7-45
JAMAAT 5-10	1-15	4-45	6-25	8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Campaigns ramp up

FROM PAGE 3

Instead, they continued their door-to-door campaign.

Divided into three teams led by their candidates for the top three posts, they campaigned among non-residential and female voters, particularly in the science faculties at Mokarram and Kazi Motaher Hossain areas.

Two Ducusu panels unveiled their manifestos yesterday. One of them, Samannito Shikkharto Sangsads, led by VP candidate Jamal Uddin Khalid and GS candidate Mahin Sarker, focuses on the university's development.

Jamal, the former president of Islami Shasantranta Chhatura Andolon's DU unit, and Mahin, the former joint member secretary of the National Citizen Party, stated in their manifesto that DU would be their top priority if elected. They want DU to lead the fourth industrial revolution, they said.

The panel's pledges include assisting DU students with preparations for global examinations like IELTS, GRE, and TOEFL, modernising the university curriculum, promoting

cultural independence, and introducing a "one student, one laptop" programme.

They also pledged to digitalise the university, among other initiatives.

The other panel, Biplobi Chhatura Parishad, also unveiled their manifesto, which includes a commitment to work towards placing the university in the top 100 global rankings and ensuring the university operates as a truly autonomous body.

These accounts contain transactions in both dirhams and US dollars, amounting to approximately Tk 311.26 crore, based on exchange rates.

Besides, records show that Saifuzzaman and his associates established and operated two business entities in the UAE - Zeba Trading FZE (building and construction materials) and Rapid Raptor FZE (software business) - under the Ras Al Khaimah Economic Zone authority.

According to Bangladesh Bank, Saifuzzaman did not obtain any official permission to register companies, invest, or purchase property abroad. CID said that these acts constitute money laundering under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2012 (Amended 2015).

Hasina's ghost

FROM PAGE 3

the administration are implementing Hasina's long-term blueprint through chaos and anarchy."

BNP Economic Affairs Secretary Engineer Khaled Hossain Mahboob Shaymal, convener of Amra BNP Poribar Atikur Rahman, and district BNP General Secretary Sirajul Islam Siraj, were also present.

বাংলাদেশ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশন

University Grants Commission of Bangladesh

আগামোগী, শেরে বাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭

Website: www.ugc.gov.bd

তারিখ: ২০ তার্ফ ১৪৩২

০৪ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি সংশোধন প্রসঙ্গে

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাইতেছে যে, "দৈনিক আমার দেশ" ও "দি ডেইলি স্টোর" পত্রিকায় গত ১২-০৮-২০২৫ তারিখ নং-ইউজিসি/প্রশা/১২১(১২)/২০১৮/২৬৪৬ নম্বর স্মারকে বাংলাদেশ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশন এর ৯ম প্রেস্বত্ত্ব বেশ কিছু পদ যথাজৰ্মে- সহকারী সচিব/সহকারী পরিচালক, একাউন্টস অফিসার, বাণিজ অফিসার, অডিট অফিসার, সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (সিল্লি), সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (ইলেক্ট্রিকাল), সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (মেকানিকাল) এবং সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (ইলেক্ট্রিকাল) নেটওয়ার্ক সিকিউরিটি ইঞ্জিনিয়ার পদসমূহের শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতায় সংশোধনী আনয়ন করা হইয়াছে এবং আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ সময় আগামী ১১-০৯-২০২৫ তারিখের পরিৱৰ্তে আগামী ২২-০৯-২০২৫ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত বর্ধিত করা হইয়াছে। তবে নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির অপরাপর শর্তব্যলী অপরিবর্তিত থাকিবে।

শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সংশোধন শর্তব্যলী কমিশনের ওয়েবসাইট www.ugc.gov.bd এর "ডাউনলোড" নামক সেবা বর্তের চাকুরি বিজ্ঞপ্তি লিঙ্ক হইতে সংজ্ঞান করা যাইবে।

উল্লেখ্য যে, বিজ্ঞপ্তির বর্ণিত পদসমূহে যাহারা ইতোপূর্বে আবেদন করিয়াছেন তাহাদের পুনরায় আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নাই।

জিডি-১৯৪৮



Dhaka South City Corporation

Office of the Executive Engineer

Dhulpur, Dhaka

www.dhakasouthcity.gov.bd

Ref. No. 46.207.000.09.23.14.2024

Date: 04/09/2025

e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of:

Sl. No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender ID No.	Last selling date & time	Tender closing & opening date & time
1	egp/dsc/z-08/25-26/p-02	Repair works of damaged road in Ward No. 66, 67, 68 and 69 under Zone 08	1146517	29-Sep-2025 13:00:00	29-Sep-2025 15:00:00
2	egp/dsc/z-08/25-26/p-01	Repair & maintenance of office of Zone 8 along with roads infrastructure of Ward No. 66, 67, 68, 69 through term contractor in FY 2025-26	1146516	22-Sep-2025 13:00:00	22-Sep-2025 15:00:00

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

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branch.

Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

08/09/2025

Mohammad Khalilur Rahman

Executive Engineer

Zone-08

Dhaka South City Corporation

E-mail: dscxen08@gmail.com

Saifuzzaman

FROM PAGE 3

Investigators also discovered four bank accounts in the names of Saifuzzaman and his associates -- two with Dubai Islamic Bank, one with Janata Bank, and another with First Abu Dhabi Bank.

These accounts contain transactions in both dirhams and US dollars, amounting to approximately Tk 311.26 crore, based on exchange rates.

Besides, records show that Saifuzzaman and his associates established and operated two business entities in the UAE -- Zeba Trading FZE (building and construction materials) and Rapid Raptor FZE (software business) -- under the Ras Al Khaimah Economic Zone authority.

According to Bangladesh Bank, Saifuzzaman did not obtain any official permission to register companies, invest, or purchase property abroad. CID said that these acts constitute money laundering under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2012 (Amended 2015).

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ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

YOUTH ANXIETIES

Navigating the rapidly-changing job market

The job market has seen dramatic shifts throughout history. From the Industrial Revolution transforming economies to the digitalisation of jobs, new technology usually meant as much opportunity as displacement.

ZIBA MAHDI

The youth today are entering the workforce during a time of overwhelming technological, economic, and social change. The career guidance they received from their parents, teachers, and mentors is far removed from the reality they're facing as fresh grads.

On average, people can expect that two-fifths of their existing skill sets will be transformed or become outdated over the 2025-2030 period, according to the World Economic Forum. The list of fastest-growing skills includes AI and big data, followed by networks, cybersecurity, and technology literacy. In addition to being tech-savvy, resilience, creative thinking, lifelong learning, curiosity, along with flexibility and agility, will continue gaining prominence over the 2025-2030 period.

Half of all employers already plan to reorient their businesses after the emergence of AI. Two-thirds of all employers, on the other hand, plan to hire talent with specific AI skills, while 40 percent predict that their workforce will be reduced given AI's proficiency at automating tasks.

Unsurprisingly, the industry most affected by AI is the one where its genesis occurred. For years, the youth were pushed towards pursuing their studies and professions in Computer Science, as it was seen as a safe and lucrative option. This, in turn, saw the number of Computer Science majors mushroom across universities everywhere. However, recent layoffs and hiring freezes by tech companies indicate that "learn to code" will no longer be anyone's go-to advice.

"Oversaturation has made competition skyrocket in the last couple of years," explains Zubaida Zahid Runee, a Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) student of Korea

University in Seoul. "It's important to stand out. This is why I decided to make my major more interdisciplinary by pursuing Brain and Cognitive Sciences to complement my Computer Science degree."

Many experts argue that fluctuations in the labour market are common and that it is too soon for AI to be causing disruptions of this scale. With that said, it's not only young coders who should be wary of new technology; many entry-level jobs are at stake as well. Beginner roles often contain a lot of drudgery—the perfect candidate to be automated by AI systems. *The Guardian* reports that such roles have been reduced by a third over the past two and a half years. This is a significant development considering early work experiences act as crucial stepping stones for young people breaking into the workforce. They offer new workers exposure to the habits, norms and expectations of the professional world.

If we travel a bit further back, we can see ripple effects of the pandemic in the employment landscape. Covid-19 threw an unexpected wrench in young people's plans, changing market trends more quickly than anyone could have anticipated. The labour market disruptions during this time included the rise of remote work, unemployment, job changes, and substantial income loss. The onset of the pandemic also caused a large number of sectors of the economy to collapse.

Some are taking these transitions in stride, however. Sarah*, who has recently started her internship at a multinational company, states, "Jobs in the business world, which required little technical knowledge, now demand strong skills in tools like Microsoft Power BI, Tableau, Google Workspace, and various customer relationship management (CRM)

platforms. But there's also increased flexibility now, with more remote positions and hybrid offices allowing for a better work-life balance."

While technological advancements may be revolutionising the job market faster than ever, the demographic considered the first digital natives may be in an apt position to tackle it. Since Gen-Z has grown up in a completely digital age, their innate understanding of technology could be leveraged to their advantage in the employment scene. They also have unparalleled access to information, including career prospects, salary ranges, and potential risks in their fields of interest.

Nevertheless, adapting to these frequent changes means workers will have to learn to reinvent themselves constantly just to remain competitive. Agility and continuous education will be necessary to survive in a workforce that requires you to be on your toes.

*Name has been changed upon request for privacy

The world is complicated and ever-changing. Usually, young people are the first to bear the brunt of unprecedented changes and shifts in the current world order. Be it the onset of climate change, the birth and acclimatisation of artificial intelligence (AI), or the consistently worsening state of geopolitics and declining global peace—young people are most vulnerable to the impacts of these changes, and they must deal with the consequences for the longest. Despite that, society still struggles to understand young people; their identities, their decisions, and the motivations behind their choices. This series will thus, bring forward one such issue every month, through articles and musings, written by young people navigating through life and its many challenges.

Are first-year friendships truly doomed to fail?

ZABIN TAZRIN NASHITA

The pain of not being able to attend university with your childhood friends lessens ever so slightly, and you feel a lot less lonely as you find yourself laughing among a relatively large group of people. That is, until you meet the derisive smiles of your seniors as they kindly inform you that the friends you make at university won't be there for long.

Against your better judgment, you start looking at your friends with some suspicion. Are they long-term friendship material? Is it naive of you to expect that the group of people with whom you seem to click superbly will manage to make it through the next four years?

As a student in her final semester of undergraduate life, I believe I possess some credentials to speak on this matter, having experienced both the quintessential university friend group breakup and managed to hold onto the people I truly care about.

University is uncharted territory to begin with, and it doesn't help that as you grow into yourself, the more difficult it is for you to find connection.



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

When you first meet your university friends, you may bond over your favourite music or film, shared experiences in class, or the first quiz that seemed to appear at the speed of light. Since you are just starting out, your focus should be to make the transition easier for yourself and observe the people around you to find a circle that works for you.

The reason university friend groups formed during the early days fall apart is due to the fact that the connection is often forged at face value. Such friend groups are bound to drift away. It does not have to be an explosive melodrama as it is often painted to be, although you are very likely to witness a few fiascos as

well.

So, to answer the question we started with—yes, the odds are stacked against the friend group you forge during the first week of class. While this is not a hard and fast rule, we've established that the reason your friend group may scatter is a valid one.

A friendship is a connection that should happen naturally, and if you're not enjoying the company of those around you, it is pointless to care about how your social life is being perceived. You may distance yourself from the people you originally clicked with to become closer to a group you may fit into better. You may be among the unlucky ones who end up not making any lasting friendships, and that is fine as well.

At the end of the day, friends lend you a space of comfort to ease the burdens of your daily life. Human relationships are complicated, and change is inevitable. The shifting dynamics with others in your vicinity should not weigh on you at the early stages, regardless of the derisions and jokes. So, if you are a freshman, put yourself out there, and hopefully, you will finish strong with a social life that you are content with.

YOUTH

The illusion of parasocial relationships

TINATH ZAeba

It is a strange thing to feel as though you know everything about someone who has never met you, stranger still when millions of people feel the same way. The phenomenon I am referring to is "parasocial relationship", a neat psychological phrase for the one-sided bonds people form with public figures. But it hardly feels like psychology when you are celebrating Taylor Swift's engagement as if she's someone you know.

In a similar vein, The Beatles were hounded by paparazzi all day, and Marilyn Monroe's face was sold like a brand logo—plastered on magazines and posters. But there was a barrier of distance. You had to buy the magazine, switch on the radio, or wait for the cinema screen to light up. Now, the smartphone in our hands makes the information accessible all the time. And it is normal that we form a bond with figures we look up to. However, we have to ask ourselves to what extent it should be accepted.

A pop star posts about her closet after her tour. Elsewhere, a beloved Hollywood actor livestreams from his kitchen in the middle of the night. The curtain never falls. You do not admire celebrities anymore; you "follow" them, which itself is a verb that suggests a certain type of stalking.

Children are especially vulnerable because their first interactions with fame often happen online. And when they scroll further into adolescence, the emotional attachment deepens. It is not just limited to liking a video anymore; it evolves into idolising, obsessing, and spending money to keep the fantasy alive. It feels personal, but the relationship is not real.

Platforms like Cameo exist for this reason: pay a large sum and your favourite actor or reality



ILLUSTRATION: AZRA HUMAYRA

star will record a birthday message, pretending for 30 seconds that you are genuinely special to them.

On platforms such as Patreon, TikTok, or OnlyFans, the entire economy thrives on the promise of closeness, marketed as exclusive access or one-on-one connection. Merch drops, VIP passes, subscription models: they are all built on the premise that the bond you think you have with a celebrity can be deepened, but only if you are willing to pay.

Another clever monetisation is album variants. Singers now release the same record multiple times, often at higher prices, with nothing changed but the photos. And thanks to obsessive fandom culture, these variants sell out every time.

The illusion hides the truth. No matter what their TikToks show, a celebrity's life is never like ours: it is full of publicists, management teams, and financial security. The gulf between fan and star is wider than ever, only now it is disguised by relatability. Fans think they are connecting across that gap, but in reality, they are consuming a packaged product marketed on the parasocial bond.

The influence does not stop at consumerism. When millions of people feel personally tied to a public figure, endorsements land differently. A product recommendation or political statement feels like advice from a friend. The danger is that fans, especially the younger demographic, absorb not only the content but also the ideologies attached to it.

Celebrities know this, and they use it—sometimes innocently, sometimes strategically.

For celebrities, this is an efficient business model. It requires no studio, no set, no middleman. Just a phone and the pretence of friendship. For fans, particularly young ones, it is a trap. They dedicate hours dissecting outfits, memorising interview lines, and watching the same music video over and over to feel closer to the celebrities.

What makes today's version more troubling is that the connection never switches off. A child can wake up at 3 AM and immediately be flooded with updates from influencers across the world. The intimacy is constant, the drip feed never-ending.

Parasocial relationships will not vanish. In fact, it is stitched into the fabric of the celebrity economy. The illusion works so well because it feels ordinary. That is the real trick of social media celebrity culture: convincing you that something hollow is instead full. We may all know, on some rational level, that the person on the screen has never thought about us. But knowing and feeling are different. And feeling, it seems, has become a business.

Tinath Zaeba is an optimistic daydreamer, a cat mom of 5 and a student of Economics at North South University. Get in touch via mailing to tinathzaeba25@gmail.com



DARING FLAIR FACES GRINDING RESILIENCE

Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz will renew their generational rivalry in a much-anticipated US Open semifinal tonight, a bridge-between-eras clash where the duo will meet for the first time at Flushing Meadows. The winner faces defending champion Jannik Sinner or Felix Auger-Aliassime.

DJOKOVIC VS ALCARAZ

Age: 38 | 22

Stakes: Record 25th Grand Slam | Sixth Slam and World No. 1 chase

Head-to-head: Djokovic leads 5-3

Recent meetings: Australian Open 2025 QF, Olympic 2024 final (Djokovic won both)

"Everybody is probably expecting and anticipating the finals between the two of them (Alcaraz and Sinner). I'm going to try to mess up the plans of most of the people."

Novak Djokovic

"Sometimes I play a shot I shouldn't, but it's the way I love playing tennis. I'm here to entertain the people, myself and the team."

Carlos Alcaraz



FEAR confronted is fear conquered

KHALID HOSSAIN

Athletes are often cast as entertainers, their victories measured in numbers and trophies. Yet, time and again, they reveal themselves as something more profound: reluctant mentors in resilience, teachers of the unseen battles that play out long before the scoreboard blinks.

Amanda Anisimova of the United States has just given us such a lesson at the Arthur Ashe Stadium court.

Around seven weeks ago, she endured one of the crudest humiliations a player could face – a Grand Slam final on Centre Court reduced to a footnote, a double bagel (6-0, 6-0) at the hands of Iga Swiatek. She was “frozen by nerves,” her body stiffened under the weight of history, she admitted later.

Few would have blamed her for burying that memory, shelving the replay, and moving on. That is, after all, the common prescription of our age: “forget, distract, move past.”

But Anisimova did the improbable,

if not unthinkable. On the eve of her US Open quarterfinal match, she sat herself down and pressed play, reliving the horror, watching her getting annihilated. She rewound the shame that many would rather erase, and in doing so, disarmed it.

Then she stepped onto Arthur Ashe Stadium and dismantled six-time Grand Slam winner Swiatek 6-4, 6-3 on Thursday (Bangladesh time), setting up Friday’s semifinal encounter with two-time US Open champion Naomi Osaka – another player who is on course to conquer her own depression-related demons.

Call it revenge, redemption, or reclamation, but in those two hours, Anisimova demonstrated that healing does not always come from escape. Sometimes, it is born of staring into the very abyss we most want to avoid.

“Last night – nobody told me to – but I watched (it) back, as painful as it was,



just to see, like, what I can avoid or what went wrong. Then I had to watch some good highlights to remove that from my brain,” the 24-year-old revealed post-match.

It is why athletes often end up as spiritual mentors without intending to be. Their struggles mirror our own, only magnified under brighter lights. “Today [yesterday] I came out with not an ounce of fear,” she added.

Anisimova may still be piecing herself together after years of personal setbacks – the sudden loss of her father and coach, bouts of grief and burnout, a tumble down the rankings, and a break from the sport to tend to her mental health – but in showing that fear confronted can be fear conquered, she revived a template for anyone stuck in their own loops of shame.

Not every wound closes quickly. Not every setback is simply “moved on” from. However, with courage to revisit the painful chapters, as the eighth seeded player proved in New York, those very scars can become the source of strength.

And that, more than rankings or titles, is what endures in memory.

PHOTOS: AFP/REUTERS

HOCKEY ASIA CUP Bangladesh seek ‘big achievement’

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh confirmed at least a sixth place finish in the AHF Hockey Asia Cup after beating Kazakhstan 5-1 in the 5th-8th place deciding match in Raigir, Bihar, India, yesterday.

They will next play the 5th-6th place deciding match on Sunday against Japan, who beat Chinese Taipei 2-0 on Wednesday.

Bangladesh, who also finished sixth in the previous edition of the Asian Cup in 2022, now have the chance to qualify directly for the FIH World Cup Qualifiers if they overcome Japan, which, according to head coach Moshir Rahman Biplob, would be a “big achievement” for the men in red and green.

“We are happy to confirm at least sixth in the Hockey Asia Cup as per our quality,” Biplob told The Daily Star yesterday.

A defeat to Japan, however, would mean Bangladesh must play a three-match playoff series against Pakistan -- who withdrew from the ongoing Asia Cup due to security concerns over traveling to India -- to secure



are ahead of Bangladesh in terms of technique, tactics, and physicality,” he said.

The coach also praised his players for giving their best despite fitness concerns, as the team had only 14 days of training before the tournament.

Bangladesh, who had already beaten Kazakhstan twice -- 3-0 and 5-1 -- in the AHF Cup in Indonesia last April, went ahead in the 10th minute yesterday when penalty-corner specialist Ashraf Islam converted a set piece. He doubled the lead in the 23rd minute with another penalty corner.

Roman Sarkar made it 3-0 from open play just before halftime. He struck again three minutes after the restart, extending the margin to 4-0 with a penalty corner, before Tayeb Ali netted from open play in the 34th minute to make it 5-0.

Kazakhstan's Altynbek Aitkaliyev scored in the 38th minute, but his side, who earned their Asia Cup spot after AHF Cup champions Oman opted out, could not avoid a third defeat in six months against Bangladesh.

their place in the qualifiers.

The champions of the ongoing Asia Cup will directly qualify for the FIH World Cup, while the next top five finishers will earn places in the qualifiers.

Biplob is hoping to take advantage of Japan's mental state following their recent setback.

“It seems to me that the Japanese are mentally down after failing to qualify for the Super Four, but they are still a team to beat. We will definitely try to cash in on their mental condition, though Japan

Mbappe's chance to overtake Henry

France, runners-up of the 2022 World Cup, are set to open their qualifying campaign for the 2026 World Cup when they take on Ukraine in Poland on Saturday night, before hosting Iceland on Tuesday. For skipper Kylian Mbappe, the upcoming fixtures present a chance to go level or even overtake French legend Thierry Henry. Mbappe, who has now scored 50 goals in 90 matches, is just one shy of equalling Henry's record and sharing the second spot in France's all-time top scorers list. World Cup winner Olivier Giroud leads the list with 57 goals.

PHOTO: REUTERS



New CWAB president Mithun vows to fight for players

SPORTS REPORTER

National team cricketer and the newly elected president of the Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) Mohammad Mithun said he is prepared to lock horns with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials for the players.

Mithun received 154 votes to beat lone competitor match referee Salim Shahed (34 votes) for the presidency post in the CWAB election held at the BCB Academy building on Thursday.

“We will try to solve everything through negotiation. If that's not possible, as I have come here to protect the rights of the cricketers, I have to speak for them. If that makes some in the board unhappy, there is nothing I can do about it,” Mithun said after getting elected.

Meanwhile, the remaining 10 posts were decided without contest. Shahed had told the media earlier that he competed in the polls to prevent what he termed an “auto pass” election.

Those elected unopposed are -- Shahriar Hossain Bidut (senior vice-president), Nurul Hasan Sohan (vice-president), Najmul Hossain Shanto, Shamsur Rahman, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Rumana Ahmed, Khaled Mashud Pilot, Imrul Kayes, Irfan Sukkur, and Akbar Ali (executive members).

Mithun takes over from former Bangladesh captain Naimur Rahman Durjoy, who had held the post from 2014 till March of 2025.



UAE name Asia Cup squad

ICC

UAE on Thursday named a 17-member outfit for the upcoming Asia Cup.

Led by their star batter Muhammad Waseem, UAE are placed in Group A along with India, Pakistan, and Oman. They will take on India in their opening game of the Asia Cup in Dubai on September 10.

Their squad is the same as the one featuring in the ongoing tri series against Afghanistan and Pakistan, with the addition of pacer Matiullah Khan and left-arm tweaker Simranjeet Singh.

UAE previously participated in the Asia Cup in 2016, when the tournament was hosted in Bangladesh.

The latest edition of the continental tournament has eight sides divided into two groups of four. The top-two teams from each group will then feature in the Super Four stage, before the best two sides fight it out for the title in the Final.

The tournament will see Asia's finest sides in action ahead of next year's ICC Men's T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka.



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



'Does asking for forgiveness absolve one of their crimes?'

Defence asks while cross-examining ex-IGP Mamun

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun yesterday maintained that his actions during the July uprising were carried out as part of his official duties.

During a cross examination by the defence counsel at the International Crimes Tribunal 1, he also said, "Issuing directives to suppress a movement may be legal, but shooting and killing protesters in a peaceful movement is not."

He added that although he knew the student movement was legal, he had to act against it while carrying out government duty.

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PHOTO: AFP

Journo beaten by lawyers in Dhaka courtroom

Another verbally abused

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Somoy TV reporter was beaten by a group of lawyers while covering the bail hearing of journalist Monjurul Alam Panna, who was arrested under the Anti-Terrorism Act, at a Dhaka courtroom yesterday afternoon.

Journalist Asif Muhammad Siam was attacked inside the courtroom of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Hasib Ullah Pias. Witnesses said the incident occurred around 2:55pm, shortly after Monjurul was brought to the court, wearing a helmet, handcuffs, and a bulletproof vest.

After Monjurul removed his helmet, he told police, "Why are you doing this? I am not your enemy."



Asif Muhammad Siam

Journalist Mukhtadir Rashid Romeo of Bangla Outlook asked Monjurul if he had been tortured in jail, to which Monjurul replied, "No."

Moments later, lawyer Muhiddin Molla reportedly verbally abused Mukhtadir for speaking, prompting the journalist to respond that only the judge can order someone to leave the courtroom.

Angered by this, the lawyer rushed at him, and Somoy TV's Siam stepped in to stop him. According to witnesses, Muhiddin then struck Siam. The lawyer and several others dragged Siam outside, continuing to beat him. Siam was left bleeding before state lawyer Kayum Hossain intervened and took him to the witness stand for protection.

Mukhtadir was also forced out of the courtroom and verbally abused.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

Afghanistan rattled by another quake

Death toll crosses 2,200

REUTERS, KABUL

A magnitude 6.2 earthquake struck southeastern Afghanistan yesterday, the German Research Centre for Geosciences said, the third tremor in the same region since Sunday, when one of the country's deadliest quakes in years killed more than 2,200 people.

Naqibullah Rahimi, a spokesperson for the health department in Nangarhar province, said the quake's epicentre was in the remote Shiwa district near the Pakistan border, with initial reports of damage in the Barkashkot area, though details were still being collected.

The tremor, at a depth of 10 km (six miles), followed the earlier quakes that flattened villages in Kunar and Nangarhar provinces, left tens of thousands homeless, and injured more than 3,600 people.

Survivors have been left without shelter as aid groups warn of dwindling resources, with the United Nations and other agencies citing a critical need for food, medical supplies and shelter.

Rescue workers yesterday pulled bodies from the rubble of homes razed in Afghanistan's earthquakes as the confirmed death toll topped 2,200, while homeless survivors faced a bleak future with global aid agencies warning of dwindling resources.

Search operations continued in the quake-hit

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



A Palestinian woman weeps as she carries the body of a baby killed in Israeli airstrikes on Gaza City at dawn, ahead of a funeral procession outside Al-Shifa Hospital yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Entire families being 'wiped out'

Say Gaza officials as Israel intensifies attacks; 54 more Palestinians killed

AGENCIES

Palestinian officials said entire families are being "wiped out" as Israel intensified its bombardment of residential areas in Gaza City and makeshift encampments across the Strip.

At least 54 Palestinians have been killed in the attacks since dawn yesterday, while thousands of residents defied Israeli orders to leave, remaining behind in the ruins in the path of Israel's latest advance.

"This time, I am not leaving my house. I want to die here. It doesn't matter if we move out or stay. Tens of thousands of those who left their homes were killed by Israel too, so why bother?" Um Nader, a mother of five from Gaza City, told Reuters via text message.

Hamas on Wednesday evening said that it is ready for the formation of an independent national administration to run Gaza and for a comprehensive truce deal, which will see all Israeli captives released.

The group's remarks came shortly after US President Donald Trump called on Hamas to release all 20 hostages. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office criticized Hamas' comments in a statement. "Unfortunately, this

is yet another spin by Hamas with nothing new in it," it said.

Netanyahu's office reiterated that the war in Gaza would only end if all hostages were released, Hamas was disarmed, the strip was demilitarized, Israel established security control over the enclave, and an alternative civilian administration was established.

- Thousands of residents defied Israeli orders to leave
- Hamas reiterates readiness for comprehensive Gaza deal
- Death toll from starvation in enclave rises to 370

Gaza's health ministry yesterday said that at least 370 Palestinians have died from starvation in the enclave since the start of Israel's offensive in October 2023, including 131 children, reports Al Jazeera online.

The ministry said that at least three people have died of malnutrition in the Strip over the last 24 hours.

Meanwhile, Nelson Mandela's grandson has said Palestinians'

lives under Israeli occupation are worse than anything Black South Africans experienced under apartheid, and urged the global community to come to their aid.

Mandela, 51, spoke to Reuters on Wednesday evening at Johannesburg Airport, where he was boarding a flight to Tunisia to join a flotilla aiming to deliver food and humanitarian supplies to Gaza despite an Israeli naval blockade.

"Many of us that have visited the occupied territories in Palestine have only come back with one conclusion: that the Palestinians are experiencing a far worse form of apartheid than we ever experienced," Mandela said.

"We believe that the global community has to continue supporting the Palestinians, just as they stood side-by-side with us," he said.

Mandela is joining a group of 10 South African activists in the Global Sumud Flotilla, which includes dozens of boats and hundreds of people from 44 countries including Swedish activist Greta Thunberg.

South Africa's African National Congress said their mission "echoes our own struggle for liberation".

Mandela emphasised that, when apartheid ended in 1994, it was after intense pressure and sanctions from other nations.

Act to avert mass hunger among the Rohingyas

Asean Parliamentarians for Human Rights urges regional bloc

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Asean Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR) has made an urgent call for the creation of Asean Humanitarian Fund to deliver life-saving support and prevent mass hunger among Rohingyas in Bangladesh.

"The World Food Programme warned that food rations will run out after November 2025 unless \$17 million per month is secured," said Charles Santiago, co-chair of APHR and former member of parliament of Malaysia.

The call was made at a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday after a three-member APHR delegation conducted a fact-finding mission to the Rohingya camps and host communities in Cox's Bazar from September 1 to 4.

There are around 1.5 million Rohingyas in Bangladesh, including about 150,000 who fled since 2023 amid renewed conflicts in Myanmar.

"The Rohingya crisis is not a distant issue. It is an Asean issue, and if the regional bloc continues its inaction, the costs will be high: human trafficking, arms and drug smuggling, as well as an influx of refugees that would continue to threaten stability across the region," said Santiago.

The APHR called for the creation of an Asean platform

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Rights groups condemn EPZ worker killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights groups yesterday issued separate statements condemning the extrajudicial death of factory worker Md Habib in Nilphamari's Export Processing Zone on September 2.

The incident took place while workers were protesting for unpaid arrears.

Human Rights Forum Bangladesh (HRFB), a platform of 23 organisations, issued a statement "strongly condemning the incident" and demanding "a fair investigation, justice, and exemplary punishment for those responsible".

It said, "Firing on workers is a direct and extreme violation of human rights."

Democratic Rights Committee, a citizen's platform, in its separate statement also slammed the government for giving tacit support to mobs preying on those going against majoritarian beliefs. "It astonishes us that the joint forces, who very easily killed a worker and carried out various extrajudicial killings over the past year, cannot control local mobs and attacks."

"Just like the previous government, this government is also taking an anti-worker, anti-women, anti-minority, undemocratic and authoritarian role," it said.

Both platforms demanded payment of arrears owed to workers, withdrawal of unjust layoffs, and proper compensation to the family of the killed worker.

The committee's statement further said, "The fall of fascism happened in exchange for the blood of many working people. Yet after the mass uprising, the first extrajudicial death to occur was that of a worker. In continuation of that, the state's joint forces killed Md Habib, a worker of Evergreen factory, who was participating in a just movement."

"We see that the interim government has not only

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



GRACING OUR GOLDEN FIELDS . . . A flock of spotted doves soars gracefully over the golden-green Aush paddy fields of Bogura's Sariakandi, where the season's crop is ripening. Drawn to the fields in this period, these doves feed on grains and seeds scattered across the paddies. Spotted doves, native to South and Southeast Asia, are easily recognised by the black-and-white checkerboard pattern on their necks. They thrive in open woodlands, farmlands, and even urban gardens, often nesting in low shrubs or trees. Known for their soft, rolling coo and fast wingbeats, they are resilient, adaptable, and often seen in pairs or loose flocks. These humble birds add rhythm to rural landscapes, embodying the delicate balance between agriculture and nature.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ



Fashion legend Armani dies

AFP, Rome

Italian fashion legend Giorgio Armani, king of a high-end lifestyle empire, has died at the age of 91 "surrounded by his loved ones", his company said yesterday.

"With infinite sorrow, the Armani Group announces the passing of its creator, founder, and tireless driving force: Giorgio Armani," it said in a statement.

The best known contemporary designer, Armani opened his fashion house in Milan in 1975, quickly rising to the top of the industry and going on to dress the stars.

His funeral will be private, the group said, but well-wishers can pay respects beforehand at a funeral chamber open tomorrow and Sunday in Milan.

"Il Signor Armani, as he was always respectfully and admiringly called by employees and collaborators, passed away peacefully, surrounded by his loved ones," the company said.

"Indefatigable to the end, he

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