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Meghna enters
heavy tyre
production

B1



Code violations
cloud run-up to
Rucsu polls

P3



Traffic chaos
plagues
Trishal

P4



Clash of fire and
nerves as India
face Pakistan

P11

Polls delay could even threaten nat'l security

Say noted citizens, urge political parties to unite for reforms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Politicians and eminent citizens yesterday stressed that there is no alternative to the government playing a stronger role in holding the next election in February, warning that any delay could plunge the country into serious turmoil.

They also urged political parties to set aside their divisions and reach consensus on implementing proposed reforms, not only for the nation's progress but also to ensure fundamental changes that would prevent any future resurgence of autocratic rule.

The remarks came at a roundtable discussion titled "Path to Political Consensus for Elections" organised by Prothom Alo at its office.

Speaking at the programme, Prof Ali Riaz, vice president of the National Consensus Commission, said, "If the election is not held in February, Bangladesh will face not only internal instability but also threats to national security. I am not entertaining any ifs or buts. That is why political parties must now stand together and face this challenge."

He noted differences of opinion among parties regarding constitutional reforms aimed at restraining executive power, establishing accountability, and ensuring that the system reflects people's aspirations.

"This election is unlike previous ones. It is an opportunity for democratic transition, not just a change of power, but a move toward consolidated, sustainable democracy. That's the goal. That's the urgency," he said.

Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman, opening the discussion, said now that all parties agree on the need for reforms, it is essential they find a way forward. "If we stall at the point of implementation, then the long-standing discussions, past movements, struggles, uprisings, and sacrifices will all be in vain. There is fear the country may once again fall into uncertainty," he said.

"We believe certain groups are trying to create this uncertainty. But we do not want such instability." He expressed hope that politicians would show foresight, step beyond partisanship if necessary, and choose consensus. "We want all parties to participate in the February election. We hope you, all of you together, will reach consensus on reforms."

Former caretaker government adviser and economist Hossain Zillur Rahman described prevailing uncertainty as a major challenge. Pointing to rising poverty, unemployment, and primary school dropouts, he said the country is moving in the wrong direction. "One of the key drivers behind this deterioration is uncertainty," he said.

"We rightly emphasise structural reforms. But beyond that lies a more critical dimension, the lived realities of people's everyday lives. This aspect has been largely absent from discussions," he noted.

"Why hasn't there been a clear proposal to combat corruption? For ordinary citizens, this issue is even more pressing and deserves explicit attention."

Zillur warned of dangers within Bangladesh's continuities -- state, constitutional, and economic. "Within these lies the danger of adventurism. Its unanticipated consequences may turn out to be even more severe than the anticipated ones."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



OBSERVATIONS

- ⌚ Jobs, investment, and public confidence already affected
- ⌚ Growing political vacuum visible in unrest, economy, law and order
- ⌚ Reforms must address corruption, poverty, daily hardships, not just constitution

Once a vital artery for agriculture and aquatic life, the Salta river now lies on its deathbed. Years of encroachment and sediment buildup have distorted its natural course, reducing it to a narrow channel. Due to the authorities' failure to protect this lifeline, the region's ecological balance is now in jeopardy. The photo was taken recently in Khulna's Batiaghata upazila.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Shibir bags most of Jucsu posts too

Wins 20 of 25 posts; voter turnout 68%



"We have seen that different candidates complained in the media about the election. But to the Election Commission, no such irregularities were found."

Jucsu EC Member Secretary Prof AKM Rashidul Alam

SAKIB AHMED, MD ABBAS and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

For the very first time in the history of Jahangirnagar University, Islami Chhatra Shibir has swept the central student union polls, winning 20 of the 25 posts.

While Swantantra Shikkharthi Sommilon's Abdur Rashid Zitu was elected vice-president, Shibir backed Samonnito Shikkharthi Jote's Mazharul Islam secured the general secretary post.

Zitu received 3,334 votes and his Shibir-backed rival Arif Ullah Adib 2,392.

Mazharul, a master's student of English and office secretary of JU Shibir, bagged 3,930 votes, while Bangladesh Ganatantrik Chhatra Sangsad candidate Abu Taibud Mohammad Siam got 1,238.

A master's student of comparative literature and culture, Zitu was a central coordinator of the Students Against Discrimination platform, which spearheaded the July uprising. Before that, he was an executive member of JU Chhatra League, which was banned as organisation in October last year.

After becoming VP, Zitu vowed to end all

forms of party-backed political activities on campus.

At a post-result briefing, he said, "Our first task will be to put an end to partisan political practices at Jahangirnagar University. We've seen how such activities disrupt students' academic lives. We'll work to ensure a fully safe and education-friendly campus."

He added that he would work to make the campus inclusive for all, regardless of caste, creed, or colour.

Newly elected GS Mazharul said they want to build a "dream campus", free from domination and dictatorship, for the students. "We don't think this election has lost its credibility in any way. There were no errors or irregularities in the vote counting process. An election where almost 70

percent of votes were cast is surely a successful one."

A total of 67.93 percent of votes were cast. An analysis of the final list shows that out of 315 posts across 11 male and 10 female halls, 131 were uncontested while 68 remained vacant.

Students voted for 25 posts in Jucsu and 315 posts across 15 halls, with 177 candidates vying

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Road crashes claim 22 lives every day

Says Jatri Kalyan Samity citing data of last 11 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 86,690 people were killed and 1,53,257 injured in 62,619 road crashes across the country over the last 11 years, Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity said yesterday.

This means, on average, 22 people lost their lives and 38 were injured on the roads every day during this period.

Citing a World Bank estimate, the organisation also said unbearable traffic congestion in the capital alone leads to a daily loss of 3.2 million working hours, amounting to an annual economic loss of Tk 98,000 crore.

Against this backdrop, the Samity urged political parties contesting the upcoming national election to include concrete plans to reduce traffic congestion and curb the yearly loss of thousands of lives on the roads through the introduction of modern public transport in their manifestos.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Jucsu's newly-elected VP Abdur Rashid Zitu from Swantantra Shikkharthi Sommilon; GS Mazharul Islam, AGS (male) Ferdous Al Hasan and AGS (female) Ayesha Siddiqi Meghla -- all from Shibir-backed Samonnito Shikkharthi Jote -- raise their hands in celebration after the polls results were announced at Jahangirnagar University's Senate Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



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If the election is not held in February, Bangladesh will face not only internal instability but also threats to national security. I'm not entertaining any ifs or buts. That's why the political parties must now stand together.”

Consensus Commission Vice President PROF ALI RIAZ



“

This [February election] is what the people want. All political parties also want it. The aspiration to exercise voting rights ranks first among the aspirations of the mass uprising.”

BNP Standing Committee Member SALAHUDDIN AHMED



“

If the government does not begin preparing the ground now, a free and fair election will be unlikely. We may face another chaotic election—another cycle of bloodshed centred on the polls.”

Ha Meem Group Chairman and Noab President AK AZAD



“

“Why hasn't there been a clear proposal for a commitment to combat corruption? For ordinary citizens, this issue is even more pressing, and it deserves to be addressed explicitly.”

Former adviser to caretaker government HOSSAIN ZILLUR



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“One solution is to strengthen the existing authority, enhancing its capacity so it can fulfil its core objectives... The other, if that strengthening fails, is that the authority itself may be changed.”

Distinguished fellow at Centre for Policy Dialogue DEBARPRIYA BHATTACHARYA



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“The ball is largely in the court of our political parties. We've achieved unity, but the question is how that unity will translate into action. The government has its own responsibilities. It must take a clear and decisive stance.”

Consensus Commission Member BADIUL ALAM MAJUMDAR

Polls delay could even threaten nat'l security

FROM PAGE 1

Economist Debarpriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said the country is facing a political vacuum. “This vacuum is evident in the economic sphere, in rising social unrest, and in deteriorating law and order,” he said.

Social science and history, he explained, offer two solutions: strengthening the existing authority so it can fulfil its core objectives, such as holding elections and reforms; or, if that fails, changing the authority itself. “Politics is the art of the feasible. You act on what is possible. As for the impossible, one may aspire to it, but not rely on it,” he said.

He cautioned that excessive focus on constitutional reform may push issues from the political domain into the judicial system. “People are asking whether elections will happen at all. Others are asking an even bigger question: if they do happen, will they be credible?”

On the next election, Debarpriya said, “The audience is ready, but the stage is not. Citizens are prepared, but the stage itself is not set. And the lead actors, the political protagonists, are not yet ready to play their roles.”

Ha-Meem Group Chairman AK Azad, also president of the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) and publisher of Samakal, said every reform proposal is both acceptable and implementable, but the government should have acted earlier. “The longer it delays, the harder it will become,” he warned.

“A duly elected government has capacities that an unelected one simply does not. We are already seeing the consequences in law and order, employment, and domestic investment. These problems are

growing by the day. Elections are inevitable. They must be held by February. There is no alternative.

“If the government does not begin preparing the ground now, a free and fair election will be unlikely. We may face another chaotic election—another cycle of bloodshed centred on the polls,” Azad said, echoing Ali Riaz's concerns about national security.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said if a free and fair election is not held, the responsibility will lie squarely with the political parties.

Urging parties to put aside differences, even temporarily, to bring the nation to a place of stability, he said, “You have failed to reach consensus among yourselves. There are contradictions, divisions, disagreements. But why should I, as a voter, be the victim of your disunity?”

He also said that when this government came to power, it had two core responsibilities: good governance and reform. “But no matter what, if you sit in the seat of government, you must govern. You must deal with the market, with unrest, with crises. That is your duty,” he said.

In this regard, I believe the government has failed significantly. The current law and order situation is such that everyone is living in fear,” Mahfuz Anam added. “Today, it seems politicians, journalists, businesspeople, even a former chief justice, are all accused of murder. If a chief justice gave a flawed verdict, punish him for that, but he did not commit murder. Nearly 226 journalists are facing murder charges; some are in jail.”

Badiul Alam Majumdar, a member of the consensus commission, said

consensus has been reached on many issues and the focus must now shift to implementation. “The ball is largely in the court of our political parties. We have achieved unity, but the question now is how that unity will translate into action,” he said.

“At the same time, the government has responsibilities. It must take a clear and decisive stance. To ensure that sacrifices are not in vain, and to prevent any future resurgence of autocracy like Sheikh Hasina's, our political parties must fulfil their responsibilities, and the government must also play its role with integrity and commitment.”

BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed said his party wants the election to be held in February. “This is what the people want. All political parties also want it. There is already consensus on this issue. No one has opposed it to date,” he told the roundtable.

He said the BNP has also been positive about signing the July Charter and stressed that parties should be prepared to hold talks on the matter, “even behind closed doors”, for the sake of the country.

On justice for victims of atrocities during the July uprising, Salahuddin said it was an ongoing process that would take time. “If we impose a timeline on justice, it would amount to injustice,” he said.

If we forget the national interest in pursuit of our own party's agenda and interests, it will be suicidal for us,” he warned.

Salahuddin added that constitutional reforms agreed upon during the consensus commission talks would be implemented through the next parliament.

“However, if someone can

propose a legitimate, lawful, and constitutional method beforehand, we are willing to agree for the sake of national stability and interest.”

He cautioned against setting a bad precedent in constitutional reform. “Two or five years down the line, others could misuse the process by saying: ‘the constitution was changed that way before, so we can do it again.’”

He said the BNP's top priority is to ensure that enforced disappearances, killings, torture, and political persecution no longer occur. “The aspiration to exercise voting rights ranks first among the aspirations of a popular uprising,” he said.

National Citizen Party Member Secretary Akhter Hossen said they want sustainable reforms, but history shows constitutional amendments alone cannot guarantee that. He noted that at least 43 of the agreed issues are linked to the constitution.

“That's why we proposed a constituent assembly election, through which a durable framework could be established via a new

constitution. If we proceed with the election but fail to decide now how the country will be governed afterward, that election will not bring the success we hope for, nor lead us to the democratic transformation we aspire to,” he said.

Jamaat-e-Islami Publicity and Media Secretary Matiur Rahman Akanda warned that if the election is not held in February, the situation could become “more dire”.

He said debate over how to implement the July Charter and reforms must not be dictated by party interests. “If we prioritise what may benefit us in power, the problems will never be resolved,” he said.

Ganosamhati Andolan Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki said dialogue was the right path to resolving the crisis. He emphasised two critical areas: how reforms will be implemented and how elections will be conducted.

If solutions can be found in these two areas, progress toward broader political understanding will be possible,” he said.

Lt Gen (Retd) Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman, chairman of Osmani Centre for Peace and Security Studies, stressed the need for security sector reform. “The sooner an elected government takes office, the better. Unelected governments are often vulnerable to internal and external pressures.

“At present, Bangladesh faces several traditional and non-traditional security concerns, especially along the south-eastern border. In such a context, it becomes difficult for an interim or caretaker government to provide coherent policy guidance on national security,” he said.

Dhaka University Prof Samina Luthfa said the interim government was a “weak government” and its performance in maintaining law and order had been “not satisfactory”. She stressed that the government must work strongly to rebuild trust. “If it cannot, people are deeply concerned the crisis may intensify further,” she said.

Samina urged political parties to stop wasting time and cooperate sincerely in preparing the roadmap for the February election. “Without this, progress will not be possible,” she added at the discussion, moderated by Prothom Alo Executive Editor Sajjad Sharif.

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Magnitude 7.4 quake strikes off Russian Far East

FROM PAGE 1

A 7.4 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Kamchatka in Russia's Far East on Saturday, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) said.

There was no risk that the quake had triggered a tsunami, according to the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre (PTWC).

The USGS said the quake hit 111 kilometres (69 miles) east of the Russian city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, the administrative centre of the Kamchatka region, at a depth of 39.5 kilometres.

The survey earlier gave a magnitude of 7.5 before downgrading it.

The PTWC initially warned that “hazardous” waves of up to one metre (3.3 feet) were possible along some nearby Russian coasts.

The centre later said “the tsunami threat... has now passed”.

In July, one of the strongest earthquakes ever recorded struck off the Kamchatka peninsula, triggering tsunamis up to four metres high across the Pacific and sparking evacuations from Hawaii to Japan.

The magnitude 8.8 quake was the largest since 2011, when a magnitude 9.1 tremor off Japan caused a tsunami that killed more than 15,000 people.

July's quake prompted authorities in Japan to order almost two million people to head to higher ground.

Tsunami warnings were also issued across the region, before being rescinded or downgraded.

Shibir bags most of Jucsu posts too

FROM PAGE 1

for the central positions and 443 for hall union positions.

Although the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal-backed panel boycotted the election midway, its VP candidate Sheikh Sadi Hasan came in fourth with 648 votes. Their GS candidate Tanjila Hossain Boishakhi also finished fourth with 941 votes.

With a partial panel in 11 halls, the number of posts won by the JCD could not be known immediately.

Shibir did not officially give any panel at the halls.

Bangladesh Gontantrik Chhatra Sangsads-backed candidates won two posts -- executive member and social welfare and human resource development -- while three independents won three posts: athlete secretary and cultural secretaries.

From the Shibir-backed panel, Ferdous Al Hasan won the assistant general secretary (male) post (2,358 votes) and Ayesha Siddiqua Meghla clinched the AGS (female) post (3,402 votes).

On September 9, the Shibir-backed Oikyabodddho Shikkharkathi Jote won 23 out of 28 posts, including the top three, in the Ducus polls.

The Jucsu election results were announced at the university's Senate Bhaban around 5:40pm yesterday, over 46 hours after voting ended in the last centre, by Chief Election Commissioner Md Moniruzzaman.

The announcement began with a one-minute silence in memory of JU Assistant Prof Jannatul Ferdous Momintha, who passed away while coming to count votes on Thursday night.

Around 4:20pm, Shibir supporters gathered at the building to hear the results. Once their candidates' names were announced, they cheered and chanted “Nara e Takbeer, Allahu Akbar!” (Shout forth the praise of God, Allah is the Greatest) and “Mujibbaad, murdabad!” (down with Mujibism!).

Jucsu Election Commission Member Secretary Prof AKM Rashidul Alam, while announcing the results, said that although some candidates raised allegations of irregularities and mismanagement in the media, the commission's investigation found no such evidence.

He, however, admitted that some mistakes were made. “Holding the Jucsu election after 33 years, maybe some small errors occurred here and there. When we try to achieve something big, sometimes we overlook the small things. So, if any mistakes took place, we're asking for forgiveness today [yesterday] on behalf of the commission.”

The election became further questionable when five out of eight panels -- Chhatra Dal, Sampriti Oikya, Swatantra Angikar Parishad, Songshoptak Parishad, and Socialist Student Front -- withdrew and demanded fresh polls over the same allegations.

Jahangirnagar University officially started its journey 54 years ago, on January 12, 1971, while Jucsu was established in 1972. Its first election was held that very year, and then in '73 and '74.

Later, they were held in 1980, 1981, 1989, 1990, 1991, and 1992. In the last 1992 polls, JCD won 105 of 107 Jucsu and hall council posts.

After voting ended on Thursday,

Road crashes claim 22 lives every day

FROM PAGE 1

The appeal was made by Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury, secretary general of the Samity, at a discussion marking “Passenger Rights Day” at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Citing health experts, he warned that beyond financial losses, long hours in traffic take a serious toll on physical and mental health.

He added that the Road Transport Act-2018 failed to address road crashes, congestion, and indiscipline in the sector, as the voices of passengers and civil society had been ignored during its formulation.

Due to the lack of modern mass transit, small vehicles such as ride-sharing motorcycles, e-bikes, and auto-rickshaws have become the primary means of transport, while 56 percent of people are compelled to rely on private vehicles, he said.

Corruption and flawed policies

under successive governments, he added, have spread traffic congestion from cities and ports to rural areas.

Mozammel also criticised the interim government for failing to initiate any reforms in the road sector despite the sacrifices of thousands of students and citizens during the July uprising for a “New Bangladesh”.

According to the Samity's data, 2022 recorded the highest casualties, with 9,951 killed and 12,356 injured in 6,749 crashes. In 2024, 8,583 people were killed and 12,608 injured in 6,259 crashes.

The Samity gathered the data from media reports. The actual number of casualties in road crashes could be much higher since many incidents remain unreported.

The organisation put the total death toll from road crashes in 2021 to 7,809. But the World Health Organization said 31,578 were killed

Killing Hamas chiefs in Qatar

FROM PAGE 12

Meanwhile, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, before departing to Israel, yesterday said the United States is “not happy” about Israel's air strikes targeting Hamas in Qatar, but the attack will not change Washington's allied status with.

Qatar yesterday said it will host a summit of Arab and Muslim leaders to denounce Israel's attack on Hamas officials in Doha and to show solidarity with the Gulf state.

Monday's meeting would consider “a draft resolution on the Israeli attack on the State of Qatar” to be drafted today at a ministerial meeting, said foreign ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari. The attack drew widespread international condemnation, including from Gulf monarchies allied with the United States, Israel's main backer.

Meanwhile, at least 51 Palestinians, including seven aid seekers, were killed

on the sidelines of the high level UN General Assembly -- where Britain, France, Canada, Australia and Belgium are expected to recognise a Palestinian state formally.

On the ground, the Israeli military yesterday said that more than 250,000 people had fled Gaza City since it began intensifying operations there, as Palestinian officials reported many had been unable to evacuate south due to overcrowding.

Gaza's civil defence agency reported a much lower figure, saying fewer than 70,000 of more than a million people had managed to leave.

The world body and members of the international community have urged the military to abandon its plans to capture the city, warning the assault and ensuing displacement could worsen the already dire humanitarian situation.

DHAKA



Streets and skylines have been overwhelmed by a clutter of posters, banners, and billboards of political hopefuls, turning public space into visual pollution for residents and passersby at Kadamtali in Keraniganj, Dhaka. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

DGHS restricts medical reps' hospital visits to 2 days a week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) has restricted pharmaceutical company representatives from meeting government doctors to only two days a week – Mondays and Thursdays.

According to an eight-point directive issued on September 11, representatives will be permitted to meet doctors between 12:00pm and 2:30pm on those days only.

They must carry their company identity cards during visits and will not be allowed to remain on hospital premises beyond the designated hours.

Officials said the move is intended to "save the image of government doctors working at all public hospitals and institutes, and ensure proper service to patients".

The DGHS warned that any pharmaceutical representative violating the directives will face legal action. They have also been barred from taking photos of prescriptions, documents, or any other hospital information.

The circular also set out restrictions for government doctors. They are prohibited from writing prescriptions or test orders on pads supplied by private diagnostic centres or carrying their logos.

Doctors cannot prescribe medicines or recommend tests from private companies if the same are available at government hospitals.

In addition, they may not use any seal other than those issued by the government, nor display drug lists supplied by pharmaceutical companies on their tables.

The directive followed allegations that many doctors prescribe medicines from particular companies or recommend tests at specific diagnostic centres in exchange for benefits.

According to an eight-point directive issued on September 11, representatives will be permitted to meet doctors between 12:00pm and 2:30pm on those days only.

MOSTAFA SHABUJ

An acute shortage of contraceptives in health centres across the country is severely affecting reproductive and maternal healthcare, with marginalised communities in rural and remote areas suffering the most.

At community clinics, Family Welfare Assistants (FWAs) usually provide free contraceptives such as condoms, oral contraceptive pills, and injections six days a week. But visits to local hospitals, upazila health complexes, union sub-centres, and remote community clinics revealed that supplies have been shrinking since mid 2024.

Rahima Begum, a resident of Char Korai Barishal in Kurigram's Chilmari upazila, said, "We used to receive contraceptive pills and women's health services from an FWA for free. But now, we are not getting them; instead, we have to buy pills from outside."

Shirina Akter of Guptamoni Char in Gaibandha's Fulchari upazila shared similar experiences.

Parvin Khatum, an FWA at Char Korai Barishal Community Clinic, said, "We used to receive 250 strips



of contraceptive pills monthly. Now we are getting only 30-40 strips. We have the injections, but no syringes. As such, we can't meet the local demand adequately."

Jesmin Aktar, an FWA at Uttar Karimia Community Clinic in Bogura's Sonatala upazila, said the supply of contraceptives has dropped significantly over the past year, sometimes stopping altogether for one or two months.

"Adolescent girls, pregnant women, and mothers of new-borns

Jobless growth, gender gaps fuel poverty rise

Speakers tell PPRC discussion, urge for coordinated reforms to address the issues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government must take urgent and decisive steps to address the country's worsening employment crisis, declining educational outcomes, and persistent gender inequalities, said speakers at an event yesterday.

Without bold, coordinated reforms in these critical areas, they warned, the risk of entrenched and widespread poverty will continue to grow, undermining Bangladesh's long-term development trajectory.

The event, styled "Ajker Agenda: What is Driving the Poverty Reversal in Bangladesh?", was organised online by the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC).

Imran Matin, executive director of the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development, said the reversal in poverty trends is not an isolated event but reflects both the impact of overlapping shocks and a deeper structural fragility in Bangladesh's poverty reduction model.

"For too long, progress has been concentrated around lifting people just above the poverty line, without securing a sustained escape from poverty. This has created a vulnerable population that is highly susceptible to crises," he said.

"We now face a twin challenge: a sharp rise in vulnerability-induced transitory poverty, and a worrying uptick in extreme or chronic poverty. Addressing this dual crisis demands a differentiated and targeted policy response."

"Current systems are outdated, fragmented, and misaligned with today's realities. We need a new generation of social protection that is care responsive, shock-resilient, and programme-specific."

This calls for a large-scale, disaggregated survey to inform smarter, more inclusive interventions."

A recent PPRC study shows that poverty in Bangladesh has surged over the past three years, with nearly 28 percent of the population now poor compared to 18.7 percent in 2022.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

Independent rights body key to democracy

Speakers tell discussion

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A truly independent and accountable Human Rights Commission can only thrive when it is free from political influence and rooted in citizen participation, said Law Adviser Dr Asif Nazrul yesterday.

He made the remark while addressing a "Stakeholder Consultation on the Reform of the National Human Rights Commission Act 2009" held in Cox's Bazar.

The event was organised by the law ministry in collaboration with UNDP through its Strengthening Institutions, Policies and Services (SIPS) Programme, with support from the Embassy of Switzerland.

A truly independent and inclusive Human Rights Commission is essential if Bangladesh is to meet international standards and restore public trust.

ADILUR RAHMAN KHAN

In a statement, UNDP Bangladesh said the draft NHRC Ordinance seeks to enhance the Commission's independence, inclusivity, and accountability.

It aims to align the NHRC's mandate with relevant parts of the Paris Principles and addresses key recommendations from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI).

UNDP said unveiling the draft ordinance marks a significant step forward in Bangladesh's commitment to human rights protection and alignment with international standards.

Housing and Public Works Adviser Adilur Rahman Khan said, "A truly independent and inclusive Human Rights Commission is essential if Bangladesh is to meet international standards and restore public trust."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

STUDENTS' UNION ELECTIONS

Code violations cloud run-up to Rucsu polls

Allegations of feasts, gifts, hall tours by aspirants run rife

NUR AHSAN MRIDUL

With the Rucsu election approaching, Rajshahi University is already witnessing breaches of electoral codes, as student panels are campaigning in halls and other places well before the official campaign period.

The election to the Rajshahi University Central Students' Union will be held on September 25. There are about 24,892 voters in Rucsu.

As per schedule, the final list of candidates will be published today. The campaigning will start the same day.

Although rules bar campaigning until the final list of candidates is published, contenders from major organisations and independents are visiting halls, hosting events, and seeking support in advance.

The code allows campaigning only between 10:00am and 10:00pm after

the final list is announced. Candidates must also seek permission before entering halls other than their own.

Yet across halls, classrooms, and spaces like Tukitaki Chattar and Amjola, campaign activity is in full swing.

Some students argue ballot numbers should be the only identifier, but contenders are introducing themselves early, raising concerns over fairness and enforcement.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6



Farmer Abu Zafar sprays insecticide on his flowering bean plants in Ranai village of Khonia Union, Kholna, to protect them from pests and boost yield. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Communal forces
on the rise after
fall of fascism
Warns Gayeshwar

UNB, Dhaka



MD AMINUL ISLAM

For over two decades, unchecked encroachment by roadside vendors and illegal three-wheeler stands has been causing severe traffic congestion at Darirampur Bus Stand on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Trishal upazila, leaving thousands of commuters to suffer daily.

Locals say the problem persists as no effective measures have been taken to resolve it.

Every day, thousands of buses and trucks from Mymensingh, Sherpur, Netrakona, Jamalpur, and Kishoreganj pass through the area, while most long-route buses to and from Dhaka make stops at the bus stand.

"Three-wheelers -- both CNG- and battery-run auto-rickshaws, along with human hauliers -- also use the area, often occupying the main road and worsening the congestion," said Atahar Ali, a local businessman.

He said the gridlock is mainly caused by the ever-increasing number of local vehicles on the highway while footpaths remain occupied by vendors.

"Around 10 educational institutions are located near the bus stand, with nearly 5,000 students forced to endure the traffic nuisance every day," said Sumaiya Nasreen, a college student.



Trishal Traffic Inspector Golam Moula Talukder said they are trying to ease the situation.

"We collect around Tk 4 lakh in fines every month for traffic rule violations, but drivers hardly pay heed. Footpaths are occasionally cleared and mobile courts are conducted, but illegal vehicles continue to operate. Only six traffic

policemen are deployed to manage the bus stand area," he said.

Trishal Police Station Officer-in-Charge Monsur Ahammad said police from the station often assist with traffic management.

Trishal UNO Abdullah Al Bakiul Bari stressed the need for a coordinated effort to ensure a permanent solution.



Locals halt felling
of 150-year-old
tree in Jhenaidah

A CORRESPONDENT, Jhenaidah

Locals in Jhenaidah Sadar upazila have stepped in to save a nearly 150-year-old rain tree from being felled, collecting 61 signatures on an application to the deputy commissioner and pledging to take full responsibility for any damage the tree may cause in the future.

The tree, located in Madhupur Bazar area of Porahati union, was scheduled to be auctioned for felling on September 10 after the upazila administration included it in a move to cut down a leaning banyan tree nearby.

The auction has since been halted following appeals from residents.

Eklaucher Rahman, 72, president of the market's traders' and shop owners' association, said the rain tree was planted around the time the market was established 150 years ago.

"It enhances the area's beauty and provides shade to more than a hundred of the market's

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3



EAST WEST UNIVERSITY
Progati Foundation for Education and Development

Permanent Sanad Holder

INVITATION OF TENDER

East West University (EWU) is inviting Tender from the bonafide/intending suppliers/firms for the following items:

- Supply and Installation of Fire Door at Main Campus of EWU.
- Procurement of different types of Lab Furniture for the Department of CSE (General Purpose Programming Lab and Competitive Programming Lab) of EWU.
- Printing of Convocation Brochure for the 25th Convocation-2026 of EWU.
- Procurement of Gown, Hood, Cap, Tassel and Locket for the 25th Convocation-2026 of EWU.
- Procurement of Certificate Folder for the 25th Convocation-2026 (including Alumni participated at the 20th Convocation-2021) of EWU.
- Arrangement of VIP Tent with Waterproof Roof, Samiana Pandel (Waterproof), Seating Arrangement, Stage, Stage Backdrop & Site Decoration, Electricity connection, Mobile washroom along with water supply and related works for the 25th Convocation 2026 of EWU.
- Procurement of 01 set UV-VIS Spectrophotometer along with accessories for the Department of GEB.
- Procurement of 39 sets Computer with Monitor, 01-unit Multimedia Projector set up with Screen for the Department of CSE (Cloud Computing Lab) of EWU.
- Procurement of 02 sets Computer with Monitor along with Graphics Card and Online UPS for CRTEWU.
- Arrangement of Job Fair 2025 at EWU.
- Procurement of 01 (one) set High-Performance Bioinformatics Computer with Monitor for the Department of GEB (Re-Tender).

The schedule of the above-mentioned tender items with terms and conditions can be obtained from the Finance & Accounts Department (1st floor) of the University until **28.09.2025** during office hours (until 03:00 p.m.) on working days. The schedule of item # 8 & 9 will also be available in the e-tendering process (<http://etender.ewubd.edu>). The price of the tender schedule (non-refundable) is Tk.500/- (Taka Five Hundred) only.

The interested bidders are requested to submit the tender by **29.09.2025 by 01:00 P.M.** through hard copy or e-tender process (as mentioned in the schedule). The tender (hard copy) must be dropped in the tender box kept at the 2nd floor of the office of the Treasurer (Room No-316) of the University. The tender(s) submitted within the deadline will be **opened on the same day** (29.09.2025) at **01:30 P.M.** in the Conference Room (4th floor) of East West University in the presence of the representatives of the bidders.

The bidders must mention the "name of the item" at the top of envelope. Otherwise, the bid document will be treated as cancelled.

East West University authority reserves the right to accept any tender in full or part of it or reject all tenders without mentioning any reason thereof.

Chief of HR & Logistics

Independent rights

FROM PAGE 3

UNDP Bangladesh Resident Representative Stefan Liller said, "We remain committed to supporting the people of Bangladesh in shaping a stronger and more effective National Human Rights Commission."

Earlier, Barrister Tanim Hussain Shawon, special consultant at the law ministry, presented the keynote on "Overview of the Proposed NHRC Ordinance 2025."

Swiss Ambassador Reto Renggli said amending the National Human Rights Commission Act is crucial to ensuring the Commission's independence, efficiency, and credibility.

"A stronger institution will not only better protect citizens' rights but also build trust, strengthen accountability, and reinforce Bangladesh's democratic principles," he added.

Swedish Ambassador Nicolas Weeks said strong and independent human rights institutions are the backbone of democratic societies.

"Sweden stands with

Bangladesh in this reform process, which is vital for safeguarding human rights, strengthening the rule of law, and advancing inclusive development."

Earlier, Barrister Tanim Hussain Shawon, special consultant at the law ministry, presented the keynote on "Overview of the Proposed NHRC Ordinance 2025."

Similar consultations have already been held in Sylhet and Khulna, with further divisional consultations planned in the north and in Dhaka.

"A stronger institution will not only better protect citizens' rights but also build trust, strengthen accountability, and reinforce Bangladesh's democratic principles," he added.

Swedish Ambassador Nicolas Weeks said strong and independent human rights institutions are the backbone of democratic societies.

"Sweden stands with

Be the

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Qualifications & Experiences

Post-graduation degree from any recognized university preferably in Economics / Finance / Accounting / Banking / Management or Business Administration is needed. No third division/class is acceptable in any academic result. GPA below 3.00 in SSC/HSC and CGPA below 2.50 on a scale of 4.00 in Graduation/Post Graduation is not acceptable. For foreign degrees, equivalence of results must be approved by the competent authority.

Minimum 20 years of professional experience in the finance company or banking sector, including at least 02 years of experience in the immediate previous position before MD & CEO.

Age limit is maximum 60 years at the time of application. Must comply with all the requirements of being the MD & CEO as per DFIM Circular No. 03, dated 25 March 2024.

Application Procedure

Interested candidates are invited to submit a detailed Curriculum Vitae (CV) with a cover letter addressed to: **Administrator**, (Appointed by Bangladesh Bank), Union Capital Limited, Head Office, bti Landmark (Level-8), 16 Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212 or, e-mail to mailbox@unicap-bd.com. Application Deadline: **30 September 2025**.

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5

Stop buying Russian oil

Trump tells Nato states

REUTERS, Bedminster

President Donald Trump yesterday said that the United States is prepared to impose fresh energy sanctions on Russia, but only if all Nato nations cease purchasing Russian oil and implement similar measures.

"I am ready to do major sanctions on Russia when all Nato nations have agreed, and started, to do the same thing, and when all Nato nations stop buying oil from Russia," Trump said in a social media post.

In recent weeks, the United States has stepped up pressure on Nato countries to tighten energy sanctions on Russia in a bid to help end its war with Ukraine – a conflict Trump has struggled to bring to a close despite repeated threats of harsher penalties on Moscow and its partners.

Trump has also faced criticism at home for repeatedly setting two-week deadlines for Russia to de-escalate and allowing them to pass without concrete action.

The Group of Seven nations' finance ministers in a Friday call discussed further sanctions on Russia and possible tariffs on countries they consider "enabling" its war in Ukraine.

Energy revenues remain the Kremlin's single most important source of cash to finance the war effort, making oil and gas exports a central target of Western sanctions. But officials and analysts warn that aggressive curbs on Russian crude also carry risks of driving up global oil prices, a prospect that could strain Western economies and weaken public support for the measures.

Since 2023, Nato member Turkey has been the third-largest buyer of Russian oil, after China and India. Other members of the alliance involved in purchasing Russian oil include Hungary and Slovakia.

Trump said Nato, acting as a bloc, should impose tariffs of 50% to 100% on Chinese imports, a move he argued would weaken Beijing's economic grip on Moscow.



A Buddhist devotee feeds pigeons at the Boudhanath Stupa in Kathmandu yesterday. Kathmandu took a step back towards normality yesterday as a curfew was eased and daily life returned, with markets opening, traffic returning, and families visiting temples.

PHOTO: STAR

GAZA GENOCIDE



"The Hamas terrorist chiefs living in Qatar don't care about the people in Gaza. They blocked all ceasefire attempts in order to endlessly drag out the war. Getting rid of them would rid the main obstacle to releasing all our hostages and ending the war."

Benjamin Netanyahu
Israeli PM

"The targeted operation in Qatar proved beyond any doubt that there is one obstacle to returning the... hostages and ending the war: Prime Minister Netanyahu."

Israel's Hostages and Missing Families Forum

Nepalis hope protest deaths will bring change

AFP, Kathmandu

Grieving families of those killed in Nepal's anti-corruption demonstrations say they hope the deaths will not be in vain, as the protesters' choice of interim prime minister took charge yesterday.

Among the dead was 30-year-old Santosh Bishwakarma, one of at least 51 people killed in two days of chaos this week – the worst unrest since the end of a decade-long civil war and the abolition of the monarchy in 2008.

His widow Amika, also 30, her eyes swollen with grief, recalled his "ultimate dream" to "die having contributed to the nation".

Santosh was shot dead on Monday during the first wave of protests, led by the youth-driven "Gen Z" movement.

A temporary social media ban sparked the demonstrations, tipping longstanding frustration over entrenched corruption and economic malaise into wider anger.

"He used to say he wouldn't die like a dog," Amika told AFP in her modest Kathmandu home, clutching a framed photo of her late husband.

"His dream was to make Nepal known to the world – and he did."

KP Sharma Oli, the 73-year-old leader of the Communist Party, quit as prime minister a day after Santosh's death and as protesters torched parliament, ending his fourth term in the post.

On Friday, former chief justice Sushila Karki was sworn into office to lead a six-month transition to elections.

But Amika, now raising her 10-year-old son Ujwal and seven-year-old daughter Sonia alone, fears for the future.

"My husband would have done everything to fulfil their dreams, even at the cost of his life," she said.

"But how am I supposed to manage everything on my own? He



sacrificed his life for the country, and I hope the new government will help me."

Family friend Solan Rai, 42, said he believed the protests marked a turning point.

"I hope we finally see real change this time," he said, adding that the anger had been "more intense than anything we've seen before".

The World Bank says a "staggering" 82 percent of Nepal's workforce is in informal employment – among the highest rates in the world.

Its GDP per capita stands at just \$1,447.

At Kathmandu's Pashupatinath temple on Friday, hundreds gathered for mass cremations.

Families wept over the bodies of loved ones, including young men shot dead in the clashes.

"I hope there is some justice – and our people finally get the

change they so desperately seek," said Ratna Maharjan, grieving for her son, breaking down into tears.

One mother refused to release her son's body, wrapped in a shroud, clinging to him on the temple steps.

Nearby, police officers laid garlands of marigolds on their fallen colleague as a bugler played over the smoke-filled riverbank.

Amika's plea was simple. "What we seek isn't too much to ask – just equality," she said. "So the rich don't thrive while the poor languish."

Pak Taliban kills 12 troops in northwest

AFP, Peshawar

At least 12 soldiers were killed in an ambush in northwest Pakistan yesterday, government and security officials said, in an attack claimed by the Pakistani Taliban.

Militancy has surged in the border regions with Afghanistan since the return to power of the Afghan Taliban in Kabul in 2021, although yesterday's attack was one of the deadliest in months in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Islamabad accuses neighbouring Afghanistan of failing to expel militants using Afghan territory to launch attacks on Pakistan, an accusation that authorities in Kabul deny.

The Pakistan military said after the ambush early on Saturday that intelligence reports "have unequivocally confirmed physical involvement of Afghan Nationals in these heinous acts".

Pakistan expects the Interim Afghan Government to uphold its responsibilities and deny use of its soil for terrorist activities against Pakistan," it said in a statement.

The Tehreek-e-Taliban, claimed responsibility for the attack in a message on social media.

The group is separate from but closely linked with the Afghan Taliban.

'We're more than our pain'

Miss Palestine to compete on global stage

AFP, Dubai

Nadeen Ayoub, the first Palestinian to compete in Miss Universe, will step onto the stage at the height of one of the most harrowing periods in her people's history, determined to show they are more than headlines of war.

"We're more than our struggle and pain," she told AFP in Dubai, where she is preparing to raise the Palestinian flag at the pageant in Thailand in November.

"Right now, our people need a voice and we don't want our identity to be erased," she said, nearly two years into the Israeli war on the people of Gaza.

Palestinians are also "children who want to live, women who have dreams and aspirations," she said.

Part of the difficulty of electing Miss Palestine is that Palestinians are divided between the occupied West Bank, besieged Gaza and annexed East Jerusalem, while many are refugees in neighbouring countries, living abroad or in Israel.

In 2022, the first Miss Palestine pageant was held online to allow for Palestinians scattered abroad, in Israel and in the territories to participate.

As the first winner of the title, Ayoub has worked on the organisation's philanthropic activities and competed in Miss Earth, an environmentally minded pageant, in 2022. But since the Gaza war erupted in October 2023, she has not participated in any beauty pageants.

Ayoub said she would take any opportunity to speak out for her people. "We must be present on every single international stage. Every single opportunity that we have to talk about Palestine, to show Palestine, we must take it," she said.

Lalon songbird takes final bow

FROM PAGE 12
a week. On September 2, she was admitted to the hospital after a routine dialysis session left her critically unstable. She was shifted to the ICU and placed on ventilation as her condition deteriorated further on Wednesday.

She leaves behind a legacy that transcends generations, rooted in the rich soil of Bangladeshi folk music. Her life, intertwined with Lalon's philosophy, was a testament to music's power to inspire, heal, and elevate the spirit.

Born on December 31, 1954, in Natore and raised in Kushertia, Farida grew up in a cultural environment that nurtured her passion for music.

Her father's encouragement led to her first lessons in classical music. But it was a chance encounter during a Dol Purnima event that changed her life – she met Moksed Ali Shai, a prominent Lalon singer who became her mentor and introduced her to the spiritual world of Lalon's songs and philosophy.

The mystic verses found a perfect interpreter in Farida's voice. Her renditions were not just performances but spiritual exercises, connecting deeply with life, and dedication. "Our new generation prefers shortcuts to become famous," she once lamented. "They should follow the footsteps of their honourable Gurus to become

sustainable and successful singers."

Her stellar career brought her some of the highest honours in the country and abroad – the Ekushey Padak in 1987, the Bangladesh National Film Award for Best Female Playback Singer in 1993, and the prestigious Fukuoka Asian Culture Prize in 2008.

Farida often spoke about the transformative power of Lalon's songs – how they brought her inner peace and connected her to a larger humanity.

She was a vocal critic of the commercialisation of folk music, warning that its spiritual essence must not be diluted. "We are doing injustice to our traditional folk music in the name of fusion," she had earlier told The Daily Star.

Her final years were spent working on a project to notate and preserve 100 Lalon songs for future generations, and she dreamt of establishing a university dedicated to his philosophy.

Farida Parveen's life was one of devotion, passion, and unshakable faith in the power of music.

She was not just a singer but a custodian of Bangladesh's cultural soul.



Police Officers scuffle with far-right activists during a 'Free speech' march in central London yesterday. More than 100,000 people massed in central London for the march amid growing anti-immigration sentiment in the country.

Lankans outclass Tigers

FROM PAGE 12

However, thanks to an 86 run sixth-wicket stand between Shamim Hossain and Jaker Ali, Bangladesh managed to post a respectable total. Shamim remained unbeaten on 42 off 34 deliveries, while Jaker was not out on 41 off 34 balls.

Sri Lanka leg spinner Wanindu Hasaranga took two wickets for 25 runs in his four overs.

Bangladesh struck early with the ball as Mustafizur Rahman had Sri Lanka opener Kusal Mendis nick one behind in the second over. The Tigers could have built more pressure had Mahedi Hasan not dropped Kamil Mishra on just 1 in the fifth over off Shoriful Islam's bowling.

Mishra and opener Pathum Nissanka increased the scoring rate after that, putting together a 95 run second-wicket stand to take Sri Lanka close to victory. Nissanka departed after a 34-ball 50, but Mishra stayed till the end, scoring an unbeaten 46 off 32 balls to take the Lankans over the line with ease.

Two-state solution is non-negotiable

Netanyahu's latest statement may lead to total annihilation of Palestinians

Though he has reiterated this stance many times before, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's latest declaration on Palestine is staggering. It comes in the backdrop of an ongoing genocide in Gaza that has killed nearly 65,000 people, including nearly 20,000 children, and led to massive displacements and casualties by starvation. Adding to this humanitarian catastrophe is the recent bombing of Qatar, a country actively working to broker a ceasefire, which has been rightly condemned by many nations. Despite this, while speaking at an event in an Israeli settlement near Jerusalem, Netanyahu has stated: "We are going to fulfil our promise that there will be no Palestinian state. This place belongs to us."

This position directly contradicts the two-state solution—a long-standing policy backed by the United States, ironically Israel's closest ally. Since the Oslo Accords, which laid the groundwork for Palestinian self-rule, US presidents have supported a two-state solution. President Bill Clinton was the first to endorse it explicitly in 2000. George W. Bush called for a Palestinian state in 2002 and backed the "Roadmap for Peace." Barack Obama strongly supported the solution and criticised Israel's settlement expansion. The Biden administration also continued to endorse it as the only path to lasting peace and security.

During Donald Trump's presidency, however, US support weakened. His administration considered the two-state solution as just one option among others, even proposing US administration of Gaza and Palestinian resettlement—plans that severely undercut the possibility of a Palestinian statehood. Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the relocation of the US embassy there further marginalised the two-state framework.

Against this backdrop, Netanyahu's statement not only defies decades of US foreign policy but also ignores widespread international condemnation. Twenty-one countries, including close allies like the United Kingdom, Australia, and Japan, have denounced Israel's plans for a new illegal settlement in the occupied West Bank, warning that such actions render a two-state solution impossible. But Israel continues to violate international humanitarian law with impunity. The world has watched the ongoing genocide, starvation of civilians, and targeted killings of Palestinians seeking food, of children in schools, of patients in hospitals, of aid workers, doctors, and journalists. And yet, the international community has failed to act decisively.

Nations that still offer Israel unconditional support must understand that these actions endanger not only Palestinian lives but the stability and security of the entire region, and the world by extension. They are in direct opposition to the core human values the international community claims to uphold. The two-state solution, therefore, must be urgently revived. At the same time, the world must act to stop the genocide, force Israel to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza, and hold it accountable.

A drainage project in shambles

DNCC must finish Kawlabazar-Dakkhin Khan undertaking without delay

We cannot stress enough the importance of timely and well-managed public works. But the ongoing drainage installation work along the 2.5-kilometre road stretch from Kawlabazar to Dakkhin Khan Bazar via Shiyaldanga Road, as reported by this daily, is a textbook case of how not to handle such projects. Instead of improving residents' lives as intended, this DNCC botchwork has left them mired in trouble and disruption.

According to locals, the drainage work has dragged on for two years now. Residents say that only a fraction of the road has been carpeted despite drainage pipes already being laid. The slow pace of work has severely affected small businesses and schools alike. Schoolchildren, for instance, are struggling to walk home on rainy days, while small entrepreneurs say their incomes have dropped by half due to customers avoiding the area. Vehicle owners too have reported disruptions, parking problems, and financial loss.

DNCC officials have cited resistance from residents over vacating occupied portions of the road as a reason for delays. While such barriers may impact work, they cannot justify prolonged inaction or poor project management. The longer the work drags on, the greater the cost to livelihoods, mobility, and public safety. Knee-deep water, loose soil, and unfinished surfaces increase the risk of accidents and diseases.

Across Dhaka, we have seen how such dug-up roads, left by utility providers or city corporations, have become a recurring nightmare. The 2019 Road Excavation Policy clearly states that excavation must be done in small sections, completed within 15 days, and debris cleared within 24 hours. In reality, these rules are seldom enforced, and projects are allowed to stretch indefinitely. This undermines the very goals of such infrastructure works.

We, therefore, urge DNCC to immediately accelerate the completion of this project. Coordination with local stakeholders should be strengthened, and any land disputes resolved quickly through transparent negotiation. Contractors must be held accountable for meeting deadlines and quality standards. Beyond this, both city corporations of Dhaka must adopt a more disciplined approach to road works, following the excavation policy to the letter. Projects should be planned and implemented in phases that minimise disruption, with post-work restoration given the same priority as installation itself. Without such systemic changes, residents will continue to suffer from unfinished infrastructure projects.

We must professionalise our fight for stolen wealth



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

KHAN KHALID ADNAN

The claims are vast and visceral: billions spirited out of Bangladesh during Awami League's tenure through fraud, over-invoicing, and old-school graft. Some of that money has left footprints abroad. In June, for instance, British authorities froze a large portfolio of UK properties linked to a former AL minister, an unusually muscular signal that destination countries may be willing to cooperate when we show them strong cases. But asset recovery is not a morality play, it is a technical sport with exacting rules. If we want the money back, we must play by those rules.

Let's take a look at the legal playbook. Bangladesh's Money Laundering Prevention Act 2012 empowers investigators and special courts to trace and confiscate proceeds of crime; the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act 2012 and its rules provide a channel to request evidence, freezing, and confiscation abroad; and the Extradition Act 1974 offers the framework to bring fugitives back. Internationally, we have a strong normative anchor: the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) makes asset recovery a "fundamental principle" and sets out the methods—mutual legal assistance, freezing, confiscation, and return, including civil actions in foreign courts where necessary. In practice, Chapter V of the convention is where most cross-border cases are won or lost, and it rewards countries that can deliver clean evidence and credible court orders.

But we should be clear about the obstacles, too. The 2013 amendment to the ACC legal framework—requiring prior government permission to file cases against public servants—long crippled case velocity and sent the wrong signal to foreign judges scrutinising our requests. Section 32A, inserted in 2013, was struck down by High Court in January 2014, removing any pre-approval barrier to the ACC filing a case, but it has yet to be formally repealed. The ACC Reform Commission has also recommended repealing Section 32A. If you want other jurisdictions to freeze assets for you, you must show independence at the front end.

Second, beneficial ownership transparency at home remains fragmented. Bangladesh Bank now requires banks to collect ultimate beneficial owner (UBO) data, which helps domestic financial investigations, but we still lack a comprehensive, searchable national register covering companies and trusts across the economy. Without it, we are asking London, Dubai, or Singapore to do due

diligence we have not done ourselves.

Third, we remain outside the OECD's Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters, the backbone of modern automatic information exchange (CRS). Staying out deprives investigators of routine cross-border financial data and leaves us reliant on bespoke letters and goodwill. Acceding to the convention should be treated as an urgent macro-reform.

Moreover, our special courts remain

early freezing cases around simple, provable narratives (embezzlement counts, circular trade payments), then widen.

Which agencies matter abroad? In the UK, the National Crime Agency, Serious Fraud Office, and the IACCC hub can be decisive, and the UK's Unexplained Wealth Orders and civil recovery under POCA are tailor-made for suspect real estate. In the US, the Justice Department's Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section (MLARS) still runs civil forfeiture of foreign kleptocracy proceeds—often the quickest way to immobilise assets sitting in Delaware LLCs or New York condos, for instance.

Regionally, Interpol's Global Focal Point Network and the Asset Recovery Interagency Network for Asia Pacific (ARIN-AP) are the fastest bridges for "who do I call" problems. And never ignore STAR at the World Bank/UNODC and the Basel Institute's ICAR for case

peers. And professionalise, then over-resource, the boring bits—translations, forensic accounting, evidence matrices, etc—that foreign judges actually trust.

Tactically, go where the assets are and use the local playbook. In the UK, pair ROE searches with Land Registry data and seek interim freezing orders while preparing civil recovery. In the US, partner with MLARS for 18 U.S.C. §981 civil forfeiture when funds have passed through the US financial system. In the Gulf and Southeast Asia, lean on FIU channels (Bangladesh is an Egmont member) to get bank intelligence before you launch formal requests. File early, precisely, and narrowly, then iterate.

Money does not come home on press releases. It comes home case by case, with quiet diplomacy and implacable lawyering. The promising news is that partners are already moving: the UK freezes show that when we present credible assets of corruption stories, courts will listen;



FILE VISUAL: SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON

overloaded. Packaging of mutual legal assistance requests (MLARs) is often weak on evidentiary schedules, duration, dual-criminality mapping, and chain-of-custody detail. The Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering's (APG) evaluators flagged this cycle of backlog and strain years ago; that shows up abroad as refusals, delays, or narrow orders. We must remember that asset recovery is like paperwork chess, where sloppy files lose positions.

Now, the international obstacles. Dual criminality still matters. A foreign court will ask whether the conduct you describe is criminal both there and here. Bank secrecy cannot be pleaded to deny MLA under UNCAC, but trusts and nominees still create fog—yes, even in the UK after its new overseas entities register—so you need to combine informal FIU-to-FIU intelligence with formal court tools. A realist's tip: build

mentoring and legislative tuning.

So, what should Bangladesh do? Restore the ACC's operational independence by repealing the 2013 permission clause and insulating appointments and budgets. Establish a permanent Asset Recovery Taskforce, bringing together legal, economic, and forensic specialists. The taskforce should operate under a unified case preparation framework and include a centralised cell dedicated to drafting MLARs. Join the OECD tax cooperation convention and switch on CRS exchange relationships to end the "don't ask, don't tell" era of offshore accounts. Launch a genuine, economy-wide beneficial ownership register, with scope for verification and sanctions for false filings. Write and pass non-conviction based forfeiture and illicit enrichment tools that meet due process standards; both are encouraged in UNCAC practice and widely used by

London's anti-corruption centre is designed for precisely this kind of grand corruption. Bangladesh Bank, for its part, is exploring a litigation funding model to finance complex foreign actions, a sensible move provided that governance and transparency are watertight. The government should lock in those partnerships and publish a quarterly scorecard of requests sent, orders obtained, and sums returned.

Finally, cut the hype surrounding money laundering and asset recovery. The public deserves candour: even well-run programmes take years, and some assets will be unrecoverable. But with a depoliticised ACC, modern transparency rules, serious international cooperation, and a taskforce that treats casework like an export industry, Bangladesh can turn a depressing saga into a rule-of-law dividend. Bring the money home, patiently and permanently.

My DUCSU voting experience: The good and the bad



Nawshin Flora is a writer and student of Dhaka University.

NAWSHIN FLORA

As a politically unaware teenager, I observed the events of the 2019 DUCSU election with a mix of fascination and amusement, wondering why a university election received so much media coverage. Now, six years later, as I voted for the first time in an election, the question is more a criticism of our broken political structure. Despite my apprehensions about electoral politics, I was excited to see what changes the DUCSU election brings for the students. For weeks, the candidates campaigned and made many promises, and it was time to test the trust they had accumulated among the students. On the day of the election, the atmosphere around the campus was festive and celebratory. For many students like me, it was their first time participating in an election, and the enthusiasm was palpable as they queued in front of the voting booths at 8am sharp. The unprecedented participation indicated an eagerness for democracy

after a long hiatus.

For years, many remained hopeless about having a fair election. Therefore, everyone in the country was looking forward to the DUCSU polls—a test of the students' political consciousness, an identification of where the political compass reached. And were their hopes met with? I believe it's too early to answer. It was 12pm when I went to campus to vote on the day of the polls. The police had closed off entry points for outsiders, and students with their identification documents were allowed in. It was a slow walk to the voting centre. The scouts and officers on duty helped with directions. What was curious, though, was that many students were still campaigning at the gate of the voting centre despite the official rule prohibiting it. I had three students come up to me with requests that I vote for their preferred candidates in particular ranks.

However, the voting process was

absolutely seamless, and I finished in no time. For the next four hours, I roamed around the campus visiting multiple voting centres at the Teacher-Student Center (TSC), University Laboratory School and College, and the Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban with my friends. The outpouring of students was incredible to witness. Many came from Cumilla and Khulna to show support for their candidates of choice and exercise their rights. While multiple rumours floated around online about voting centres being out of action, the reality was completely different. There was little to no ruckus till the afternoon. On the Senate premises, some people were handing out biscuits and bananas to the students.

At 4pm, I headed home, and when I came back around an hour later through the Nilkhet entry point, the entire road was filled with people. The next few hours on the campus grounds were tense with Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activists instantaneously calling press conferences and rumours of vote mismanagement. I heard news of some candidates trying to bypass the rules. Another round of press conferences took place following processions and slogans. There were some complaints regarding the LED screens being turned off during the vote count in multiple centres. With an anxious mind, I came

home around 10:30pm and waited for the election results eagerly, like every other student of DU. The weeks-long anticipation was brought to an end after midnight, when the Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir backed panel won in a landslide victory.

The outcome of the election has brought a myriad of political anxieties for the students and aspirations of the masses. Despite accusations of vote manipulation, the prominent consensus is that democracy was practised in Bangladesh after a long time, and the students were given an actual choice to exercise their rights. What was indeed remarkable was the participation of nonresident students in hordes. Yet there were inadequacies in the administration of the election that must be addressed and criticised. A university election getting special national attention is another aspect of the media and political structure that should be the subject of criticism. As a citizen, I wonder when this dominance-inserting culture of Bangladeshi politics would end—why the sight of RAB, Police and Detective Branch of Police has been normalised in public universities. The horizon for student politics is now ripe with new possibilities, and I can only hope that those elected will serve the students to the best of their abilities. And those who voted for them will hold them accountable.

Navigating pre-election tensions: A plea for common sense



LETTERS FROM THE UK

Dr Geof Wood
is a development anthropologist and author of several books and numerous journal articles. He is also emeritus professor of international development at the University of Bath, UK.

GEOF WOOD

With the frequently stated, and apparently unequivocal, commitment to a general election in early February 2026 in Bangladesh, the starting pistol has been fired for about six months of intense party campaigning that will no doubt include disputes over the rules of the game. One central battleground will be party manifestos—which, in recent UK elections, have become more important than before as accountability documents. The ruling Labour Party in the UK is currently trapped by imprudent manifesto commitments, especially on tax, made before the July 2024 election in order to win it.

The question is, will the manifestos of Bangladesh's political parties emerge as serious accountability documents, especially with so many parties competing, each trying to showcase its unique selling point? In the past, manifestos of some parties referenced their role in the Liberation War and nation-building struggles during the 1970s. Will that be the point of contestation this time too, or will parties shift their focus to the urgent challenges of addressing livelihood concerns and national aspirations, delivering concrete ideas about delivery? Of course, the memory of what happened over 50 years ago is baked into the nation's DNA, but the older generation need to accept that today's youth prioritise the future over the past. I was reminded of this by younger Bangladeshi colleagues over the years.

So, will this be the "moving on" election? If so, we should be seeing "moving on" manifestos, too. The trend of settling old scores about "who did what" decades ago should be seen as a distraction from the huge challenges facing any incoming government. After July 2024, I advocated for some version of a truth and reconciliation commission. Perhaps it is time to allow this to happen by default. I am not suggesting that clear cases of violence, abuse, and murder should be ignored. Definitely not. But there is a difference between pursuing political feuds

and vengeance, and genuinely seeking rights and justice. Justice in the future will never be realised if the courts are overwhelmed, as they presently are, by spurious cases.

If the authors of such cases were genuinely concerned about people's livelihoods and aspirations, then they would draw a common-sense line and re-focus. The nation desperately needs to come together to face the future, rather than being trapped in the pursuit of short-term victories over opponents with whom they have, frankly, more in common than not. This is a plea for replacing factional intrigue with real, value-based thinking about what Bangladeshi need for a fulfilled future.

Take, for example, the finding of a recent study by the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) that the national poverty stands at nearly 28 percent, with extreme poverty rising to 9.35 percent. One may dispute whether this is an actual rise or whether previous figures were over-optimistic (I tend to the latter view), but the PPRC figures must be seen as a jolt to our senses about inclusive development. We have long known that inequality has grown at a higher rate in Bangladesh than in any other Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) seeking exit from LDC status. These new poverty figures show that over a quarter of the population is being left behind, while a minority become super-rich by buying state favours and political leverage.

If a political party seeks legitimacy and credibility in the upcoming elections and afterwards, then it must confront the staggering reality that neither foreign aid nor economic growth (from a low base) has prevented the dangerous divergence between the rich and the poor over the last five decades. Of course, the population has simultaneously grown and much poverty has been alleviated, but we cannot rest on laurels. "Keeping up" is clearly not happening.

Manifestos should, therefore, be published

well before election day, following a deadline set for all contenders by the Election Commission, with non-compliance resulting in exclusion from the contest. This way, manifestos become available for public debate and scrutiny. Parties, in their own interest, should make efforts to discuss and communicate their programmes widely, not simply rely on vote banks and manipulation, as has too often been the case across the 13

power, they should accept that national elections confer one set of powers, but other levels—upazila and union, for instance—also allocate authority, including to rival parties. That is pluralist democracy with checks and balances. We have seen what happens when full inclusion equals full exclusion in Bangladesh and elsewhere. That path easily leads to dictatorship; and students and ordinary citizens in July last year fought

short-term factionalism. It is a little like the *prisoner's dilemma* where mutual distrust ensures that everyone ends up in a situation no one actually wants.

So if the nation seeks responsible governance to address the major challenges—whether related to inflation, banking, gender and minority discrimination, poverty, skill shortages, climate change, global competitiveness, river pollution,



Politics must catch up with the demand of the July uprising where people fought to dismantle an authoritarian order and lay the foundations for a more accountable, participatory future.

FILE PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

previous elections.

But accountability and public debate demand responsibility too. For social science academics, there can be many explanations for electoral violence, especially with the heightened tensions of zero sum politics where the winner takes all. The stakes here are unreasonably high: full inclusion if victorious, full exclusion if not. Inclusion means access to the spoils of power, with exclusion its inverse. If parties wish to avoid the violent undermining of democratic legitimacy through muscle

precisely to avoid such exclusionary politics with its fascist overtones. Bangladeshi are surely too wise to settle for that outcome again.

Avoiding the violence associated with exclusionary politics requires conceding space in order to have space oneself. It means resisting the short-term temptation of total control for the sake of long-term participation and relevance. Those in politics and activism need to step back and see the bigger picture rather than remain trapped in

youth opportunity, sustainable housing, renewable energy, food security, the political consequences of feudo-capitalism, tax evasion or corruption—then all sides must cut each other some slack, avoid petty battles, and acknowledge that one's freedom is tied to others' freedom, and one's well-being is meaningful only if shared.

Only then will Bangladesh have a chance to arrive where everyone wants to be, by optimising for the long term rather than maximising short-term advantage.

Beyond the flames: Nepal's search for a sovereign path



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ZAKIR KIBRIA

The Himalayas have always been a place of profound silence and deep truths. But in the autumn of 2025, that silence is shattered by the roar of a generation that could wait no longer. The images from Kathmandu are both electrifying and heartbreaking: a sea of young, determined faces illuminated by the flicker of a state's failing legitimacy. The resignation of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli was a seismic event, a testament to the power of the people's will.

Yet, as the smoke clears over Singha Durbar, a crucial question emerges for Nepal and for all watching nations in the Global South: in a world of competing giants, can the righteous anger of a people be channelled into building a truly sovereign future, or does it risk being steered by other designs? The test for Nepal is not just to voice its rage, but to own its revolution.

To dismiss Nepal's unrest as a foreign concoction is to insult the intelligence and the agony of its youth. The fuel for this

fire was laid down over years of profound neglect. Nepal's economy has become a cruel paradox: it is a factory that does not produce goods, but exiles. The issuance of over 839,266 exit permits in the last fiscal year further highlights the national crisis. This relentless exodus of its brightest and strongest, propping up a remittance economy that constitutes over 33 percent of GDP, is an admission of a state's failure to provide for its citizens. When a government's primary export is its own people, what remains is a powder keg of disillusionment, with youth unemployment acting as the fuse.

The state's decision to ban social media was not merely a misstep; it was an act of digital suffocation. For a generation that lives, works, and dreams online, this was the final, unforgivable severance. Their protest was organic, a raw, legitimate cry for a future that doesn't require a passport to be lived.

But righteous anger has a dangerous twin: orchestrated chaos. The evolution of

the protests from mass dissent to systematic destruction follows a pattern that raises difficult questions. For instance, the burning of the Birgunj Customs Office, a vital economic artery, was not a mere act of passionate protest. It was a surgical strike on institutional state capacity.

The most alarming event was the assault on Dillibazar Jail. The escape of an estimated 15,000 inmates is not the work of enraged students; it is a tactical operation that demands planning, resources, and a specific intent to unleash anarchy and paralyse the state. This is the moment the script may have flipped—when a homegrown movement becomes a fertile ground for those who specialise in turning chaos into strategic advantage.

Why would external powers care about the fate of a small, landlocked nation? The answer lies in geography and the relentless logic of power. Nepal, perched between India and China, is the ultimate buffer state. For decades, it has navigated a delicate dance between its two colossal neighbours. But one project promises to shatter this balance: the China-Nepal trans-Himalayan railway.

This is not just a train line. As former Chinese envoys have stated, it is a "game-changer," designed to transform Nepal from a landlocked nation into a "land-linked" hub, integrated directly into China's Belt and Road Initiative. It represents nothing less than a fundamental reorientation of Nepal's

economic and strategic destiny away from its historical dependencies. For any power invested in containing the rise of a multipolar Asia and maintaining its own primacy, this is an unacceptable prospect. A stable, confident Nepal building this railway is one thing; a Nepal in flames, its government toppled and its future uncertain, is quite another.

This is where the documented actions of external actors demand scrutiny, not as proof of conspiracy, but as a map of undeniable interest. The United States has a long and sophisticated history of influencing political transitions under the banner of "democracy promotion." The National Endowment for Democracy (NED), with its deep congressional funding and historical ties to intelligence agencies, has been a vehicle for this influence globally. The fact that several Nepali youth groups and NGOs at the forefront of the unrest have received NED funding is a data point that cannot be ignored.

The diplomatic choreography is equally telling. The 2023 Nepal visit of Victoria Nuland, a diplomat synonymous with hawkish interventionism in Ukraine and elsewhere, was a significant signal. The highly publicised meeting between the popular, anti-establishment Kathmandu Mayor, Balen Shah, and US Ambassador Dean Thompson was another. In the subtle language of geopolitics, these are not casual chats. They are alignments. They are efforts to co-opt the energy of dissent and channel it towards

outcomes that serve a larger, offshore strategy.

The question for the Global South is not whether Nepali youth have a right to be angry. They do. The question is whether their authentic cry for justice is being amplified and weaponised to ensure the Himalayan railway never leaves the drawing board, to keep Nepal in a state of manageable instability, and to ensure the great game of control continues, just with new, digitally native pawns.

Nepal's story is our story. It is a cautionary tale for Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and every nation navigating the treacherous waters of 21st-century geopolitics. It teaches us that our domestic failures—our corruption, our inequality—are our greatest vulnerabilities, the open windows through which foreign influence flies in.

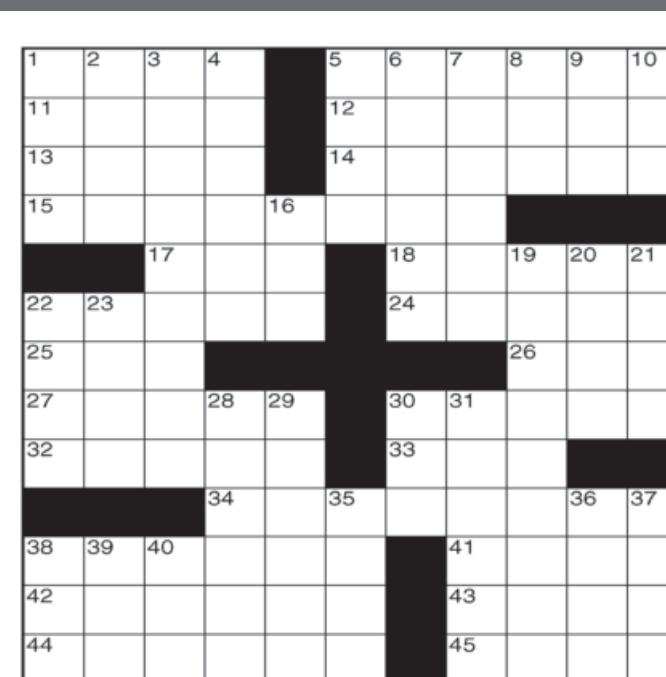
The path forward for Nepal, and for all of us, is not to reject the valid demands of the young. It is to build nations so resilient, so just, and so confident in their own sovereignty that they become immune to the whispered scripts of external actors. The dream of a peaceful, prosperous, and interconnected South Asia depends on it. The Himalayas have witnessed empires rise and fall. The hope now is that they will witness the rise of a Nepal that is not a trophy in a new Cold War, but a sovereign author of its own destiny, its future written in the hopeful, determined eyes of its youth, finally building at home.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Cats' quarries
5 Crafty
11 Fan favorite
12 Trail mix bit
13 Dispatch
14 Flashing light
15 Pretty sure things
17 Purpose
18 Like a corset
22 Treat the turkey
24 Skip the ceremony
25 Bulldog backer
26 Originally called
27 Mythical weeper
30 Soda bottle size
32 TV's Leary
33 Outback bird

34 Lunar events
38 Goof
41 Verdi opera
42 Pony Express workers
43 Beef cut
44 Tips off
45 Poker payment

DOWN
1 Overlook
2 Inkling
3 Puzzlement
4 Heir, often
5 Church area
6 End a lawsuit
7 Ankle bone
8 First ncemero
9 Soaking spot
10 Seine summer
16 Flower visitor
19 Bruise
20 Olympics weapon
21 Glade grazer
22 Crook
23 "I cannot tell..."
28 Singer Justin
29 Chaperone
30 Oahu garland
31 Gazelle's kin
35 Defeat
36 Fix a story
37 Rational
38 Lingerie buy
39 Gushee flow
40 Pindar poem



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS





Jaya Ahsan named UNDP Goodwill Ambassador for third term

Acclaimed Bangladeshi actress Jaya Ahsan has been reappointed as a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), marking her third consecutive term in the role.

The announcement was made on Friday, September 12, with Ahsan expressing her gratitude for the renewed opportunity. "I have served as UNDP's Goodwill Ambassador twice before. This third appointment feels equally special," she told The Daily Star. She also noted that while she engages in various philanthropic activities individually, working as an ambassador for a global institution like the UNDP brings a different sense of fulfillment.

The actress first became a UNDP Goodwill Ambassador in 2022. Her continued involvement highlights both her long-standing commitment to humanitarian causes.

ANONNO PROTEEK CHOWDHURI talks 'Noya Note', rising career

MAISHA TASnim SRESHTHA

"I spent most of my life studying and playing football," Anonno Proteek Chowdhuri says with a small shrug. He trained as a chartered accountant and worked in the field long enough to know the claustrophobia it carried. "I kept telling myself that if I ever reached a point of stability, I'd make a film one day."

However, years of quiet resolve caught up with him. He had seen his parents, directors Chayanika Chowdhury and Arun Chowdhury, leave their marks on the entertainment industry, and he was building up his repertoire to do the same. Anonno's debut web film *Noya Note*, released on September 12, grew directly out of that decisive leap. The film opens with the striking line, "In this world, everyone begs—some for five taka, others for millions," setting the tone for a story that follows a homeless man, begging for money. Working on a tight budget, he sent lead actor Nasir Uddin Khan onto real streets in character, unannounced.

"The gamble even paid off. Strangers on the street took Nasir *bhai* for a homeless man, and he walked back counting Tk 330 in his palm," he recalls with a wry smile. "I didn't have the money to gather hundreds of extras. And if people didn't actually believe Nasir *bhai* was a beggar, the scene would never feel real." To the public, he was just another man seeking alms; the camera, pulled back to a wide frame, captured an unfiltered scene.

Anonno's apprenticeship began in 2019 on the set of *Mayaboti*, where he worked as an assistant director. "It struck me early that a director juggles far more than what appears on the monitor, so I chose to shoulder the smaller tasks, so



that the core team can keep their eyes fixed on the lens."

That sense of responsibility has never left him. On the set of *Jole Jwole Tara*, he personally arranged restrooms for the cast and crew members. "As an AD, my crew's well-being is my duty on humanitarian grounds."

To Anonno, the digital screen is the perfect balance between the global and local audience. "Our market is still in a flux," he explains. "Streaming creates avenues for

stories that sit somewhere between a TV serial and a full-length feature film." He calls Bangladesh's modest scale a blessing in disguise. "Even with slim budgets, the craftsmanship can rival global productions."

Anonno finally concedes his one concern, "Scale is my greatest challenge," he says. "To realise these stories as I imagine them, I need a bigger canvas, a stage expansive enough to hold their full weight. If I can get there, I know I'll shine."



Obscure marks 40 Years with vinyl record album 'Reincarnation'

Bangladesh's iconic rock band Obscure is embracing the vinyl revival with their upcoming album *Reincarnation*. Marking 40 years in music, the record will showcase 10 of the band's most celebrated tracks – freshly re-recorded and newly arranged – alongside other selected favourites. Released under Gaan Baksho Music, the vinyl edition is already in production, with pressing underway in Ireland and a planned launch in January 2026.

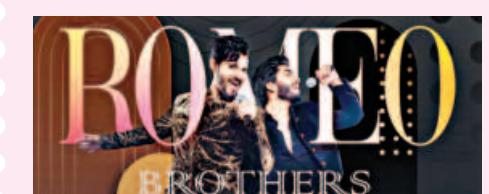
This will be Obscure's 14th studio album and their first in six years, offering longtime fans a classic format to rediscover the songs that defined the group's four-decade journey. By reimagining their iconic hits for vinyl, the band joins a global wave of artists reviving the warm, timeless sound of long-play records for a new generation of listeners.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Melody & Memories'

For the very first time, the Romeo Brothers take the stage to meet, greet, and celebrate with you. Enjoy an evening of pure nostalgia with timeless modern Bengali classics, mesmerizing ghazals, and vibrant qawwali. Together, relive the songs our mothers cherished, the cassettes our fathers played, and those unforgettable moments of claps, laughter, and joy.

**DATE: THURSDAY | SEPTEMBER 25, 2025
TIME: 6PM-10PM
VENUE: JATRA BIROTI**



NEWS

'Govt silent over attacks on Mahfuj'

FROM PAGE 12

His statement was a reaction to an incident on Friday where Awami League activists in London hurled eggs at two vehicles of the Bangladesh high commission after an event of Information Adviser Mahfuj at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).

Mahfuj attended the SOAS programme Friday afternoon. The event, jointly organised by SOAS and the Bangladesh high commission, marked the first anniversary of the July uprising in Bangladesh.

Awami League activists gathered outside the venue and demonstrated. After the event concluded, the adviser and senior commission officials departed in several vehicles.

According to an official statement, shortly afterwards, two empty high commission cars exiting the campus were attacked by Awami League leaders and workers, who threw eggs at them. Some protesters also lay on the road in an attempt to obstruct the vehicles, the post read.

Police quickly intervened and removed those blocking the road.

Meanwhile, Ganosamhati Andolan also issued a statement decrying the attack on Mahfuj.

The party's chief coordinator, Zonayed Saki, and executive coordinator, Abul Hasan Rubel, said,

Nepal sets polls date

FROM PAGE 12

She has not spoken publicly since being appointed late on Friday, but started her work to restore government by meeting some of the scores wounded in hospital.

Regional leaders congratulated Karki. Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus congratulated Karki.

"Your assumption of this high office, at a critical and challenging time, is a reflection of the trust and confidence reposed in you by the people of Nepal," Yunus said in a statement yesterday.

"As a longstanding friend and neighbour of Nepal, we are confident that under your able leadership and guidance, Nepal and its resilient people will continue to progress on the path of peace, development and stability."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India supported "the peace, progress and prosperity" of Nepal.

Protests began on Monday and quickly escalated, with parliament and key government buildings set ablaze, as they fed into long-standing economic woes in Nepal.

The capital Kathmandu took a step back towards normality yesterday

"From the very beginning of the post-uprising period, we have repeatedly called for maintaining national unity and refraining from inciting division. The defeated forces are being emboldened to carry out such attacks repeatedly by taking advantage of the disunity among the forces of the mass uprising. If we had remained united on questions of national interest, we could have avoided such situations."

Earlier, in August, Mahfuj faced assault attempts in New York. Awami League supporters tried to disrupt his entry into the Bangladesh Consulate. They also threw eggs at the adviser, shouted slogans against him, and even broke the glass door of the consulate building.

GOVT CONDEMNS ATTACK ON MAHFUJ

Later in the night, the interim government, in a statement, condemned the attempted attack on Mahfuj in London.

Noting that the Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam publicly condemned the attack on Mahfuj in New York, the statement read that the government condemns this latest attack with the same conviction.

"As we said after the attack in New York, violence is not protest; intimidation is not free speech. Those words apply with full force in London as they did in New York."

"Fundamental freedoms of speech,

assembly and peaceful protest are cornerstones of democracy – but they must be exercised with responsibility and respect."

In the statement, the government called on the Metropolitan Police in London to complete a full investigation, using available footage to identify the miscreants and bring them to justice.

It also urged political leaders and community organisers to publicly and unequivocally repudiate violence and intimidation in the diaspora, whatever their factional loyalties.

Finally, the government affirmed the right to peaceful protest – and the equal right of officials, students and citizens to speak and assemble without fear.

Jamaat, 6 other parties

FROM PAGE 12

considered "an accomplice in terrorism and fascism".

IAB spokesperson Gazi Ataur Rahman told The Daily Star that each of the like-minded parties will announce their programmes as part of the simultaneous movements in separate press conferences. He said the IAB will hold its press conference at its headquarters tomorrow.

"The like-minded parties will first hold the programmes in Dhaka. We will announce tougher programmes in phases and gradually we will spread our programmes to division, district, upazila and union levels," he added.

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, in a statement yesterday, said it will hold its press conference today at its central office in Purana Paltan, where its Ameer Muhammad Mamunul Haque will announce its programme.

Jalaluddin, secretary general of the party, told The Daily Star they will also toughen their programmes gradually to force the government to meet their demands.

Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair said if the government holds the election without fulfilling their demands, the polls will not be able to meet the people's expectations.

Asked whether they would join the election if the government does not accept their demands, he said they would contest the election only after having their demands realised.

Besides Jamaat, IAB and several others, NCP was also vocal in the dialogue of the National Consensus Commission on major reforms, including upper house election under the PR system.

as a curfew was eased and daily life returned, with markets opening, traffic returning, and families visiting temples.

Soldiers scaled back their presence on streets, where they had been deployed in large numbers since the protests.

"We don't know what will happen in the future now, but we are satisfied today," said Durga Magar, a 23-year-old Kathmandu shopworker.

A fifth of people in Nepal aged 15-24 are unemployed, according to the World Bank, with GDP per capita standing at just \$1,447.

International rights groups issued a joint statement calling for the new administration to end the "impunity of the past".

Nepal is at a turning point, where the hard work of securing human rights for all could be built upon or sent into reverse," Amnesty International's Isabelle Lassee said.

For many Nepalis, Karki's appointment carried both symbolic weight and the promise of change.

"Nepal has got its first woman prime minister," said Suraj Bhattarai, 51, a social worker, adding he hoped she would "take good governance forward".

Businesses request Yunus

FROM PAGE 12

Similarly, biologic drugs such as trastuzumab (breast cancer) are available locally for about \$200-400 per vial, whereas international prices are often \$3,000-4,000 per dose, the letter said.

The graduation will be particularly impactful for the apparel sector, which accounts for over 81 percent of the export value.

Duty-free access will end, production costs will rise and compliance rules will tighten.

Electricity and gas constraints pose a major challenge for Bangladesh in its post-LDC graduation journey.

Frequent power cuts, gas shortages and rising energy costs disrupt industrial production, raise export prices and reduce competitiveness.

Several countries such as the Maldives, Vanuatu, Samoa and Nepal have delayed their UN-designated LDC graduation

despite meeting the eligibility criteria, usually due to economic or political challenges, said the joint letter sent to Yunus on August 24.

The Solomon Islands were granted a six-year delay.

Myanmar met the UN graduation criteria in years such as 2018, 2021 and 2024.

However, due to political instability following a military coup, the UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP) deferred its graduation until 2027.

Timor Leste also fulfilled the criteria in 2015, 2018 and 2021. Yet, the CDP postponed its graduation decision until 2024.

The chambers and trade bodies are the International Chamber of Commerce Bangladesh, the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the

Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The other chambers and trade bodies are the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries, the Bangladesh Association of Banks, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association and the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

The Bangladesh Textile Mills Association, the Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries, the Bangladesh Association of Publicly Listed Companies, the Bangladesh Insurance Association, the Bangladesh Semiconductor Industry Association and the Leather and Footwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association of Bangladesh also signed the joint letter.

Govt cuts specialist care

FROM PAGE 12

resident physician in Dhaka Medical College Hospital's paediatrics department, said that removing experienced specialists – who need to spend nearly an hour with each child – will harm both quality and access.

"An outpatient doctor already sees 70 patients a day. How can they spare the time or expertise for these children with special needs? The very purpose of the centres will be lost, and low- and middle-income families will be left with nowhere to go."

"We talk about universal health in line with SDG commitments. But true universal health is only possible if the quality of life of these children is improved."

Dr Toshiba Rahman, who has been running the Child Development Centre and Neurology Clinic at DMCH since 2009, said, "Neurodevelopment is a complex, stage-based process. Using scientific tools and evidence-based assessments, we evaluate motor, cognitive, language and socio-emotional growth – allowing early detection and timely intervention that can transform a child's future."

From January to August this year, her centre treated over 5,000 children. "You can't just glance at a child for five minutes and write a prescription ... Each case takes 30-45 minutes of observation, reviewing reports, listening to parents and consulting therapists. If we compromise on quality, diagnosis and planning will fail – and the children will pay the price."

Asked whether they would join the election if the government does not accept their demands, he said they would contest the election only after having their demands realised.

Asked whether they would join the election if the government does not accept their demands, he said they would contest the election only after having their demands realised.

Sufia Akter, mother of a child with developmental delays, said, "This is not just about my child – every child with developmental issues first goes to a general paediatrician, who blindly refers them to Shishu Bikash Kendras. If you remove the specialists and expect general doctors to handle it, what's the point?"

"The government ignores low- and middle-income families, for whom 10-taka services are a lifeline."

However, finance ministry's Joint Secretary Rownak Jahan defended the government decision, saying staffing in development projects must follow strict regulations. "We've provided all that was possible within our purview and authority," she told The Daily Star.

But the move contradicts the Health Reforms Commission's recommendation to set up multidisciplinary child development centres in all district and medical college hospitals, supported by new legislation to ensure continuity.

Health Secretary Saidur Rahman acknowledged the limitations. "Since this is a project, it'll have to be discontinued at some point."

He added that integrating the centres into the mainstream system – like other hospital units with revenue support – could provide a permanent solution.

About hospital paediatricians replacing specialists, he said, "It may take some time for them to adapt, but their specialisation is in children." He insisted that quality care could be maintained with proper monitoring. "It actually depends on who is dedicated to

it." However, specialists fear otherwise. Professor Naila Zaman Khan, paediatric neurologist who pioneered the centres and is a member of the Health Reform Commission, said, "Removing any one component will collapse the service."

Even if general paediatricians are redeployed, she said, they would require at least three months of structured training.

She urged integrating training for paediatricians and child health physicians as a regular part of the Directorate General of Health Services's system.

"Dhaka Shishu Hospital earlier offered a three-month course for child health physicians, but it was discontinued in 2018. Since then, training has been piecemeal. We need a comprehensive approach. Establishing a centre in any major government specialised hospital could ensure continuity; otherwise, marginalised families will bear the loss."

The Health Reform Commission has also proposed a Child Development Centre Act to guarantee sustainability. Without it, Naila said, services remain prone to disruption, leaving hundreds of children referred from primary and secondary care facilities without support.



Low-income people wait from dawn to buy rice and other essentials at fair prices from an OMS dealer on Boundary Road near Boyra College in Khulna. The long wait is especially hard for elderly women and children. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Six killed, 15 hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Six persons were killed and 15 others injured in road accidents in three districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Chattogram, a laguna hit Shor Mohammad, 60, and left him dead on the spot on Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway while he was crossing the road.

Meanwhile, a bus collided head-on with a pickup, leaving the van's driver Abdul Quader, 42, dead on the spot, said Jasim Uddin, OC of Patiya Crossing Highway Police Station.

In Sunamganj, two District Administration employees -- Shomirul Haque Jewel, 38, and Sobdor Ali, 37 -- were killed as their motorcycle was hit by an oncoming car in Joykalash area of Shantiganj upazila.

Joykalash Highway Police Station OC Suman Kumar Chowdhury said Jewel died on the spot while Sobdor succumbed to his injuries while being taken to Sylhet.

In Mymensingh, two buses collided head-on in Bhoraduba area on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Bhaluka upazila at around 7:30pm, leaving the bus helpers dead on the spot and 15 others injured, said police.

The deceased are Md Sharif, 21, and Md Nirob, 15. The injured were sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital and Bhaluka Upazila Health Complex.

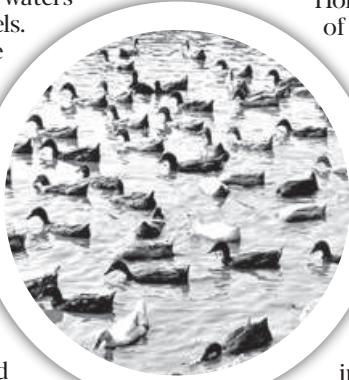
Duck farming gains ground in Netrakona haors

JAYDUL ISLAM

During the monsoon season, young people in the haor regions of Netrakona are becoming self-reliant by engaging in low-cost duck farming.

The growing interest in duck farms is also creating an alternative source of employment for the district's rural youth.

In this agriculture-based region, Boro and Aman paddy grow in abundance. But when farming activities come to a halt during the monsoon, most people in the haor areas depend on fishing in the open waters of rivers, canals, and beels.



2,500 ducks, which now lay 1,900-2,000 eggs daily.

"Before the harvest, we need to provide some additional feed, but it's still very low compared to other farming costs," he said.

Farmer Nur Kamal of Kalmakanda said, "I spend most of my time managing the farm, but I can't handle it alone. I have three permanent workers, and sometimes I need to hire a few extra hands. Rearing 4,000 ducks is not easy, but it has created employment opportunities for at least three more people."

Homemaker Jamila Khatun of Jahangirpur village in Sadar upazila said, "I rear ten ducks at home. Since I cannot afford to buy fish and meat, the eggs and meat from these ducks help meet my family's food needs."

There are 1,009 government-registered duck farms in the district, said District Livestock Officer Md Shahidullah.

"Beyond that, we estimate there are more than 5,500 unregistered small and large farms. Together, these farms are directly creating employment for at least 10,000 people."

District Livestock Office Additional Director Sadikul Islam said, "Duck farming is essential to meet the district's demand for eggs. Duck meat also plays an important role in meeting local meat demand. We provide guidance and support to small-scale farmers to ensure production continues smoothly."

Ducks grow quickly on natural food, reducing the need for costly feed. The open waters and vast crop fields of the haor are proving to be ideal for rearing, which not only generates employment but also helps meet local demand for eggs and meat, said officials.

Among the district's 10 upazilas, Madan, Mohanganj, and Khalaijuri are completely haor areas, while Kalmakanda, Barhatta, Atpara, and others have low-lying lands that also create a favourable environment for duck farming during the monsoon.

Mohsin Mia, a duck farmer from Uradighi village in Raypur Union, said he and two friends started a farm with

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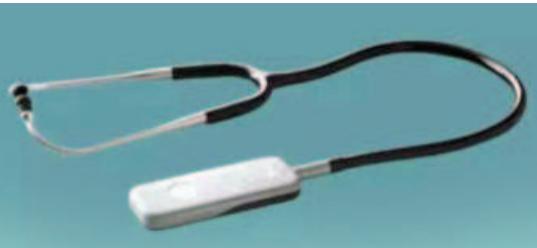
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AI stethoscope detects heart issues in seconds and analyse subtle differences that the human ear cannot detect

STAR HEALTH DESK

Doctors have developed an artificial intelligence (AI)-led stethoscope that can detect three serious heart conditions in just 15 seconds, The Guardian reported.

The new device, created by researchers at Imperial College London and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, is able to identify heart failure, atrial fibrillation (abnormal heart rhythm), and heart valve disease almost instantly.

Unlike the traditional stethoscope, invented in 1816, this upgraded version records both heart sounds and electrical signals, which are then analysed by AI algorithms through cloud technology.

According to the report, a trial involving about 12,000 UK patients showed remarkable results. Those examined with the device were twice as likely to be diagnosed with heart failure, three times more likely to be diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, and nearly twice as likely to be diagnosed with valve disease compared with standard checks.

The device, manufactured by California-based Eko Health, replaces the traditional chest piece with a device around the size of a playing card and connects to smartphones to transmit results. It uses a microphone to analyse subtle differences in heartbeat and blood flow that the human ear cannot detect.

It takes an ECG (electrocardiogram), recording electrical signals from the heart, and sends the information to the cloud to be analysed by AI trained on data from tens of thousands of patients.

Experts believe it could reduce hospital admissions by enabling earlier diagnosis in community clinics.

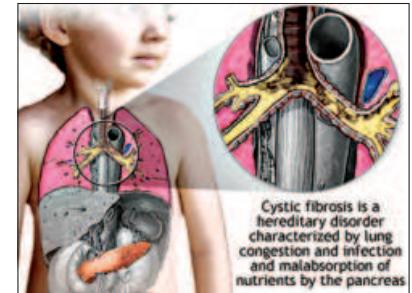
DR RAHAT BIN HABIB &
PROF DR ARM LUTHFUL KABIR

Every year on 8 September, the world observes Cystic Fibrosis (CF) Day to raise awareness, share experiences, and call for better care for people living with this chronic genetic disease.

CF affects the lungs, digestive system, and other organs by producing thick, sticky mucus that blocks airways and ducts, leading to repeated lung infections, poor absorption of nutrients, and gradual respiratory decline.

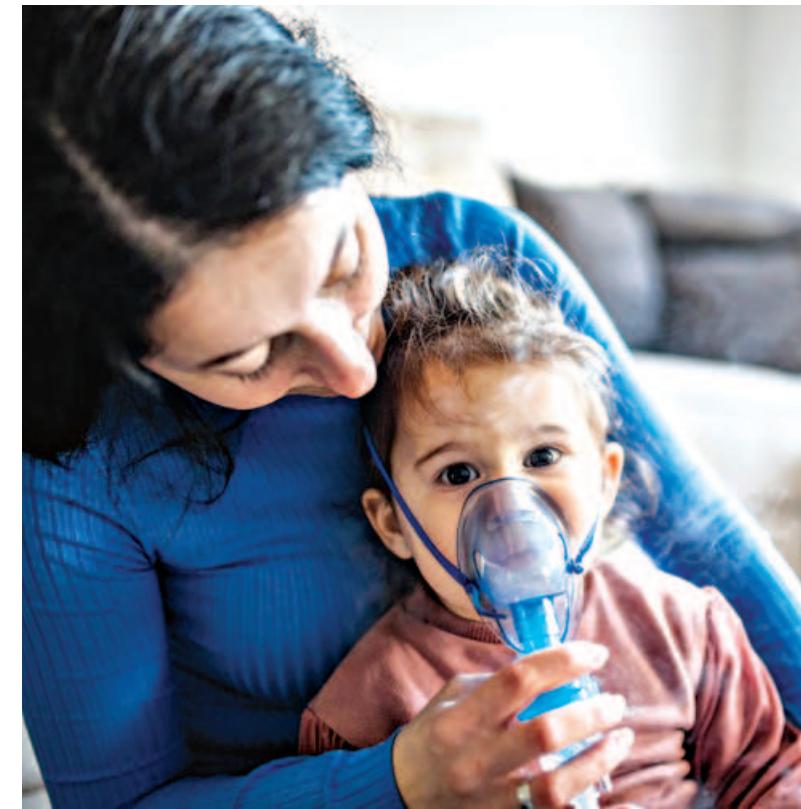
Globally, more than 162,000 people in 94 countries live with CF, but about 35% remain undiagnosed. In developed countries, advances in screening, specialist care, and CFTR modulator therapies have extended life expectancy beyond 45 years. In Bangladesh, CF is still under-recognised and often mistaken for asthma, tuberculosis, chronic bronchitis and recurrent pneumonia.

A landmark study in Bangladesh by Prof Luthful Kabir and colleagues,



using an indigenously developed sweat test, provided the first large-scale insight into the disease in children.

Among 95 suspected cases, symptoms began at an average of 16.9



months, yet diagnosis was delayed for years. Every child had a chronic wet cough, 90.5% had breathing difficulties, and many showed digital clubbing, chest crackles, or thick sputum.

Lung scans revealed bronchiectasis in 60% and pan-sinusitis in 89%, while 37% had signs of malabsorption and 87% were severely underweight. Our experience from more than 300 cases confirms CF exists in Bangladeshi children across all ethnic groups.

Unfortunately, many still believe it is a Western and Caucasian disease, leading to years of misdiagnosis and maltreatment. Globally, treatments

like Trikafta and gene therapy are changing lives, but in Bangladesh, these medicines are not easy to obtain.

On CF Day 2025, we must act—through awareness, early screening, a national registry, and better treatment access—so that no child suffers from this disease when it can be easily diagnosed.

The writers are Assistant Professor (Paediatrics) at Saeed Sayed Nazrul Islam Medical College, Kishoreganj, Bangladesh, and Professor & Head (Paediatrics) at Ad-Din Medical College, Mogbazar, Dhaka, Bangladesh, respectively. Email: ssmcdmc@gmail.com



STOP BULLYING
No one heals by wounding others

AYANA FARUK PURNOTA

Bullying is a negative behaviour that harms individuals physically or psychologically. It includes hurting, intimidating, or dominating someone perceived as weaker. Bullying can occur anywhere—schools, playgrounds, neighbourhoods, or online—but is most common in schools.

Forms of bullying include:

1. Physical – Aggressive violence for no reason.
2. Verbal – Hurtful speech that leaves the victim distressed.
3. Social – Spreading lies or rumours to ruin reputations.
4. Cyber – Online harassment through digital platforms.
5. Sexual – Unwanted explicit behaviour.
6. Racial – Offensive remarks about race, religion, or nationality.
7. Disability – Mocking physical or mental conditions.

Research shows about 20% of students aged 12–18 are bullied—often unreported. Boys face more physical bullying; girls face more social bullying. In the Philippines, the rate is 65%. Victims may suffer from isolation, depression, anxiety, poor sleep, or loss of interest.

Why do people bully? They may have been victims themselves, acting out of pride, fear, or jealousy.

What can we do? Tell a trusted adult, avoid unsafe areas, use helplines, think before posting online, and stand up for others. Resolve conflicts peacefully.

Role of elders: Listen, support, monitor friendships, and encourage hobbies. Schools must enforce anti-bullying rules and train staff to respond appropriately.

Let us choose kindness and create a safe, respectful world for all.

The writer is a health activist.

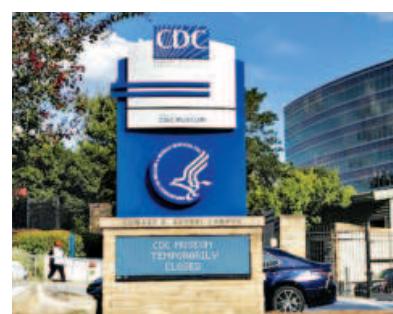
WHO urged protection of CDC's public health excellence

STAR HEALTH REPORT

The World Health Organisation (WHO) called for the protection of the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), emphasising its vital role in global public health.

"No institution is perfect, and continued improvements are always needed to make sure the latest science and evidence is applied to emerging challenges in real time, but the work of the US CDC has been invaluable and must be protected," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus stated in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

His remarks came amid leadership changes at the CDC and rising concerns that decisions by U.S. Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr could jeopardise public health in the country. Ghebreyesus did not



The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) main campus in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.

comment on those concerns or echo calls for Kennedy's resignation.

Instead, he highlighted how the CDC's longstanding reputation as a "centre of excellence" had inspired countries worldwide to adopt its

best practices.

He noted that the WHO's long-term collaboration with the CDC had allowed both U.S. citizens and global communities to benefit from cutting-edge American science, while also giving the U.S. access to crucial global health data, alerts, experience, and guidance.

Ghebreyesus's comments underscored the need to shield scientific institutions from political interference and ensure they continue to serve public health interests effectively.

The Trump administration has been critical of the WHO for its handling of COVID 19, with Kennedy dismissing the organisation as "morbidity."

In January, Trump ordered the United States to leave the WHO.

Source: World Health Organisation

WORLD PHYSIOTHERAPY DAY 2025

The role of physiotherapy and physical activity in healthy ageing

DR M EASIN ALI

Every year, on 8 September, World Physiotherapy Day is observed globally. The aim is to raise awareness about the importance of physiotherapy, highlight the contributions of physiotherapists, and promote its positive effects on physical, mental, and social well-being.



falls and fractures

- Reduced balance – a major risk for injury
- Chronic illnesses – arthritis, diabetes, and hypertension become more prevalent

About 30–40% of people over 65 experience at least one fall annually. These can cause serious injuries, loss of independence, and social isolation.

Physiotherapy is vital not just for rehabilitation but also for prevention. It supports healthy, active ageing and helps maintain independence.

Physical activity benefits not only muscles and bones, but also mental alertness and social interaction. A physiotherapist-guided exercise plan ensures safe and effective outcomes.

Prevention is better than cure. To age healthily, exercise daily, eat a balanced diet, get adequate rest, have regular check-ups, and follow

physiotherapist-recommended routines.

Older adults carry wisdom and tradition. Keeping them healthy benefits families and society. Physiotherapy helps them remain active, independent, and valuable contributors to their communities.

Access to physiotherapy remains limited, especially in rural areas. Solutions include awareness campaigns to educate families and communities, training more physiotherapists, and community programmes offering regular physical activity and therapy services.

Physiotherapy ensures physical ability, mental well-being, and social participation for older adults. It must be integrated into mainstream healthcare. With regular physical activity and physiotherapy, our elders can enjoy active, independent, and fulfilling lives.

The writer is the Chairman and Chief Consultant at Dhaka City Physiotherapy Hospital, Dhammardi, Dhaka. Email: dreasin20@gmail.com

Expanding financial access to empower small entrepreneurs

The Daily Start (TDS): How have NRBC's financial products supported small entrepreneurs, particularly women and rural business owners, in accessing credit and building resilience?

Dr. Md Touhidul Alam Khan (DMTAK): NRBC Bank is committed to promoting financial inclusion by offering collateral-free microloans that are easily accessible to rural and women entrepreneurs. Since March 2021, we have disbursed approximately BDT 1,500 crore to over 52,500 entrepreneurs. Our NRBC "Sukhi Bangla" product enables new and unbanked entrepreneurs to open accounts with as little as BDT 10 to BDT 100, with minimal documentation requirements.

In remote regions such as chars and haors, we provide loans up to BDT 50,000 at an interest rate of 7 percent, mainly targeting women, without the need for collateral. Additionally, in partnership with the Jayeeta Foundation, we offer women entrepreneurs access to loans up to BDT 50 lakh at a 5 percent interest rate.

TDS: What innovative financial tools or partnerships have emerged to expand inclusion and affordability in underserved markets?

DMTAK: To reach marginalised groups in remote areas, NRBC Bank has launched Sub-Branch Banking, leveraging technology to deliver comprehensive banking services at lower costs. Our Planet App has further simplified banking, allowing customers to perform transactions from the comfort of their homes. This innovative approach helps eliminate barriers and encourages greater participation in the formal financial system.

We have also formed strategic partnerships and developed products to promote financial inclusion with some organisations to support marginalized communities through increased

financial access, market linkages, and digital village initiatives. Our participation in the 'Banker-SME Women Entrepreneurs Fair' increased visibility for women-led businesses. Additionally, we introduced nano-credit and app-based services to make banking more affordable for low-income users, extending financial access to areas that were previously excluded from formal finance.



Dr. Md Touhidul Alam Khan, FCMA
Managing Director and CEO, NRBC Bank PLC

TDS: How do you evaluate the success of your financial inclusion initiatives and what metrics guide future investment and outreach?

DMTAK: We measure our success by the number of entrepreneurs supported, the volume of loans disbursed, the geographic spread of our services, and the affordability of our financial products. Recognition also contributes to our assessment. For instance, NRBC Bank was named the Fastest Growing Microfinance Bank in 2022 by 'Global Economics' in the UK.

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

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

Associates warm up the Asia Cup

EKUSH TAPADER from Abu Dhabi

Even before the big clashes begin, the Asia Cup depends on its associate teams to set the stage. They may not dominate headlines, but their presence shapes the early rhythm of the tournament.

On the day before facing Pakistan, Oman captain Jatinder Singh's official press conference room was empty. He arrived on time on Thursday, sat waiting, and only after two journalists showed up did the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) media manager manage to save face. Similarly, Hong Kong captain Yasim Murtaza, after losing to Bangladesh, personally greeted the journalists while completing the formalities. For these teams, simply participating in the Asia Cup remains a reward in itself.

Yet the expectations behind including Oman, Hong Kong, and hosts UAE in the tournament have largely gone unmet. Their one-sided performances in the first four matches so far have failed to generate excitement, making the early stages of the competition's 17th edition feel rather subdued.

Beyond the tournament, opportunities for these sides are limited. Murtaza admitted as much before leaving Abu Dhabi for their latest fixture: "We play against associate member countries. Even then, we get a tournament only every few months. Honestly, I don't know when I'll play next."

Oman, Hong Kong, and UAE lack the cushion of a dedicated fan base and deep player pools as many of their cricketers are migrants from India and Pakistan, often former mainstream players.

"As an associate member, we don't get the same opportunities as the Test-playing nations. You saw the difference on the field yourself."

In contrast, Nepal -- absent from this edition after losing to UAE in last year's ACC Premier Cup -- have a sizeable following. A significant Nepali expatriate community in Abu Dhabi, many employed in Indian restaurants, discussed the tournament's coverage. One remarked, "If Nepal were in the tournament, we would have gone to watch the games."

Their absence is self-inflicted, but had Nepal been here, organisers would likely have benefited from genuine fan engagement and a spike in TV ratings.

At this juncture, it feels as though the real tournament only began with Bangladesh-Sri Lanka on Saturday before Sunday's much anticipated India-Pakistan match.

Thus, the ACC has a window of opportunity to recover. The marquee affair between India and Pakistan promises full stands and global attention. With the two nations having faced a border conflict just months ago, off-field tension is palpable, feeding nationalism into the cricket spectacle.

At the opening ceremony on September 9, captains Suryakumar Yadav and Salman Agha exchanged polite greetings but remained distant. The cold professionalism mirrored wider political realities, though ordinary fans are less affected. On the way from Zayed Cricket Stadium, Pakistani taxi driver Zahid Khan Zaman asked a journalist, "Has Virat Kohli retired? Why isn't he here?"

As he drove, he said he was deeply disappointed to hear Kohli wasn't playing here. At the end of the day, politics may shape headlines, but fandom is personal.

For the ACC, however, these political and commercial undercurrents are more important than the early, uneventful associate fixtures. Oman, Hong Kong, and UAE may not deliver edge-of-the-seat contests, but the buildup to marquee matches ensures that the Asia Cup's overall intended financial and viewer objectives remain intact.



Mushfiqur's unique homecoming as NCL T20 begins

SPORTS REPORTER

Mushfiqur Rahim -- one of Bogura's proudest sons -- will take the field at the district's Shaheed Chandra Stadium on the opening game of the second edition of National Cricket League T20 (NCL T20) today, but not for the home division Rajshahi.

He will play for Sylhet Division against holders Rangpur Division while Rajshahi Division will take on last year's runners-up Dhaka Metro at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium in the day's other match.

The 38-year-old, who began his domestic career playing for Sylhet Division but returned to his home division of Rajshahi early in his career, has shifted his allegiance back to Sylhet this year.

But having Mushfiqur as an opponent has not dampened the spirits of the local fans who are excited to see top class cricket returning to Bogura.

Despite being an international stadium, the Chandu Stadium has not hosted an international match since 2006, only hosting a handful of four-day matches of NCL and Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) in the last 19 years.

The excitement of getting to see NCL T20



matches in Bogura reached another local boy Tanzid Hasan Tamim, who is now in Abu Dhabi representing Bangladesh in the ongoing Asia Cup.

"It feels so nostalgic and wonderful to see this festive atmosphere in Bogura... I request everyone from Bogura to buy tickets and attend in huge numbers to enjoy the tournament,"

Tanzid posted in his official Facebook page few hours before Bangladesh's game against Sri Lanka on Saturday.

Meanwhile, Sylhet's head coach Rajin Saleh was relieved to have someone as experienced as Mushfiqur in the side to strengthen the batting department.

"Our batting is perhaps the weakest link in the team. Apart from Mushfiqur and Zakir [Hasan], we don't have T20 players in the batting department. Hopefully, Mushfiqur's inclusion will motivate the young players and they will learn a lot from him in the dressing room," Saleh told The Daily Star yesterday.

The opening three rounds of NCL T20 will run between September 14 and 19 in Rajshahi and Bogura. All eight teams will then move to Sylhet for the remaining matches. The final will be held at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium on October 3.

Clash of fire and nerves as India face Pakistan

AGENCIES

An India-Pakistan cricket match needs little introduction. It is the game's fiercest rivalry, one that stretches far beyond the boundary ropes.

When the two teams meet in Dubai on Sunday for their Asia Cup group A clash, the contest will carry not only sporting weight but also the baggage of recent political tension, ensuring emotions run higher than ever.

The nuclear-armed neighbours engaged in a four-day military conflict earlier this year, and bilateral cricket has remained suspended since 2008.

Calls from some quarters in India to boycott the fixture only added to the build-up, but with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) aligning with the government, the showdown will go ahead -- to the delight of millions of fans across the globe.

On the cricketing front, India arrive as firm favourites. The reigning Asia Cup champions and current T20 World Cup holders made a ruthless start to their campaign, dismissing the UAE for just 57 before chasing down the target in 27 balls.

Reinforced by the return of pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and top-order dynamo Shubman Gill, and led by captain Suryakumar Yadav, India boast a lethal balance of explosive batting and world-class bowling depth.

Pakistan, by contrast, are a side in transition. Without stalwarts Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan, leadership rests on the shoulders of Salman Ali Agha. Youngsters Saim Ayub and Hasan



Nawaz have been entrusted with responsibility, while left arm pacer Shaheen Afridi remains their biggest match winner.

Pakistan eased past Oman in their opener but know India represent a far sterner test. Coach Mike Hesson has urged calm, insisting the team's growth remains the priority.

The psychological burden of playing India in a global tournament has historically weighed on Pakistan, but former captain Wasim Akram has urged the squad to look beyond the hype. "Enjoy, it's a game of cricket. Forget about everything other than cricket," he advised.

Still, the anticipation is electric. India's aura of dominance, Pakistan's unpredictability, the political backdrop, and the setting in cricket-crazy Dubai all combine to make Sunday's encounter unmissable.

Both teams may insist their sole focus is cricket--India's batting coach Sitanshu Kotak stressed that "players are focused on playing cricket and nothing else," while Hesson admitted "being part of a highly-charged event is going to be exciting."

But history says, for India and Pakistan, victory is more than points -- it is pride, power, and history in sport's fiercest rivalry.



India and Pakistan have faced off 13 times in T20Is. India have come out victorious 10 times while Pakistan only thrice. Pakistan's last victory against India in this format came in 2022, a five-wicket win during an Asia Cup match in Dubai.

In Asia Cup, India and Pakistan have faced off 18 times across ODI and T20I formats. Out of 15 50-over clashes, India have come out on top eight times, Pakistan five times while two other matches ended in a no result. In the 20-over format, the two sides have faced off thrice, with India winning twice and Pakistan winning only once.

Since 2024, India have lost only three out of their 32 T20Is. Pakistan have won eight of their last 10 matches in this format.

For the first time since 2012, Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma won't feature in an India-Pakistan T20I. The Indian duo featured in the last 11 India-Pakistan clashes in the format. Both retired from T20Is last year following India's triumph in the ICC T20 World Cup.

Manchester City's total of three points is the fewest ever collected by Pep Guardiola in his first three league games of a season.

It is the first time since 2004-05 that City have lost two of their first three top-flight matches (W1) in a season; only one team have ever had the same record at this stage and recovered to win the title -- Manchester United in 1992-93.

City have won five of their last eight Premier League matches against Man Utd (D1 L2), though they failed to win either game against them (D1 L1) last season for the first time since 2020-21.

Across their first three matches of the season, United had 58 shots, 14 more than any other side.

Bruno Fernandes has created the most chances in the league both overall (12) and from open play (8), while he has also scored in each of their last three wins against City in the top flight.

Derby day tension as troubled City host hopeful United

Manchester United head into Sunday's Manchester derby at the Etihad with rare confidence, sitting ahead of local rivals Manchester City in the table for the first time in five years. Ruben Amorim's side, buoyed by December's dramatic 2-1 win at the same ground, have shown flashes of progress despite an inconsistent start, while Pep Guardiola's men are still adjusting to a major squad overhaul that has brought back-to-back defeats. With United desperate to prove their resurgence and City aiming to steady the ship, the derby promises to be a riveting contest.



Live from 8:30 pm
TEN Cricket
England vs South Africa
3rd T20I
Live from 7:30 pm
STAR SPORTS

SELECT HD1, HD2
English Premier League
Burnley vs Liverpool
Live from 9:30 pm

FEDERATION CUP 2025-26 Mohammedan, Kings in same group

SPORTS REPORTER

The 2025-26 Federation Cup has pitted defending champions Bashundhara Kings and reigning Bangladesh Premier League champions Mohammedan in the same group during the official draw, which was held at the Bangladesh Football Federation house on Saturday.

The tournament will commence on 23 September with a Group B fixture, however, the detailed fixture format is yet to be announced.

Matches in the tournament will be played every Tuesday, with two fixtures scheduled across two separate venues. Unlike the league, which spans five venues, this year's Federation Cup will be held exclusively at the Bashundhara Kings Arena and the Shaheed Dharendranath Dutta Stadium in Cumilla.

The competition features 10 teams divided into two groups of five. Each team will play four group stage matches in a round-robin format. Upon the conclusion of the group phase, the top two teams from each group will progress to the next round. The two group winners will face each other for a direct ticket to the final. The loser of that match will have another opportunity to qualify by playing the winner of the match between the two runners-up.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has scheduled the final for 10 April next year. Responding to media queries after the draw, Imrul Hasan, chairman of the league committee and senior vice-president of the federation, confirmed that, in accordance with an executive committee decision, no BFF committee official will be permitted in the dugout during matches.

GROUP A

Abahani, Rahmatganj, Brothers Union, Fakirerpool, PWD

GROUP B

Bashundhara Kings, Mohammedan, Arambagh, Bangladesh Police, Fortis FC

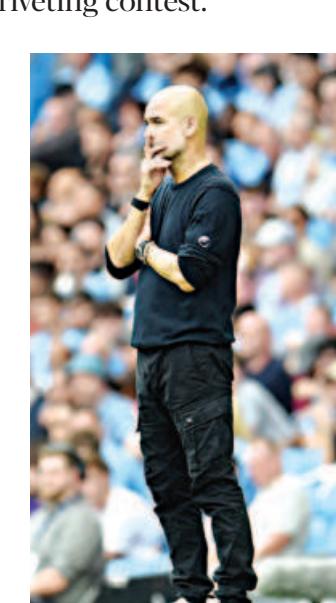
Councillorship list in focus as BCB election approaches

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) held an emergency board of directors meeting on Saturday about the upcoming BCB election, scheduled to be held in the first week of October, with the main agenda being finalising the councillorship list. BCB has already notified the concerned parties for the nomination of councillors, and they are expected to provide the names of councillors by September 17.

Out of the 25 BCB board directors, 10 will be elected from the Regional and District Cricket Association councillorship category, 12 from Dhaka Metropolis Club representatives category, and one from the Others category. The National Sports Council (NSC) will nominate the two remaining directors.

Although current board president Aminul Islam Bulbul and former skipper Tamim Iqbal have already announced their interest to run for the BCB top post, many current directors and interested candidates are waiting to see the final list of voters before taking the plunge.





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

SHAH CEMENT
BANGLADESH'S NO. 1 CEMENT BRAND

'Govt silent over attacks on Mahfuj' Alleges Nahid; govt condemns attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite repeated attacks on Mahfuj Alam, the interim government has neither taken decisive action nor issued strong statements, alleged Nahid Islam, convener of the National Citizen Party, in a post on his Facebook page yesterday.

"Not a single adviser or press secretary has commented on these incidents. There seems to be a silent consent also within the government and advisory council for humiliating or even eliminating Mahfuj Alam," said Nahid.

"Those in power have exploited figures like him and are now pushing them towards death. We will remember this -- and there will be a political reckoning," warned the NCP chief.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Jamaat, 6 other parties to wage simultaneous movements

Will demand implementation of the charter, PR for upper house

RASHIDUL HASAN

The political arena is bracing for fresh heat as the Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Andolan Bangladesh and five like-minded parties have moved to begin simultaneous movements this week for a four-point demand, including immediate implementation of the July Charter.

According to IAB, the other like minded parties are Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, Gono Odhikar Parishad, Amar Bangladesh Party, Khelafat Majlis, and Bangladesh Nezame Islam Party.

Their three other demands include banning the politics of Jatiya Party as "Awami League's accomplice and India's agent", implementing the proportional representation system for an upper house in the upcoming national election, and creating a level playing field for the polls.

Top leaders of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis and IAB told The Daily Star that the National Citizen Party agreed to join their movement.

However, NCP's Senior Joint Convener and Chief of Political Liaison Ariful Islam Adib in a message told this newspaper that the party has not yet made any decision regarding joining any alliance or simultaneous movements.

He said the NCP held informal discussions with several political parties over its demand for a legal basis of the July Charter and the framing of a new constitution through a constituent assembly election. "We want the PR system for the upper house only," Ariful added.

He also said the NCP will support the demand for banning Jatiya Party's organisational activities since it is



A displaced Palestinian child walks amid devastated tents, following an overnight Israeli strike that levelled a building and damaged the surrounding temporary shelters, in the Rimal neighbourhood of Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

SHISHU BIKASH CENTRES
Govt cuts specialist care for children with special needs

NILIMA JAHAN

For children with special needs, the 35 Shishu Bikash Kendras have been more than clinics -- they are lifelines offering hope in a country where proper, affordable care is rare.

Launched in 2008 to provide free treatment and therapy, these government-run child development centres have transformed countless families' lives.

Their future, however, now hangs in the balance, as the project's term expired last June and the government plans to run it on a shoestring budget.

As part of this plan, all developmental paediatricians -- doctors trained to manage complex neurodevelopmental conditions -- are to be removed and replaced with general paediatricians attached to hospitals.

With staffers unpaid for 14 months, doctors facing dismissal, and thousands of vulnerable children at risk, experts and parents say the government is abandoning children with special needs.

Under the Health, Population and Nutrition Sector Programme, the health ministry set up the 35 centres -- 24 in medical college

AT A GLANCE

The 35 centres serve children aged 0-16

ISSUES TREATED

Autism

Down syndrome

Cerebral palsy

ADHD

Seizures

Epilepsy

Delayed speech

Intellectual disabilities

Neurodevelopmental disorders

243,000 children received treatment

0-16 with autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, ADHD, epilepsy, delayed speech, intellectual disabilities and other disorders.

Patient numbers rose from under 10,000 in the first year to over 56,000 in 2022-23. In total, 243,000 children have received treatment, with more than 1,000 attending daily between 8:30am and 2:30pm.

To bridge the gap after the project's closure, the health ministry had proposed a two year initiative titled "Implementation of Essential Activities of the DGHS, DGDA and Community Clinic Health Assistance Trust".

However, when the finance ministry sent the plan to the Planning Commission, posts for developmental paediatricians were dropped. Instead, it suggested outsourcing 35 therapists and 12 psychologists.

Experts warned that cutting specialist care may save money in the short term but will raise far greater costs later, as children deprived of early treatment risk growing up dependent on long-term state support.

Dr Shaidur Rahman Shohag,

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

ASIA CUP 2025 Lankans outclass Tigers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sri Lanka outclassed Bangladesh in every department to secure a convincing six-wicket victory in a Group B Asia Cup encounter at the Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

Having restricted the Tigers to 139 for five in 20 overs, the Lankans also dominated with the bat, chasing down the target in just 14.4 overs.

Despite a commanding seven-wicket win over Hong Kong in their first game, Bangladesh now find themselves in a tricky position. The Litton Das-led side not only need to win their next game against Afghanistan on Tuesday but may also have to rely on the outcome of other group matches to qualify as one of the top two teams.

Bangladesh got off to a woeful start after being put in to bat, losing both openers -- Tanzid Hasan Tamim and Parvez Hossain Emon -- in 1.4 overs without a run on the board. Sri Lanka's bowlers piled on the pressure, reducing the Tigers to 53 for five in

SEE PAGE 5 COL 8



Bangladesh batter Towhid Hridoy is caught short of his crease as Sri Lanka players celebrate during a Group B Asia Cup encounter in Abu Dhabi yesterday. It was a disappointing day for the Tigers, who suffered a six-wicket defeat as the Lankans chased down a 140-run target in just 14.4 overs.

PHOTO: AFP



FARIDA PARVEEN
(Dec 1954-Sept 2025)

Lalon songbird takes final bow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Celebrated folk singer Farida Parveen, revered as the "Queen of Lalon Geet", passed away at 10:15pm last night. She was 70.

The news was confirmed to The Daily Star by Ashis Kumar Chakraborty, managing director of Universal Medical College Hospital. Farida is survived by her husband and four children.

After battling kidney complications for years, her health worsened in recent months, requiring dialysis twice

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Killing Hamas chiefs in Qatar will end war in Gaza

Says Netanyahu; US says Doha strike 'not going to change' ties

AGENCIES

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday said that getting rid of Hamas chiefs living in Qatar would remove the main obstacle to releasing all hostages and ending the war in Gaza.

Israel targeted the Hamas leadership in Doha in air strikes that were condemned by Qatar, which has served as one of the venues for ceasefire talks.

Hamas has said five of its members, including a son of its exiled Gaza chief Khalil al-Hayya, were killed in the attack, but its senior leaders and members of its negotiating team survived. Qatar has said a member of its internal security forces was also killed.

"The Hamas terrorist chiefs living in Qatar don't care about the people in Gaza. They blocked all ceasefire attempts in order to endlessly drag out the war," he said on X.

"Getting rid of them would rid the main obstacle to releasing all our hostages and ending the war."

Hamas has described the Doha attack as an attempt by Israel to derail the ceasefire negotiations, and said it would not change the group's terms for ending the war in Gaza.

Israel has demanded Hamas free all remaining hostages held in Gaza and disarm. Hamas says it will not free all hostages without an agreement that would end the war, and will not give up its weapons until Palestinians have an independent state.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

➤ Arab, Muslim leaders to meet in Qatar Monday

➤ 51 more killed in Gaza

Nepal sets polls date on March 5 next year

Parliament dissolved; Yunus greets Karki as she takes charge

AGENCIES

Nepal's President Ramchandra Paudel has dissolved parliament and called for fresh elections on March 5 next year following a week of deadly violence that culminated in the appointment of the country's first woman prime minister.

The statement from Paudel's office late on Friday came just hours after he announced former Chief Justice Sushila Karki would lead the country on an interim basis following the deadly "Gen Z"-led anti graft protests that forced former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli to resign.

According to the statement, the president has "dissolved the House of Representatives" and fixed March 5 next year for the elections.

Karki was appointed after two days of intense negotiations between Paudel, army chief Ashok Raj Sigdel and the protest leaders behind Nepal's worst upheaval in years, in which at least 51 people were killed and more than 1,300 injured.

Nepal's southern neighbour, India, said it hoped that the developments would help foster peace and stability.

Kakri began work yesterday by visiting young protesters wounded in the deadly anti corruption rallies that ousted her predecessor.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1