



DHAKA THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 25, 2025

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXV No. 242

ASHWIN 10, 1432 BS

www.thedailystar.net

RABIUS SANI 2, 1447 HJRI

20 PAGES PLUS RISING STARS: TK 15.00

10 BUSINESSES, HASINA FAMILY Tk 57,257cr in assets frozen at home, abroad

Shows progress report by joint task force investigating 11 priority cases

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Courts have frozen assets worth about Tk 57,257 crore, allegedly owned by 10 major business groups and members of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina's family, in over eight months from January.

The orders were issued as a high-level joint task force is investigating 11 priority cases -- one involving Hasina's family and the others S Alam Group, Beximco Group, Summit Group, Bashundhara Group, Gemcon Group, Orion Group, Nabil Group, Nassa Group, Sikder Group, and Aramit Group.

According to a task force document obtained by The Daily Star, Tk 43,385 crore of these assets are movable and Tk 13,871.56 crore immovable.

The document, outlining the progress of the investigations, shows that Tk 46,805.32 crore of the assets are in Bangladesh, while the remaining Tk 10,451.54 crore are abroad.

The Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) formed the task force on January 6, following a directive from the Financial Institutions Division of the finance ministry. The move came as the interim government ramped up efforts to recover funds allegedly embezzled or laundered abroad by Hasina's family and businesses linked to her regime.

In October last year, Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur said \$17 billion to \$18 billion (Tk 2.2 lakh crore) was siphoned off through the banking sector alone between 2009 and 2023.

An official of the task force, requesting anonymity, said the majority of the 10 conglomerates laundered money to the US, UK, Canada, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong, and other offshore jurisdictions.

The task force is now working with government agencies and key stakeholders in the destination countries to recover the laundered assets, the official added.

It is also planning to appoint international firms to seize assets abroad under the priority cases, and sanctions will be imposed via the UK, US, and UN on the sale or transfer of these assets, said officials.

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- Tk 46,805.32cr assets in Bangladesh
- Tk 10,451.54cr are in foreign assets
- These include Tk 17,215cr in bank accounts, company shares



A policeman strolls past a pile of seized vehicles that have been lying abandoned for years on the Chattogram court premises. Most have rusted away under the sun and rain, turning into heaps of scrap metal and making it difficult for commuters to move around the area. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

ROHINGYA CRISIS Political solution, not aid, only way out

Says new OHCHR report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The current humanitarian response to the Rohingya crisis is insufficient as political solutions are needed to ensure their safe and dignified return to Myanmar.

The Rohingya have called for active leadership by the UN, regional powers and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to pressure Myanmar's actors.

They also urged the UN, states and international courts to secure guarantees from Myanmar authorities for an agreement and to ensure accountability for past crimes.

The refugees further demanded direct engagement with educated Rohingya representatives in shaping any roadmap for repatriation.

The findings were revealed in a new study

by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) based on testimonies of 125 Rohingya men and women in Cox's Bazar camps.

The report, "Rohingya Perspectives on Pathways to a Safe, Dignified, and Peaceful Future", comes ahead of the UN General Assembly High Level Conference on the Rohingya crisis and other minorities in Myanmar.

The Rohingya categorically rejected any possibility of living under the Arakan Army (AA), branding the group "terrorists" and "bandits", said the report, which was released on Tuesday.

More than 70 percent of the respondents believed the AA is seeking to "erase" the Rohingya in Arakan.

The others fear they would face forced labour, religious repression or confinement in camps if

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Yunus seeks WB support to upgrade Ctg port
Calls for smarter financing to close \$4 trillion SDG gap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser M u h a m m a d Yunus yesterday urged the World Bank to assist in modernising the Chittagong Port and recovering stolen funds.



"Chittagong Port is key to economic growth in the region -- let's develop it together," a press release from the Chief Adviser's Press Wing quoted him as saying to WB President Ajay Banga.

During a meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, Yunus urged the Washington-based multilateral lender to support his government in recovering stolen assets.

Banga underscored the importance of robust reforms in the banking and fiscal sectors, stating they are essential for sustained, high-growth economic

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

'Rab helicopters will strike from above'
Hasina heard telling Inu in audio evidence at ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday played four phone call recordings between deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and three others at the International Crimes Tribunal-1. The conversations shed light on plans to suppress the July protests, including bombing demonstrators who blocked the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway in Narayanganj.

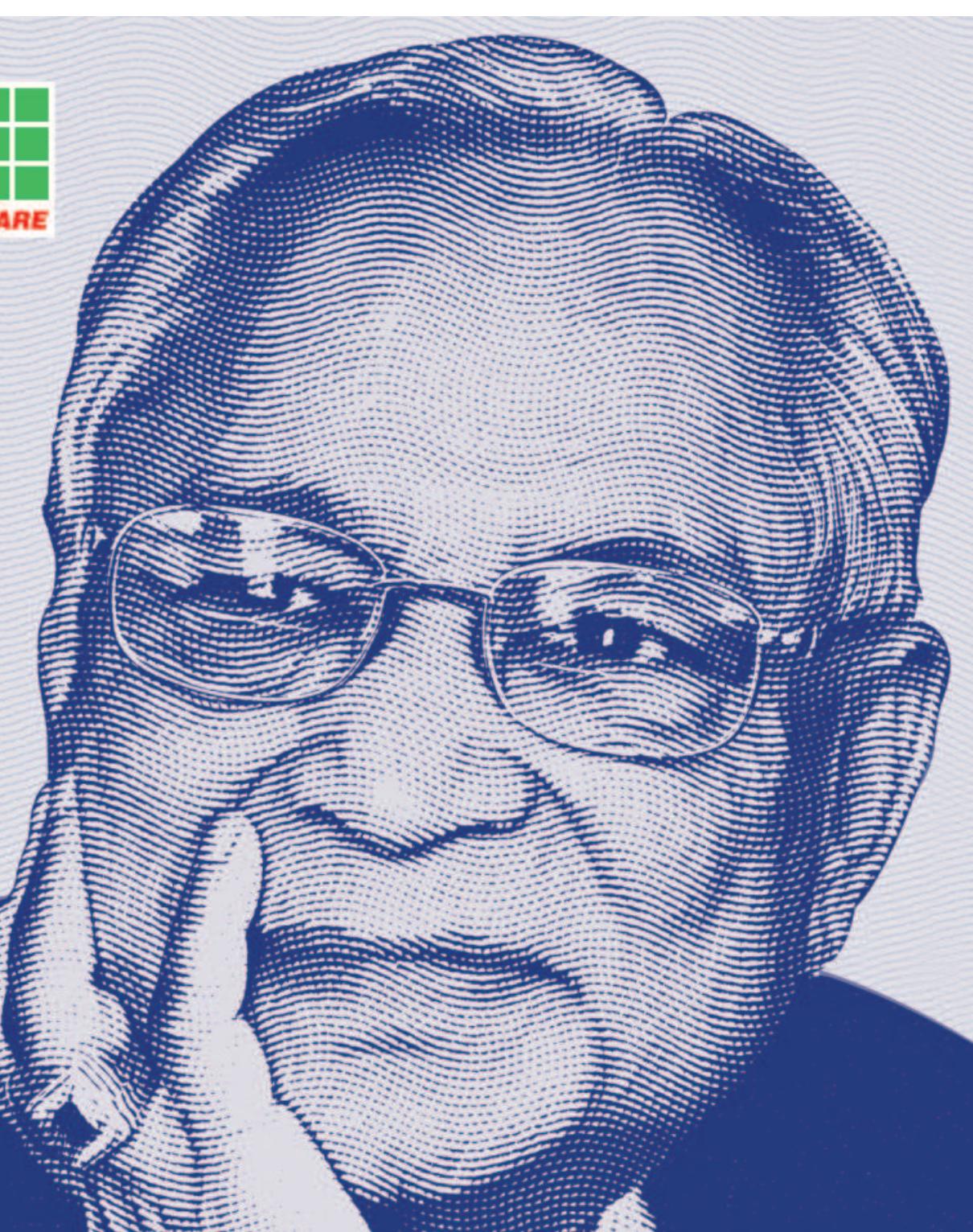
In one call with Hasanul Haq Inu, Hasina is heard saying, "...Army are not being allowed to enter Narayanganj ... We are landing paratroopers."

She added, "No, I am saying there is no need for casualties; they have put up barricades, fine ... They [paratroopers] will drop from the sky, then capture [protesters] from both sides ... and bombing will be done from helicopters ... Rab helicopters will strike from above."

Inu, president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal of the Awami League-led 14-party alliance, replied, "Okay... there will be sound-bombing from

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1





"IF YOU LOVE PEOPLE GOD WILL LOVE YOU"

**HOMAGE TO THE HUMANITARIAN
SAMSON H. CHOWDHURY ON HIS BIRTH CENTENARY**

100 Years of
SAMSON H. CHOWDHURY
UNCOMPROMISING INTEGRITY
1925 - forever in our hearts



NARINDA CEMETERY

Colombo Saheb's tomb saved from ruin

DIPAN NANDY

In the heart of Dhaka, amid the city's relentless pace, a silent grave has reclaimed its dignity.

Known only as Colombo Saheb, the man buried at Narinda Christian Cemetery remains a mystery -- his real name lost to time. Yet his tomb endures, immortalised in one of the earliest visual records of Dhaka: a painting by German artist Johann Zoffany in 1787.

While the city depicted in Zoffany's canvas has transformed beyond recognition, Colombo Saheb's grave has survived -- and now it has been



PHOTO: STAR

brickwork and threatening collapse.

Two years on, the scene is strikingly different. The cemetery's main gate has been renovated, and just beyond it stands the restored tomb -- freed from the slow decay that once loomed over it.

The restored monument was officially inaugurated at Dhaka Christian Cemetery in Wari on September 20.

The restoration was led by Professor Abu Sayeed M Ahmed, who said such work demands both patience and precision. "One cannot afford mistakes in a project like this," he said. "The aim was to bring it back to its original design, without adding anything new. To achieve that, me and my team turned to historical records, relying on rare photographs from 1850 and 1875, alongside Zoffany's painting that had first revealed the existence of the

grave."

Because the tomb was built during the early years of the Mughal period, traditional techniques were used in its restoration. Brick dust and lime formed the base, while natural binding agents such as lentil paste, jaggery and betel nut resin were applied to ensure authenticity.

"The biggest challenge in renovating the tomb was to remove the huge banyan trees that grew on the dome and remove its peaks, so that there was no structural damage," he said.

The work was costly, made possible by support from international heritage groups. The project was funded by the British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia, an organisation that has long worked to preserve old cemeteries across India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.

Later, the Commonwealth Heritage

Foundation joined as a partner, ensuring the restoration could be completed.

For the Christian Cemetery Board, the project represents more than the repair of bricks and mortar. "We want future generations to come here not just to see a gate or a few graves, but to feel the depth of history, the soul of the city's heritage," said Father Albert Rosario, the board's vice-chairman.

The story of Colombo Saheb's tomb, however, is only the beginning. Abu Sayeed M Ahmed said talks are already underway to restore fifteen to twenty more tombs and monuments at Narinda.

If completed, he believes the cemetery will no longer be seen simply as a burial ground, but as a cultural park where the city's layered past will be on display.



reborn.

Back in 2023, this correspondent found the tomb in a state of near ruin. A sprawling banyan tree had all but consumed it, its roots choking the

Tk 57,257cr in assets frozen at home, abroad

FROM PAGE 1

Assets of nine of the 10 conglomerates, as well as members of Hasina's family, have already been traced overseas, they added.

"All these assets were built with laundered money," one official said. "Orders are being issued through local cases to seize them."

The task force is made up of representatives from the Anti-Corruption Commission, the National Board of Revenue, and the Criminal Investigation Department of police. The ACC is leading the probe, while the BFIU acts as the secretariat.

An ACC official, requesting anonymity, confirmed the authenticity of the task force document.

Md Akhtar Hossain, director general (prevention) of the ACC, told The Daily Star that as part of the investigation, movable and immovable assets of individuals, including from the 10 companies, have been frozen at different times. He, however, declined to provide any breakdown of the assets frozen.

The task force document shows that about Tk 17,215 crore of the frozen assets include money kept in banks and shares in beneficiary-owner (BO) accounts initially suspended by the BFIU and later blocked through court orders. Of the amount, Tk 1,679.72 crore is in local currency and Tk 36 crore in US dollar (\$3 million) in 1,573 bank accounts of individuals and entities. The rest, Tk 15,500 crore in shares, were held in

188 BO accounts.

Under the Money Laundering Prevention Regulations, 2019, the BFIU can freeze bank accounts for 30 days and then extend the freeze up to seven times itself in cases of suspicious transactions or illegal activities. For further extensions, it needs court orders. The BFIU secured court orders to ensure the freeze in these 11 cases, according to the document.

The media had previously reported that accounts of Hasina, her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, daughter Saima Wazed Putul, sister Sheikh Rehana, and Rehana's son Radwan Mujib Siddiq, among others, have been frozen.

As for the company, only transactions for paying salaries or purchasing raw materials are allowed, he said.

"We are facing problems with cash transactions. Many banks are also refusing to open LCs for us because they are afraid of the Anti-Corruption Commission."

He also said they were considering legally challenging the freeze and seizure.

Contacted, Ranjan Chowdhury, vice chairman of Nassa Group, said they have not yet taken any legal steps regarding the frozen assets.

He claimed the group's bank account has been suspended due to loan defaults, not frozen.

The labour ministry is trying to help the company pay salaries since bank borrowing is not an option for many of its enterprises with defaulted loans, he added.

Also frozen were accounts of the Awami League's research wing, the Centre for Research and Information

(CRI) and its "Young Bangla" project.

The task force document mentions that in two of the priority cases -- one involving Saifuzzaman and the other Beximco -- the UK National Crime Agency has frozen assets worth £260 million (Tk 4,256 crore).

The owners and founders of Summit, Orion, Sikder, Nassa and Nabil groups also saw their accounts frozen.

Orion Group MD Salman Obaidul Karim told The Daily Star on August 24 that their personal bank accounts have been frozen while land and properties have been "seized".

As for the company, only transactions for paying salaries or purchasing raw materials are allowed, he said.

"We are facing problems with cash transactions. Many banks are also refusing to open LCs for us because they are afraid of the Anti-Corruption Commission."

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Open your
Account
from anywhere



ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্ণার' পূর্বালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়

244 held from AL flash processions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested 244 leaders and activists of Awami League and its affiliate organisations from flash processions across Dhaka yesterday.

Law enforcers also recovered 14 crude bombs and seven banners during the drives carried out by different AL units, DMP said in a press statement.

DMP Additional Commissioner (Crime and Operations) SN Nazrul Islam said, "We are working to gather intelligence on the financiers, shelter providers, and recruiters for those participating in Awami League flash processions."

He also said AL activists from Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Gazipur, and Gopalganj had come to Dhaka to join these processions.

Nazrul said previously, DMP arrested more than 500 leaders and activists of AL and its affiliated bodies in different drives.

App for postal voting to be launched in Nov

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Postal Vote BD app, designed to allow Bangladeshi expatriates to vote, will be launched in the third week of November, said Election Commissioner Abul Fazal Md Sanaullah yesterday.

Speaking at a discussion at the EC headquarters in Dhaka, Sanaullah said only 2.7 percent of eligible voters usually register for postal voting, and fewer than 30 percent of them actually cast their votes.

"Still, Bangladeshi expatriates appear more interested than average," he said.

The postal ballots will include candidate symbols. Once the symbols are finalised, voters can check the list through the app or website and vote accordingly. Completed ballots must be returned by mail.

Expatriate voters will not be charged, though the government will bear a cost of about Tk 700 per vote, he said.

He explained that registration will take place in two phases – voter registration for those already on the list with a National ID, and additional out-of-country voting registration through the app.

Each region will have 7-10 days for registration, with 3-7 extra days if needed.

Sanaullah also pointed out two major challenges with postal ballots – ensuring confidentiality and the risk of ballots being invalidated if a court changes the candidate list after they are sent.

DUCSU POLLS DU authorities refuse to provide voters' attendance list

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University authorities have refused to release the signed voter attendance lists from the recently held Ducusu and hall union elections, calling them "highly sensitive and confidential".

In a statement, the university said thousands of students signed the lists while collecting ballots.

These are not public documents, and disclosing them would compromise security and privacy.

The refusal came after defeated Ducusu candidates repeatedly demanded access to the lists in order to verify alleged irregularities. They also sought CCTV footage of polling centres and clarification on the ballot printing process, accusing the administration of disregarding their complaints.

DU said the applications were mostly "vague" and lacked specific grounds. While full CCTV footage will not be released, candidates may apply to view relevant segments in the presence of experts.



Human hauliers occupy three lanes of a road near Phulbaria bus terminal in Dhaka's Gulistan, leaving little space for traffic and causing severe jams. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

STUDENTS' UNION ELECTIONS AGS candidates pledge reforms, student welfare

Star talks to four such Rucusu aspirants



Esha



Likhon



Nasim



Mahayeer

SHARIF M SHAFIQUE,
SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK and
NUR AHSEN MRIDUL

four AGS candidates about their pledges, aspirations, and implementation plans.

ESHA VOWS TO BE 'VOICE OF STUDENTS'

Zahin Biswas Esha, from the Oikyaboddho Notun Projomno panel backed by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, said her priority is addressing students' concerns.

A student of Performing Arts, Esha highlighted challenges faced by female students since the July uprising and stressed the urgent need for female leadership.

The Daily Star spoke to

"I have worked on students' legitimate demands before and will continue to do so," she said.

If elected, Esha promises to promote social and cultural coexistence on the campus while improving the quality of education and research.

Her plans include preparing a roadmap for part-time job opportunities, tackling accommodation shortages, modernising the health centre, opening a 24-hour pharmacy, ensuring safe water and food, and

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Expired chips, cakes, juices, chanachur, and jellies are regularly burnt with other waste at night along Rajshahi city's bypass road, adding to severe air pollution. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Another firefighter dies from Tongi fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

The death toll from Monday's chemical warehouse fire in Gazipur's Tongi rose to two yesterday after another firefighter, burnt in the explosion, lost his battle for life.

Nurul Huda, 40, a firefighter at Tongi Fire Station and a resident of Gafargaon in Mymensingh, succumbed to his injuries at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery in Dhaka, said Mohammad Mamun, deputy director of Gazipur Fire Service and Civil Defence.

His death comes just a day after Shamim Ahmed died from similar injuries. Both were among four firefighters burnt while battling the blaze. The fire broke out on September 22 at a tin shed warehouse in Sahara Market.

As firefighters tried to extinguish the flames, a powerful explosion ripped through the building. Officials later confirmed the warehouse contained sodium-based chemicals that react dangerously with water.

CUCSU POLLS 20 withdraw, 4 nominations cancelled

CU CORRESPONDENT

Twenty candidates have withdrawn their nomination papers in the Chittagong University Central Students' Union (Cucusu) elections, while the Election Commission cancelled the nominations of four others due to discrepancies.

Prof AKM Ariful Haque, member secretary of the university election commission, confirmed the development.

The Cucusu and hall council elections are now scheduled for October 15.

All examinations on October 15 and 16 will remain suspended, but regular classes will continue except on the polling day, when the university will remain closed for voting.

The final list of contenders will be published today. In total, 931 nomination papers were submitted for the Cucusu and hall union elections.

Five more die of dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five dengue patients died while 668 others were hospitalised in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), three deaths were reported from the Dhaka South City Corporation area and two from the Dhaka North City Corporation area.

With the new deaths and cases, the total number of deaths rose to 187, while total cases rose to 43,841.

Among the total cases, a total of 41,638 dengue patients have been released so far.

Currently, 2,016 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at different hospitals across Bangladesh, 1,259 of whom are from outside Dhaka.

CPB gets new committee Chandan president, Kafi Ratan general secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kazi Sazzad Zahir Chandan has been elected president of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) for a four-year term.

Abdullah Al Kafi Ratan has been elected the new general secretary, succeeding Ruhin Hossain Prince. The newly elected members of the 43-member central committee chose the two leaders yesterday.

The newly elected presidium members are Mujahidul Islam Selim, Rafiquzzaman Layek, SA Rashid, Ragib Ahsan Munna, Joly Talukdar, and Md Aminul Farid.

Chandan previously served as assistant general secretary of the CPB as well as central president of the Bangladesh Chhatra Union, and general secretary of the Krishok Samiti.

Kafi Ratan, an economics graduate from Dhaka University and a former banker, was an assistant general secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra Union as well as elected general secretary of Dhaka University's Bangabandhu Hall student union.

He later contested as a mayoral candidate in Dhaka North City Corporation. His electoral constituency is Cumilla-5.



Chandan Kafi Ratan

Man beaten to death on theft suspicion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A man was beaten to death and another seriously injured in a mob attack on suspicion of robbery in Gazipur's Sadar upazila early yesterday.

Tohid Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Joydebpur Police Station, said the incident took place around 4:00am in Nayapara area, where locals detained Haydar Islam, 51, and Alamin, 25, and beat them.

Acting on a tip-off, Joydebpur police rescued the two and took them to Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared Haydar dead on arrival. Abul Fazal, emergency duty officer at the hospital, said Alamin's condition is critical.

Witnesses said the area had recently seen several robberies, prompting residents to organise night patrols.

At dawn, they detained one suspect while his companions fled. Another was later caught in the Bhoragata area and beaten by the crowd, they added.

The OC said Haydar had six criminal cases against him, including robbery, filed with different police stations.

Tea seller dies after clash in Agargaon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A tea seller died after a clash over setting up stalls on a footpath in Dhaka's Agargaon on Tuesday night.

The victim, 40-year-old Bablu Mia, hailed from Kishoreganj and lived in Agargaon's Janata Housing. He ran a small tea stall near the housing entrance, said his brother-in-law Abdur Rouf.

According to police, around 8:00pm Bablu got into an argument with Ruhul Amin, who operated a nearby stall, over the alleged forceful occupation of the footpath. The quarrel escalated into a fight, during which Bablu was struck on the head with an iron pipe.

He was rushed to the National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospital along with several others injured in the clash. As his condition deteriorated, he was transferred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where he died around 2:00am, said Inspector Md Farul of the DMCH police camp.

Bablu's body has been kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy. Police said they are investigating the incident.



Abandoned vehicles seized in various cases lie rusting in the open on the Chattogram court premises, blocking movement and creating piles of junk that hold no resale value. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Waste burning chokes Savar

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH

On August 17, the Department of Environment declared Savar a degraded airshed, citing the growing threat of air pollution from open burning of solid waste and brick kilns.

Experts said a degraded airshed is a geographical area where air quality consistently falls below national or international safe standards due to high pollutant concentrations, prompting strict environmental regulations.

From September 1, brick burning and production have been banned in all kilns except Tunnel Kilns and Hybrid Hoffman Kilns, while the open burning of solid waste has also been prohibited.

Although brick kiln operations are currently halted due to the rainy season, solid waste burning continues across Savar.

During a recent visit, this correspondent observed tyres, wood, batteries and tannery waste being burnt in open spaces.

In Madhumoti Model Town and Salehpur areas alone, at least 12 factories were found burning tyres to produce furnace oil.

Other sites were using thousands of

tonnes of wood to make coal, burning chromium containing tannery waste for animal feed, and even burning batteries to produce shisha.

Mohammad Sohag, a farmer, said his soil's fertility has been destroyed, drastically reducing papaya yield.

Sumon Mia, a resident, said smoke and stench from tyre factories have made living conditions unbearable.



Salauddin Khan Naeem, general secretary of the Savar Nagorik Committee, called for strict enforcement and closure of all polluting establishments.

Savar UNO Abu Bakar Sarkar said mobile court drives are being conducted against establishments that pollute the air, including illegal brick kilns and factories

burning tyres, batteries and tannery waste.

"If these factories start operating again, they will be completely closed down," he said.

Md Nazmul Hasan, assistant director of the DoE, said an action plan has been prepared to shut down establishments involved in open waste burning, with legal action to be taken against owners and employees if necessary.

Anisur Rahman, who runs a factory producing animal feed raw materials by burning raw hide, refused to speak to The Daily Star.

Solaiman Hossain, Jashim Uddin and Selim Mia, owners of three separate tyre-burning factories, said their factories have remained closed for now due to financial losses. He also declined to comment on the environmental impact of their operations.

Prof Md Mustafizur Rahman of Jahangirnagar University's Environmental Science Department said Savar's development is largely unplanned, with poor waste management and widespread open dumping. He stressed the need for stronger monitoring of factories emitting toxic fumes.

COX'S BAZAR SEA BEACH

Fund crunch threatens lifeguard operations

MOKAMMEL SHUVO

Rip currents and shifting sand channels have made three of Cox's Bazar's most popular beach zones -- Kolatoli, Sughandha and Laboni -- increasingly treacherous for tourists.

In the past eight months alone, 11 people have drowned while bathing in these waters, with another 11 narrowly rescued from being swept out to sea.

To address such tragedies, private group Sea Safe Lifeguard has been providing rescue services for over a decade. But the initiative is now on the brink of collapse due to a funding crisis.

Supervisor Sifat Saifullah said, "If the service shuts down, the risk for tourists will rise even further."

According to sources, Sea Safe Lifeguard will end its operations on September 30. From the following day, there will be no trained rescue personnel on Cox's Bazar beach.

The tourism ministry has instructed the Cox's Bazar district administration to sustain lifeguard operations through contributions from local hotels, motels and guesthouses.

On September 17, Joint Secretary AKM Moniruzzaman issued a letter directing the deputy commissioner to

arrange lifeguards under this model.

Deputy Director of Cox's Bazar Local Government Nazim Uddin Ahmed said, "After informing the ministry about the possible shutdown, we were told to continue operations through alternative means. We have already begun taking steps."

Under the plan, larger hotels

Mukim Khan said, "Although the ministry wants us to finance 27 lifeguards, covering Tk 14-15 lakh per month is unrealistic. Very few owners have agreed, and even if they do, it will take time. Without a clear policy, such funding is unsustainable."

Sea-Safe Lifeguard's regional manager Imtiaz Ahmed said the

service began in 2012, supported by the UK-based Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI).

He said the RNLI officially ended the project in December last year but extended it twice at the request of the district administration. With no further support, operations will cease after September.

But the hotel sector has voiced concern.

Cox's Bazar Hotel and Resort Owners Association General Secretary



PHOTO: COLLECTED

would finance the salaries of three lifeguards each, while smaller establishments would cover one each. Existing trained lifeguards are expected to be prioritised.

Notice is hereby given that an application under Section 81(2) and 85(2) read with section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 and Rules 8 and 263 of the Companies Rule, 2009 was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division on behalf of the above named Petitioner for condonation of Delay in holding the 22nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Bashundhara Import Export Ltd. for the calendar years ended 30.06.2024 and relieving the Directors and officers of the Company from the liability of payment of fine or penalty.

Upon hearing of the application on 18.09.2025, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel has been pleased to admit the said application and directed to file an affidavit-in-compliance on or before 29th October, 2025.

Any one desirous of opposing the said application, you may appear before the Hon'ble High Court either in person or through Advocate.

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

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I feel strongly indignant at the statements made by senior Israeli government officials that appear to categorically reject the very notion of Palestinian state-building. For our country, the question is not whether to recognize a Palestinian state, but when. The continued unilateral actions by the government of Israel can never be accepted.

Shigeru Ishiba
Japan PM

Russia 'real bear', not 'paper tiger'

Russia vows to press offensive, rejects Trump's idea that Ukraine can retake land

AGENCIES

The Kremlin yesterday said it would press on with its military offensive in Ukraine and rejected US President Donald Trump's claim that Kyiv's army could retake territory it had seized.

Moscow also pushed back on Trump's characterisation of Russia as a "paper tiger", a day after the US president dismissed Russia's army and said he could see Ukraine winning back every inch of land captured by Russia's forces.

Trump's remarks, delivered after a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky at the United Nations, were a major pivot in his stance on the three-and-a-half-year conflict, which he had at one point boasted he could end within hours.

But the Republican has for weeks voiced mounting frustration with Putin for refusing to halt his offensive.

"We are continuing our special military operation to ensure our interests and achieve the goals" set by Putin, said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, using Moscow's term for its assault on Ukraine.

Shigeru Ishiba
Japan PM



"We are doing this for both the present and the future of our country. For many generations to come. Therefore, we have no alternative," he added in a radio interview.

Russia launched its all-out offensive on Ukraine in February 2022, when its forces tried to capture the capital Kyiv and Putin publicly called for Zelensky to be toppled.

The conflict has since killed tens of thousands of people, devastated much of eastern and

southern Ukraine and forced millions to flee their homes.

Moscow's army controls around one-fifth of Ukraine's territory.

Trump had on Tuesday dismissed Russia's military prowess and mocked its inability to quickly beat Ukraine.

In a post on Truth Social, he said Ukraine may "be able to take back their Country in its original form and, who knows, maybe even go further than that".

In his post, Trump said he had changed his view on the war

"after getting to know and fully understand the Ukraine/Russia Military and Economic situation and, after seeing the Economic trouble it is causing Russia."

"Putin and Russia are in BIG Economic trouble, and this is the time for Ukraine to act," Trump said.

He added that Russia was "fighting aimlessly" after more than three years of war and was now a "paper tiger" instead of a serious nuclear force.

Russia rejected that notion.

"The idea that Ukraine can recapture something is, from our point of view, mistaken," Peskov told reporters, including AFP.

Russia also bristled at the accusation it was weak.

"The phrase 'paper tiger' was used in relation to our economy," Peskov said.

"Russia is more associated with a bear. And paper bears don't exist. Russia is a real bear," he added.

Zelensky has hailed Trump's apparent change of position as a "big shift", though it is unclear if the US leader will follow through with concrete steps, such as more sanctions on Russia.

5 killed in Ladakh autonomy protests

AFP, Srinagar

Five people were killed in India yesterday as police clashed with hundreds of protesters demanding greater autonomy in the Himalayan territory of Ladakh, leaving "dozens" injured, police said.

In the main city of Leh, demonstrators torched a police vehicle and the offices of ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, while officers fired tear gas and used batons to disperse crowds, police said.

"Five deaths were reported after the protests," a police officer in Leh told AFP, on condition of anonymity as he was not authorised to speak to journalists. "The number of injured is in the dozens."

Another police officer,



Regzin Sangdup, told AFP that "several people, including some policemen, were injured."

Authorities later imposed restrictions on gatherings, banning assemblies of more than four people.

The sparsely populated, high-altitude desert region, home to some 300,000 people, borders both China and Pakistan.

Around half of Ladakh's residents are Muslim and about 40 percent are Buddhist.

Yesterday's demonstrations were organised in solidarity with prominent activist Sonam Wangchuk, who has been on hunger strike for two weeks.

He is demanding either full statehood for Ladakh or constitutional protections for its tribal communities, land and fragile environment.

Macron warns against 'survival of the fittest' in world affairs

AFP, United Nations

French President Emmanuel Macron warned Tuesday against allowing an approach of "survival of the fittest" to take hold in international relations as he addressed the UN General Assembly.

Macron also mounted a defense of the current international order after President Donald Trump savaged the United Nations in a speech to the organisation's General Assembly.

"That is the major risk of our time... a risk of seeing the survival of the fittest. It is the risk of seeing the selfishness of a few prevail," he said.

"The world's complexity is not a reason to throw in the towel on our principles and our ambitions. To a certain extent, ours is a moment of paradox. We need more than ever before to restore the spirit of cooperation that prevailed 80 years ago."

He said that the UN's "harshest critics are also those that want to change the rule of the game, because they want to exert domination."



Typhoon slams into south China; 17 killed in Taiwan

AFP, Yangjiang

according to regional officials.

Fierce winds, pounding rain and rough seas battered southern China yesterday as powerful Typhoon Ragasa made landfall in Guangdong province after killing at least 17 in Taiwan.

Ragasa churned into Guangdong, home to tens of millions of people, and AFP journalists at the impact point in the city of Yangjiang saw flying debris and gusts ripping advertisements off of buildings.

The typhoon had swept past Hong Kong, with the densely-populated city's weather service ranking the storm the strongest yet in the northwestern Pacific this year.

Ragasa's passage in Taiwan killed at least 17 and injured 18 when a decades-old barrier lake burst in eastern Hualien county under the storm's heavy rains,

The typhoon trampled parts of the northern Philippines earlier this week and killed at least eight people, including seven fishermen.

Authorities earlier said 152 people were unaccounted for, but later revised that figure down to 17, saying they had made contact with more than 100 of those previously deemed missing.

More than 7,600 people were evacuated due to Ragasa.

Authorities across mainland China ordered businesses and schools to shut down in at least 10 cities across the nation's south, affecting millions of people.

The weather service said that at the time of landfall, the maximum wind speed near the centre of the storm was 145 kilometres per hour (90 miles per hour).

EU chief backs calls to keep children off social media

AFP, United Nations

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen yesterday threw her support behind growing calls to ban social media use for children, promising to weigh action at Europe in coming months.

"Many member states believe the time has come for a 'digital majority age' for access to social media," the European Commission head told an event on the sidelines of the UNGA.

"I must tell you as a mother of seven children, and grandmother of five, I share their view," she said.

Von der Leyen was speaking alongside Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, whose country is at the forefront of global efforts to curb internet harms -- with its social media ban on under-16s a world-first.

"We all agree that young people should reach a certain age before they smoke, drink, or have access to adult content," she said. "The same can be said for social media."

"EU has some of the world's strictest rules to fight harmful content online, with several investigations looking into how the biggest social media platforms protect children."



রাষ্ট্রীয় মালিকানাধীন রূপালী ব্যাংক নতুন আঙ্গিকে নিজস্ব ব্র্যান্ড নিয়ে এলো মোবাইল ব্যাংকিং সেবা

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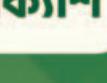
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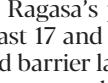
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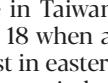
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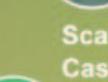
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Token-based
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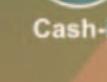
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Cash-in



Send
Money



Cash-out



Add Money

One killed in shooting at US ICE facility

AFP, Houston

One person was killed and two wounded in a shooting yesterday at a US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facility in the US city of Dallas, officials said.

The suspected gunman, who opened fire on the ICE facility from an adjacent building, is dead, the Dallas police department said in a post on X. "It must stop."

"While we don't know motive yet, we know that our ICE law enforcement is facing unprecedented violence against them," Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said on X. "It must stop."

Local television station Fox4 said the three people shot were detainees in ICE custody.

ICE deputy director Madison Sheahan told Fox News that no ICE officers were injured in the attack.

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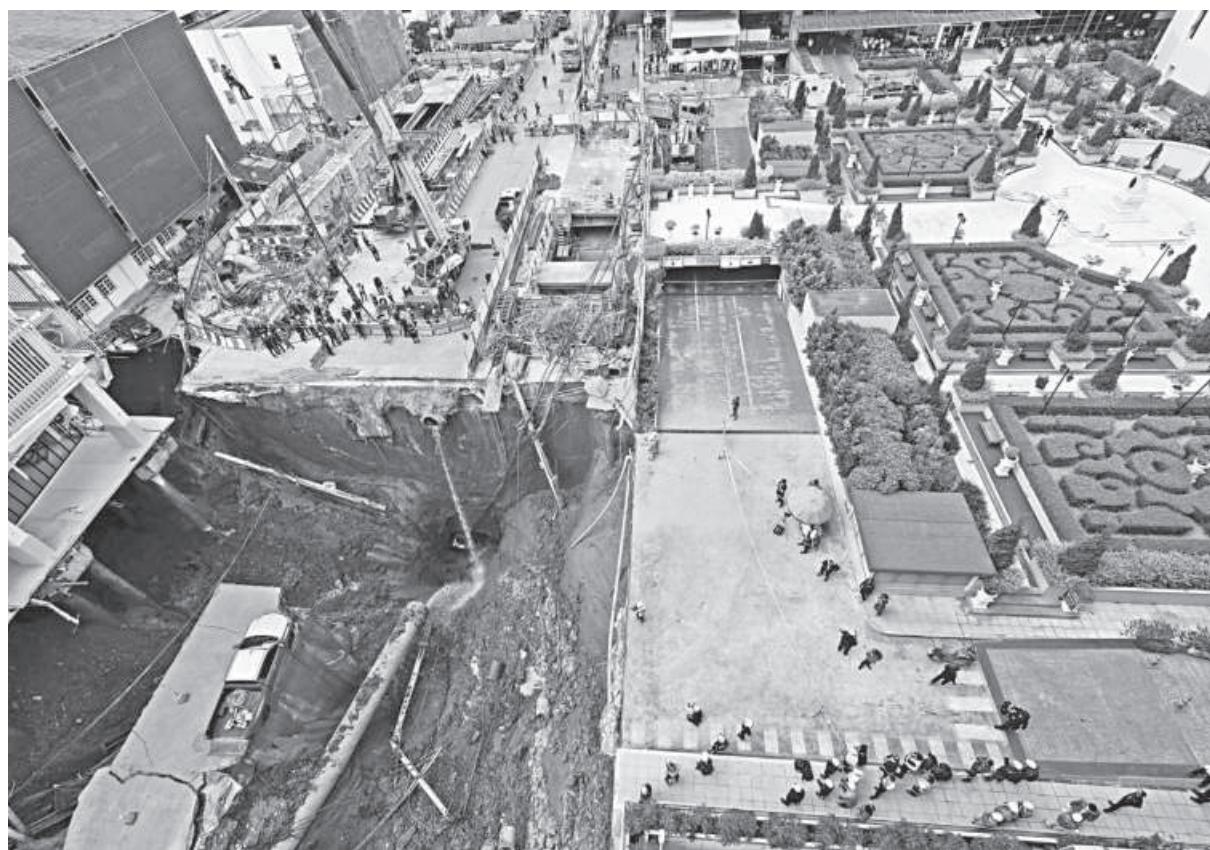
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Emergency workers and people gather near a massive sinkhole that opened on Samsen Road near Vajira Hospital, in Bangkok, Thailand, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

HIV-prevention drug to be available for \$40 a year from 2027

AFP, Geneva

Generic versions of a groundbreaking injectable HIV-prevention drug should be available for \$40 a year in more than 100 countries from 2027, Unitaid and the Gates Foundation said Wednesday.

The two organisations have entered into separate agreements with Indian pharmaceutical companies to produce cheaper generic versions of lenacapavir -- a twice-yearly injection shown to reduce the risk of HIV transmission by more than 99.9 percent -- for low- and middle-income countries.

Marketed under the brand name Yeztugo by California based Gilead Sciences, lenacapavir currently costs around \$28,000 a year in the United States.

Far cheaper generic versions are therefore "really critical for the scale-up of prevention of HIV," Carmen Perez Casas, Unitaid's strategic lead for HIV, told AFP in an interview.

"Now, with this product, we can end HIV."

In October last year, Gilead announced that it had signed licensing deals with six generic drugmakers to produce and sell the world's first long-acting pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in poorer countries.

Unitaid, an international health agency, said Wednesday that a partnership had been established with Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) and Wits RHI to provide the drug at an annual cost of \$40 per person across 120 nations starting in 2027.

"The product is going to be at the beginning manufactured in India," Perez Casas said.

"But we also are working towards regional production in the future."

The Gates Foundation also announced Wednesday that it had entered into a similar partnership with Indian pharmaceutical company Hetero.

"Scientific advances like lenacapavir can help us end the HIV epidemic, if they are made accessible to people who can benefit from them the most," Trevor Mundel, head of global health at the Gates Foundation, said in a statement.

Since 2010, global efforts have helped slash the number of new HIV infections by 40 percent, but UNAIDS data still shows 1.3 million people contracted HIV in 2024.

Indian security forces kill five Maoist rebels

AFP, Raipur

Indian security forces have shot dead five Maoist rebels, including two senior commanders, in the first major onslaught since the guerrillas announced a unilateral halt in fighting last week, officials said Wednesday.

New Delhi has launched an all-out offensive to crush the decades-long conflict, vowing to wipe out the Maoist rebellion by March 2026.

The latest gun battles were reported from the states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, part of the so-called "Red Corridor".

"Three members of the Jharkhand Jan Mukti Parishad (JJMP) were killed today in a gun battle with security forces," police inspector general Michaelraj S. told AFP.

JJMP is a splinter group of the Naxalite movement, named after the village in the foothills of the Himalayas where the Maoist-inspired guerrilla movement began nearly six decades ago.

Last week, the Maoists said they were suspending their armed struggle and offered talks with the government.

Authorities said they were verifying the authenticity of the claims.

On Monday, security forces killed two top Maoist leaders -- Katta Ramachandra Reddy and Kadri Satyanarayan Reddy -- in Abujhmad region of central India.

The duo were believed to have been active for the last three decades and were blamed for numerous deadly attacks on security forces.

"Our security forces are systematically dismantling the top leadership of the Naxals, breaking the backbone of red terror," home minister Amit Shah said in a social media post.

The Naxals have offered to engage in talks before, including in February when they called for a ceasefire -- an offer rejected by authorities.

Nearly 450 Maoist rebels have been killed since last year.

More than 12,000 rebels, soldiers and civilians have died in the conflict since a handful of villagers rose up against their feudal lords there in 1967.

The rebellion controlled nearly a third of the country with an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 fighters at its peak in the mid 2000s, but it has been dramatically weakened in recent years.

Law and order tops voter priorities

FROM PAGE 16

According to the survey findings presented yesterday at the Bangladesh National Archives Auditorium, 39.1 percent of the respondents consider the BNP the "most suitable party" to form the next government, Jamaat-e-Islami 28.1 percent, Awami League 17.7 percent and the National Citizen Party 4.9 percent.

In terms of perceived chances, 40 percent of the respondents said they believe the BNP is "most likely to form the next government", while 23.3 percent answered Jamaat and 12.1 percent Awami League.

The survey covered voters in 521 Primary Sampling Units. Of the respondents, 69.5 percent were in rural areas and 30.5 percent urban.

Md Rubaiyath Sarwar, managing director of Innovision and lead researcher, shared findings from the second report, which focuses on political choices and electoral outlook.

Discussing the results, Asif M. Shahin, professor at Dhaka University's development studies department, pointed out that many voters remain undecided.

"Most of the respondents believe BNP is likely to form the next government. In such a scenario, undecided voters may lean towards the BNP, thinking, 'Let's not waste my vote,'" he said.

Asked if they would vote, 57.8 percent respondents answered "yes", down from 62 percent in the first round. Willingness to reveal voting choice rose to 83.2 percent from 65.7 percent.

Among 5,673 respondents who disclosed their voting choices, 41.3 percent supported the BNP, 30.3 percent Jamaat, and 18.8 percent Awami League. NCP and Islami Andolan Bangladesh received 4.1 and 3.1 percent support among the respondents.

Among Gen Z voters, the BNP was supported by 34.3 percent of the respondents, Jamaat 32.8 percent, Awami League 18.8 percent, and NCP 6.8 percent. BNP's main backing comes from older generations, whereas Jamaat finds stronger support among the youth.

The study was conducted in collaboration with Voice for Reform and the Bangladesh Research Analysis & Information Network (BRAIN). Shafiqur Rahman, executive director of BRAIN, also spoke at the event, moderated by Fahim Mashroor, joint convener of Voice for Reform.

Discussing the facts, Zyma Islam, senior reporter at The Daily Star, said

nearly one-third of the population are young voters, whose preferences had remained largely invisible. "After the Dusse election, we're finally seeing the contours of youth voting preferences," she said.

Citing the survey, she said a majority of voters are not swayed by party symbols. They are choosing candidates based on capability and qualities, not manifestos. They want tangible changes and actions, not promises, she said.

Jamaat received the highest satisfaction rating at 30.3 percent in local politics, followed by BNP at 21.5 percent. Awami League faced the highest dissatisfaction, with 33.4 percent expressing discontent.

Asked about Awami League's participation in the next election, 45.8 percent said all parties should be allowed to contest, while 45.6 percent said the party should not be allowed in elections before trial.

If the Awami League does not participate, BNP's support would rise to 45.6 percent, Jamaat's to 33.5 percent, and NCP's to 4.7 percent, according to the survey. Additionally, 8.3 percent respondents said they would abstain.

On foreign policy, 72.2 percent said Bangladesh should maintain good relations with India, while 69 percent said the same about Pakistan.

In another part of the survey, young voters rated Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the highest among past leaders. Among Gen Z, 20.8 percent gave him a perfect score, followed by Ziaur Rahman (15.5 percent), Khaleda Zia (10.6 percent), Sheikh Hasina (8.6 percent), and HM Ershad (4.4 percent).

Bangabandhu and Ziaur Rahman stood out as the most popular leaders across generations. Nearly half of all respondents rated each above 70 percent, with strongest support among voters aged 60 and above.

Meanwhile, Hasina received the highest proportion of zero score ratings, with 21.6 percent giving her a rating of zero. Ershad followed with 13.7 percent, while Bangabandhu received 8.8 percent. Khaleda Zia and Ziaur Rahman had the lowest zero ratings, at 5.6 and 4.4 percent.

The study was conducted in collaboration with Voice for Reform and the Bangladesh Research Analysis & Information Network (BRAIN). Shafiqur Rahman, executive director of BRAIN, also spoke at the event, moderated by Fahim Mashroor, joint convener of Voice for Reform.

Discussing the facts, Zyma Islam, senior reporter at The Daily Star, said

London mayor hits back at Trump's 'Islamophobic' remarks

AFP, London

London mayor Sadiq Khan called Donald Trump "Islamophobic" and "racist" yesterday after the US president appeared to suggest the British politician wanted to introduce sharia law in the UK's capital city.

Khan, of the centre-left Labour party, and the Republican Trump have traded insults for years, with the latest row stemming from comments the president made at the United Nations this week.

"Now they want to go to sharia law. But you are in a different country, you can't do that," he added, referring to the Islamic law code based on the teachings of the Koran.

Labour Prime Minister Keir Starmer has made a considerable effort to try to stay in Trump's

misogynistic and he is Islamophobic," the Mayor of London told Sky News.

During his speech to the UN General Assembly in New York on Tuesday, Trump said: "I look at London, where you have a terrible mayor, terrible, terrible mayor, and it's been changed, it's been so changed.

"Now they want to go to sharia law. But you are in a different country, you can't do that," he added, referring to the Islamic law code based on the teachings of the Koran.

Labour Prime Minister Keir Starmer has made a considerable effort to try to stay in Trump's

good books, including with an unprecedented second state visit to the UK last week.

Khan said London was top of many indicators such as foreign investment, adding he was "really proud that we are the greatest city in the world".

Earlier on Wednesday, government minister Pat McFadden said Trump was "misreading" London.

Khan, who is Muslim, has been London's mayor since 2016. That year he criticised Trump over the then-presidential hopeful's proposed travel ban for people from some Muslim-majority countries.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Ministry of Liberation War Affairs
Transport pool Building
Secretariat Link Road, Dhaka-1000
(Admin-2 Section)
www.molwa.gov.bd

Invitation for Tender

01	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Liberation War Affairs.			
02	Agency	Ministry of Liberation War Affairs.			
03	Procuring Entity Name	Ministry of Liberation War Affairs.			
04	Procuring Entity Code	Not Applicable			
05	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka.			
06	Invitation for	Tender.			
07	Invitation Ref No & Date	48.00.0000.000.001.07.0041.25.395			
08	Date	24.09.2025			
Key Information:					
09	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method			
Funding Information:					
10	Budget and Source of Funds	Revenue Budget/GOB			
Particular Information:					
11	Tender Packages/Lots	LAN Network Infrastructure Installation and Modernization			
12	Tender Publication Date	25.09.2025			
13	Tender Last Selling Date	08.10.2025, Time 3:30 PM			
14	Tender Submission Date and Time	09.10.2025, Time 12:00 PM			
15	Tender Opening Date and Time	09.10.2025, 12:30 PM			
16	Name & Address of the office	Address			
	Selling & Receiving of Tender Document	Deputy Secretary (Admin-2) Ministry of Liberation War Affairs, 5 th Floor, Room No-604, Transport Pool Building, Secretariat Link Road, Dhaka-1000.			
	Opening of Tender Document				
17	Place/Date/Time of Pre-Tender Meeting (Optional)	-			
Information for Tenderer (IFT):					
18	Brief Eligibility and Qualification of Tenderer	<p>(1) Valid Trade License Certificate (FY 2025-26). (2) Income Tax Return Certificate (FY 2024-25). (3) VAT Registration Certificate. (4) Bank solvency certificate must be submitted with tender period. (5) Bidder shall mention the Brand, Country of Origin/Made in and warranty of the items. (6) The Tenderer shall have a minimum of 5 years of overall experience in similar works must be submitted. (7) The Tenderer shall have an experience of similar works as at least Tk. 40,00,000/- (Forty Lac) within the three years (FY 2022-23, 2023-24 & 2024-25) of government, Semi-Government and Autonomous organizations in the systems (work completion certificate must be submitted). (8) Required Tender Security (Bank Draft/Pay Order/ Bank Guarantee) must be submitted. (9) Specific Completion Certificate with NoA/work order as specified in the TDS must be submitted. (10) The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the Tenderer shall be TK. 40,00,000/- (Forty Lac) must be submitted Authorization form. (11) Undertaking of not being Black-Listed/Debarment in any Government/Autonomous Body. (12) Total item based lowest bidder will be selected. (13) The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all Applications. (14) Manufacturer/Dealer Authorization letter must be submitted with the bid.</p>			
19	Brief Description of Goods	LAN Network Infrastructure Installation and Modernization			
20	Brief Description of Related Services	As described in STD.			
21	Price of Tender Document (Tk)	BDT-1,000/- (Not returnable)			
22	Package no	Identification of Package	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk)	Completion Time in Weeks/ Months
22	01	LAN Network Infrastructure Installation and Modernization	Ministry of Liberation War Affairs, 5 th Floor, Room No-604, Transport pool Building, Secretariat Link Road, Dhaka-1000.	3% - 5% In favour of Deputy Secretary (Admin-2), Ministry of Liberation War Affairs	02 weeks from signing of contract.
Procuring Entity Details:					
23	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Shobnam Mushatry Rikta			
24	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Deputy Secretary (Admin-2)			
25	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Ministry of Liberation War Affairs, 5 th Floor, Room No-611, Transport pool Building, Secretariat Link Road, Dhaka-1000.			
26	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	02223388201 (Off) Fax: 41050901 mail: dsadmin2@molwa.gov.bd			
27	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the Tender proceedings.				

Shobnam Mushatry Rikta
Deputy Secretary (Admin-2)
Tel: 02223388201

Attacks on NCP leaders disgraceful

Better security measures should have been taken for NYC-bound political delegates

We strongly condemn the attacks on National Citizen Party (NCP) Member Secretary Akhter Hossen and Senior Joint Member Secretary Tasnim Jara by Awami League supporters in New York City outside the JFK Airport on Monday. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir was also with them at the time. According to reports, eggs were hurled at Akhter, while a torrent of sexist slurs was directed at Jara. The three were part of Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus's delegation to the 80th United Nations General Assembly.

While everyone has a right to protest, nobody has the right to be violent or abusive. The AL supporters' behaviour was reprehensible and demonstrates that they have learnt nothing from the July uprising and the public's rejection of the AL for its brutal crackdown on protesters. Nor is there any sign of remorse for the brutal deaths of over a thousand civilians in the uprising. It is deplorable that AL supporters are still following such a violent political culture, manifesting it even on foreign soil. What is also concerning is the image such acts create of Bangladeshis in an environment where anti-immigrant sentiments are rife, with likely adverse repercussions for our diaspora as a whole. In the past, there have been similar attempts to attack Information Adviser Mahfuz Alam as well as incidents of vandalism at the Bangladesh Consulate General.

We are also disappointed that the chief adviser's office was unable to ensure adequate security for these three political leaders despite their being part of his delegation. The CA office has expressed regret over the attack, stating it was politically motivated and alleging that Mirza Fakhrul was also assaulted. The statement further noted that precautionary measures had been taken, but due to last-minute visa complications the three were rerouted through another exit. It added that despite formal requests for VVIP access, the airport authorities denied it, exposing them to risk. According to a report, the three leaders did not have the same visa documents as the others in the delegation who had VVIP access. This should have been factored into the pre-visit planning by the CA office, with proper follow-up actions.

This disturbing incident and those that occurred before should make the CA office more diligent and foresighted when arranging foreign visits for officials or other individuals in official entourages. It is also important to ascertain whether the Bangladesh Consulate General played its due role in providing the proper protocol to the political leaders.

It is, however, reassuring to know that one of the culprits who recorded himself holding up an egg and hurling abuses at Akhter Hossen has been arrested. We hope that such unsavoury incidents are avoided in the future. Going forward, Bangladeshi consulates must be more vigilant and take pre-emptive actions (such as informing local police) to prevent belligerent groups from gathering outside airports, consulates, or other public areas. Given the hostile climate created by many AL supporters living abroad, the CA office must take extra steps to ensure the security of all Bangladeshi officials and delegates visiting foreign countries.

Shocking deaths of firefighters in Tongi

The incident raises questions about the safety of firefighters

We are shocked by the deaths of two firefighters in an explosion in Tongi's Sahara Market on September 22. Reportedly, upon receiving information about a fire at a chemical warehouse in the market, a team of firefighters from Tongi Fire Station rushed there to handle the situation. However, tragedy struck when the team approached to douse the fire after being assured by one of the owners that there were no flammable or explosive materials inside. The following explosion indicated that there were, in fact, highly explosive substances inside the warehouse, although it is still not known exactly which materials were stored there. The two firefighters who died sustained 100 percent burn injuries, while another person is presently fighting for his life with 42 percent burns.

The incident has raised some fundamental questions. The warehouse owner misled the firefighters about the nature of the materials stored there; was it because hazardous chemicals were illegally kept in the warehouse? Did he not realise that such false information could endanger public safety? Also, it needs to be seen whether there are other chemical warehouses in the market operating secretly and posing a danger to the public. Shahin Alam, station officer of Tongi Fire Station, stated that had they been informed about the presence of explosive substances, their response strategy would have been different. That two lives were lost due to false information is unacceptable.

Our firefighters routinely risk their lives while on duty, yet their safety and well-being are often overlooked. The memories of the tragic explosion at the BM Container Depot in Sitakunda, Chattogram on June 4, 2022, which claimed the lives of 13 firefighters, are still fresh in our memory. Such incidents reveal serious concerns about the protection and preparedness of our firefighting teams. Reports indicate that firefighters often operate without essential personal protective equipment, such as fire suits or breathing apparatus. Furthermore, compensation for injuries or deaths remains grossly inadequate, while there is no insurance coverage for deaths or injuries either. Such a situation is deplorable.

We, therefore, urge the government to ensure that the salaries and other benefits of firefighters match the risk and grueling work that they have to do. The government must also take strict measures to prevent the illegal operation of hazardous chemical warehouses for public safety. Regarding the Tongi incident, the government must conduct a thorough investigation to find the real reason behind the explosion and hold the individual who misled the firefighters accountable. Additionally, it must ensure adequate compensation for the families of the deceased and provide proper medical care to those injured. Above all, the government must take decisive steps to prevent such tragedies from happening again.

EDITORIAL

Palestine's recognition is not a reward to Hamas

How Western media obscures Palestinian suffering



Kamal Ahmed
is consulting editor at The Daily Star. He led the Media Reform Commission under the interim government. His X handle is @ahmedkal.

KAMAL AHMED

The recognition of Palestine as a state by some major Western powers, including the UK and France, has come so late that many would argue these nations also bear some responsibilities for the thousands of preventable deaths that have occurred in Gaza. Yet, US President Donald Trump, the most powerful man on Earth, believes the recognition of a Palestinian state by key allies is effectively rewarding Hamas for its attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, which started the war. According to White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt, "Frankly, he believes it's a reward to Hamas."

President Trump repeated the same diatribe against its allies that have independently announced recognition of Palestine at the United Nations General Assembly's 80th session. Shockingly, it's not just President Trump, who earlier this year shockingly proposed to convert Gaza into "the Riviera of the Middle East"; many leading media houses, particularly in Britain, also echoed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's outrage by likening the recognition as a surrender to terrorism.

Headlines in the British media, the day after the announcement by Prime Minister Keir Starmer, are anything but an unbelievably shameful dehumanisation of the Palestinian people. Picking up a few words from Hamas' reaction that the recognition by the UK, Canada and Australia were "victory for the justice of our cause," the *Daily Mail* splashed out "Hamas claims victory." *The Times* took a similar approach, though quoting families of Israeli hostages who have accused the prime minister of handing Hamas "its greatest prize." The *Telegraph* headline also said, "Hamas declares 'victory' after UK recognition of Palestine."

There were, however, a few



Smoke rises from an Israeli strike as displaced Palestinians flee northern Gaza due to an Israeli military operation, move southward after Israeli forces ordered residents of Gaza City to evacuate to the south, in the central Gaza Strip on September 24, 2025.

PHOTO: REUTERS

exceptions who are known for their liberal and leftwing views. The *Mirror*'s front page reads "the best hope for peace," showing a photo of damaged buildings in Gaza. *The Guardian* quoted Sir Keir Starmer's claim that the decision showed "commitment to a two-state solution." But the domineering tone was of the right-wing view of anti-recognition of a Palestinian state.

It has been alleged for quite some time that the mainstream media in the West are inherently biased against Palestinians. The Centre for Media Monitoring (CMM), founded by the Muslim Council of Britain and known for monitoring anti-Muslim bias in British media, pointed out that BBC presenters shut down genocide claims in over 100 documented instances while making zero mention of

Israeli leaders' genocidal statements, including Netanyahu's biblical Amalek reference.

The report, published in June this year, examined over 35,000 pieces of BBC content and found that Israeli deaths were given 33 times more coverage per fatality, and four times more emotive language than the Palestinian ones. It also assessed some

everything possible to keep the media out of Gaza by denying access to foreign journalists, shutting down Al Jazeera and indiscriminately killing Palestinian journalists.

According to the United Nations, more media workers have been killed by Israeli forces during their ongoing military campaign in Gaza than the journalists killed in two world wars and wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan combined. In various counts, the toll varies between 220 and 272. While covering the Gaza war, Palestinian journalists' unmatched sacrifices to tell the stories of devastation and inhumane sufferings of the innocent victims, including women and children, to the world were largely ignored by most Western media outlets. Instead, briefings by the Israeli Defense Forces' spokesperson got prominence in their coverage.

The most disturbing aspect of the mainstream global media's coverage of Palestine's recognition is its continuation of the same approach to reporting on the Gaza invasion—one that dehumanises Palestinian lives, equates the general population of Gaza with Hamas, and normalises atrocities to the point of whitewashing war crimes. The contrast with their treatment of Ukraine's war with Russia could not be starker. While Ukrainian victims of Russian invasion justifiably get humane treatment in the language of their reports and commentaries, the innocent Palestinians under Israeli occupation are often subjected to being equated with terrorists.

It is true that the recognition of Palestine by these Western powers is largely symbolic as the US remains steadfast in favour of Israel. But this symbolic gesture is crucial to keep the hope for a two-state solution of the conflict as Netanyahu insisted that there will not be any Palestine. This long-awaited recognition should now be followed by coordinated and practical measures to bring an end to the Gaza war and annexation of the West Bank. Immediate suspension of arms supply and military cooperation are the least these countries could do to resume negotiations for the future of Palestine, freeing Israeli hostages and civilians languishing in Israeli prisons, and rebuilding Gaza.

Bangladesh must uphold its secular heritage



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ALTAF RUSSELL

Bangladesh is currently experiencing a troubling rise in far-right rhetoric. Many try to justify this by pointing to similar trends in India and even Western democracies. However, as someone living in Glasgow, Scotland, I have witnessed a powerful counter-narrative—one that offers hope and inspiration for those who believe in a secular and inclusive Bangladesh.

In the heart of Glasgow city centre, I recently observed a vibrant crowd waving Scottish flags, Palestinian banners, and placards reading "Migrants Make Our NHS," "Scotland Needs Migrants," "None of Us Chose Our Place of Birth," "Stop the Far Right," and "We All Bleed Red."

The gathering was a peaceful demonstration against far-right ideologies and in support of migrants and refugees.

What stood out was the unity across communities—locals and immigrants, young and old—coming together to reject hate.

Police and organisers ensured the event remained peaceful, even as a small group of far-right agitators attempted to disrupt it.

They were calmly turned away, their divisive message drowned out by the overwhelming call for solidarity.

Unlike their counterparts in Bangladesh, Indian far-right leaders rarely seek ideological guidance from abroad. On the other hand, far-right movements in Bangladesh have often been influenced or fueled by external elements, particularly from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and parts of the Middle East. The transnational connections are evident—Bangladeshi Hefazat leaders, for example, have recently visited Afghanistan to reportedly draw "ideological inspiration" from regimes that, in reality, promote religious authoritarianism. This external influence has shaped a more rigid and imported version of far-right politics in Bangladesh, alienating it from its own pluralistic heritage.

Interestingly, when comparisons between India and China arise in Bangladesh, a prominent portion of Gen Z tends to favour China. Yet, paradoxically, many of these same young people are influenced by the rise of fundamentalist politics in India and far-right ideologies in the West. Gen Z in China, however, does not appear to be motivated by global

wing forces have crafted their own narrative, often adjusting their tone to accommodate regional sensitivities. For instance, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, aware of the cultural diversity across India, does not attempt to replicate Gujarat's political model everywhere. When in West Bengal, he publicly acknowledges figures like Rabindranath Tagore to appeal to local sentiments.

Unlike their counterparts in Bangladesh, Indian far-right leaders rarely seek ideological guidance from abroad. On the other hand, far-right movements in Bangladesh have often been influenced or fueled by external elements, particularly from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and parts of the Middle East. The transnational connections are evident—Bangladeshi Hefazat leaders, for example, have recently visited Afghanistan to reportedly draw "ideological inspiration" from regimes that, in reality, promote religious authoritarianism. This external influence has shaped a more rigid and imported version of far-right politics in Bangladesh, alienating it from its own pluralistic heritage.

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far-right trends, at least in the same way. Their political orientation is shaped more by domestic narratives and state-controlled ideology than by transnational far-right movements. This contrast highlights how external ideological influence plays a more significant role in shaping far-right tendencies in South Asia.

What is often overlooked in

Gen Z and Millennials are generally more progressive and supportive of diversity. However, in Bangladesh, despite the uprising led by students, Gen Z is often portrayed as leaning towards the far right. I believe this image is misleading. A dysfunctional political culture and limited civic education pushed many young people towards reactionary views, and unfortunately, many of them remain alienated from Bengal's rich secular history, which must be reclaimed.

Bangladesh's public discourse is that these far-right surges are not going unchallenged. Across the world, people are standing up for pluralism, tolerance, and human rights. The Glasgow demonstration is just one example showing that the story of our times is not only about the rise of hate, but also about the resilience of hope.

Bangladesh's founding principles were rooted in secularism, linguistic rights, and cultural diversity. The spirits of 1971 Liberation War and

2024 July uprising were of inclusion, not exclusion. Yet today, some seek to rewrite this legacy, using the rise of far-right politics elsewhere as justification for intolerance at home. But should we follow the most divisive examples from abroad? Or should we look to those who are resisting hate, those who refuse to let fear and prejudice define their society?

My personal experience in Scotland is that younger people are more likely to be anti-far-right than older people. Gen Z and Millennials are generally more progressive and supportive of diversity. However, in Bangladesh, despite the uprising led by students, Gen Z is often portrayed as leaning towards the far right. I believe this image is misleading. A dysfunctional political culture and limited civic education pushed many young people towards reactionary views, and unfortunately, many of them remain alienated from Bengal's rich secular history, which must be reclaimed.

The Glasgow rally was a testament to the power of secular values. In Bangladesh, we must reject attempts to pit one group against another, whether based on religion, ethnicity, or political affiliation. By standing up for secularism and inclusion, we can set a positive example for the region and the world.

It is a choice to accept or deny the far-right wave sweeping across Bangladesh that each of us must make, every day, in our words and actions. We can choose to be bystanders, or we can choose to be upstanders. Let us draw inspiration from Glasgow and countless other places where ordinary people are standing up to hate. Let us remember the true spirit of 1971 and the July uprising.

In every country, the forces of division and exclusion are being met by the forces of hope and inclusion. The question for Bangladesh is simple: which side of history will we choose?

How much has Bangladesh achieved from BRI?



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MUHAMMAD BADRUL HASAN

The year 2026 marks a decade of Bangladesh's involvement in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). On this occasion, it is important to assess what we have achieved from this partnership, its potential impact, and what can be done going forward. What began through Chinese President Xi Jinping's state visit to Bangladesh in 2016—with promises of transformative infrastructure, enhanced connectivity, and deepened trade links—has evolved into a complex chapter in our national development story. The BRI is China's global infrastructure development and connectivity strategy launched in 2013. It aims to boost trade, investment, and cultural exchange by building networks of roads, railways, ports, energy pipelines, and digital infrastructure across Asia, Africa, Europe, and beyond. For some, the BRI has been a gateway to long-overdue projects and regional integration, and for others, it has raised questions about debt sustainability, environmental impacts, and the balance of strategic interests.

After signing BRI, Bangladesh has seen the inaugural works of Padma Bridge, which is considered as one of the largest transport infrastructure projects in the country. We have also seen some development in other sectors, such as power generation, energy, railways, trade, etc., through enhanced investment partnership. Under the BRI, Bangladesh is expected to get \$26 billion for projects and \$14 billion for joint venture projects, totalling \$40 billion. BRI initiatives have mostly been

competitive bidding. Some projects advanced by less than 15 percent even after years. This depicts how poorly our governance mechanism has performed with foreign investment, and this is a risk for long-term projects like the BRI.

The environmental aspects of BRI received less attention compared to other issues. As we saw, several coal-fired power projects that were planned for BRI financing got cancelled,

Karnaphuli Tunnel. The world is abandoning tunnel structures, as these are not suitable for the natural flow of rivers. Also, for an active delta like us, navigability is a huge concern, which got damaged by this tunnel.

As we near the completion of a decade of BRI involvement, it is fairly evident that we haven't been able to get the best out of it. Some assessment for improvement is required. As we are now seeing the development of

engaged in this sector. As Bangladesh aims to produce 30 percent of its total power production through renewable energy by 2041, it requires more investment and infrastructural adjustments. BRI has opened the door for Chinese investors to provide the assistance to fulfil these targets. As China intends to make a significant geostrategic impact in South Asia, we can also channel this intention to seek Chinese investment through BRI to assist transboundary river management, especially issues related to the Teesta River.

There are a few spaces where we need to improve to make a sustainable impact on BRI execution in Bangladesh. First, geopolitical balance is a factor that needs consideration to make sure that Bangladesh's global image is one of neutrality. If our geopolitical language is more inclined to China, it might create misconceptions about our standing globally. Second, our policy should be of cooperation and impartiality. Third, we need to make sure political institutions remain unbiased and focused only on national interests during BRI engagements. Recently, some investors raised concern regarding investment protection and execution for renewable energy in Bangladesh. This issue needs to be addressed to ensure an easy transition. Fourth, environmental impact assessment reports of BRI projects should be made public and reassessed by different stakeholders to avoid unwanted circumstances. Our focus should be more on technology transfer and knowledge-sharing than on dependency on Chinese expertise.

Finally, public-private partnership projects can be a great base for knowledge sharing and technology transfer. PPP projects involve a vast array of stakeholders from different sectors, which creates an opportunity to strengthen stakeholder capacity regarding infrastructure development, fund management, and innovation in project execution. It requires strong policy design and some adjustments in bilateral agreements in the future.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

which created havoc in the investment climate. Later, China also committed not to invest in new coal-fired projects. In 2021, it institutionalised its decision to halt investment in coal projects abroad through Xi's own announcement at the UNGA. Now, Chinese investors are willing to invest in Bangladesh's renewable energy sector, but they are concerned about the country's poor investment climate, especially now. Another highly discussed environmentally malfunctions BRI project has been the

different economic zones in Bangladesh, they can be a good ground for BRI investments. Connecting these economic zones with seaports and export hubs can positively accelerate our growth. BRI also offers an opportunity for us to become a regional hub for trade and commerce. Bangladesh is looking for aviation development, especially generating opportunities for domestic operations to enhance commercial activities and increasing capacities for international operations. BRI investment can also be

Riyadh-Islamabad axis can reshape the geopolitical chessboard



Hussain A Samad
is consultant at the World Bank in Washington, DC, and an independent researcher. He can be reached at hsamad2000@yahoo.com.

HUSSAIN A SAMAD

Recently, a semi-seismic shift has occurred in the landscape of geopolitics, although it arrived not with a bang, but rather quietly. On September 17, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed a defence treaty called the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA), which sent reverberations from Washington to New Delhi and Tel Aviv. Crucially, the pact contains a clause stating that any attack on one signatory will be considered an attack on both. This mutual defence commitment—mirroring Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO Charter)—marks the birth of a potentially powerful new axis, signifying a bold commitment to strategic independence from traditional alliances.

The question is: what prompted this alliance, and what does it mean for the current global and regional order? The first part of the answer, according to a growing consensus among analysts, lies not in Riyadh or Islamabad, but in the smoke-filled skies of Qatar's Doha.

It relates to Israel's audacious attack on Qatar on September 9, aimed at assassinating

The move has ignited speculation about a broader realignment. Adding to the momentum, Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar revealed that other Muslim nations have expressed interest in similar pacts. Whispers of a "Muslim NATO" are growing louder, with countries like Qatar and Turkey being seen as potential future partners in similar pacts. The recent solidarity summit in Qatar, attended by leaders from across the Muslim world, further highlights this rallying cry for unity against perceived external threats in light of waning confidence in US protection.

For Israel, the strategic calculus has been altered. The era of near-impunity for military actions in neighbouring states may be ending. An attack on Saudi Arabia would now risk invoking a response from a nuclear-armed Pakistan, thereby constraining Israel's regional ambitions. Israeli officials have downplayed the agreement, but privately, they must be weighing the risks of escalation in an already volatile theatre.

For the United States, the pact represents a multifaceted strategic blow and a significant loss of influence over a key ally and the world's largest oil exporter. For decades, the US has been the undisputed security broker in the Middle East, a role that underpins its diplomatic leverage and secures multi-billion dollar arms deals. The initial secrecy surrounding the pact is a clear signal that Riyadh and Islamabad intentionally bypassed Washington to avoid any disruptions in the process. Beyond losing its role as the exclusive protector, the US now faces the rise of a new,

independent power bloc that could challenge its geopolitical interests across the region. Critics in Washington argue that it could accelerate a post-American order, while proponents see it as a wake-up call for a more balanced US policy. While the US joined the UN Security Council's condemnation of the Doha strike, the damage to trust seems to remain.

For India, the treaty also creates an acute diplomatic dilemma. New Delhi has cultivated a strong, multifaceted economic relationship with Saudi Arabia, which is home to over 2.5 million Indian expatriate workers. Simultaneously, its 75-year-old rivalry with Pakistan remains its most pressing security concern. The pact forces an uncomfortable question: in the event of a future conflict with Pakistan, would Saudi Arabia be treaty-bound to intervene? This new reality forces India to navigate a treacherous diplomatic tightrope, balancing its vital interests in the Gulf with the heightened threat from its western neighbour. However, sources indicate that the pact will not disrupt Saudi oil flows to India, providing some reassurance amid efforts to bolster the India-Middle East Economic Corridor (IMEC).

The treaty's effects also ripple beyond the immediate players. For instance, the situation requires careful observation for countries like Bangladesh. In recent times, Dhaka has been mending fences with Islamabad. At the same time, its relationship with India, sharing the fifth-longest land border in the world (over 4,000 km), is deep and historic, while its economic and labour ties to Saudi

Arabia are vital. Dhaka will likely adhere to its foundational foreign policy principle of "friendship to all, malice towards none," cautiously navigating the shifting allegiances without being entangled in bloc politics.

The immediate winners of this new arrangement are clear. Pakistan is elevated to a pivotal geopolitical player, with its status as a security guarantor for a wealthy Gulf state promising immense economic and diplomatic dividends. Saudi Arabia gains a deterrent independent of the West, granting it greater autonomy in its foreign policy.

The Riyadh-Islamabad axis should thus be seen as a move by two nations to seize control of their own security destinies in a world that is precarious. But is it a masterstroke of statecraft or a dangerous gamble? On the one hand, the pact could introduce a new balance of power, a form of mutually assured deterrence that could diffuse tensions and prevent conflicts from spiralling out of control. It might finally compel the US to play a more even-handed role and restrain Israel's military adventurism. On the other hand, it could lead to the hardening of alliances and the formalisation of hostile blocs, reminiscent of the Cold War. The risk of miscalculation increases as new tripwires are laid across one of the world's most volatile regions.

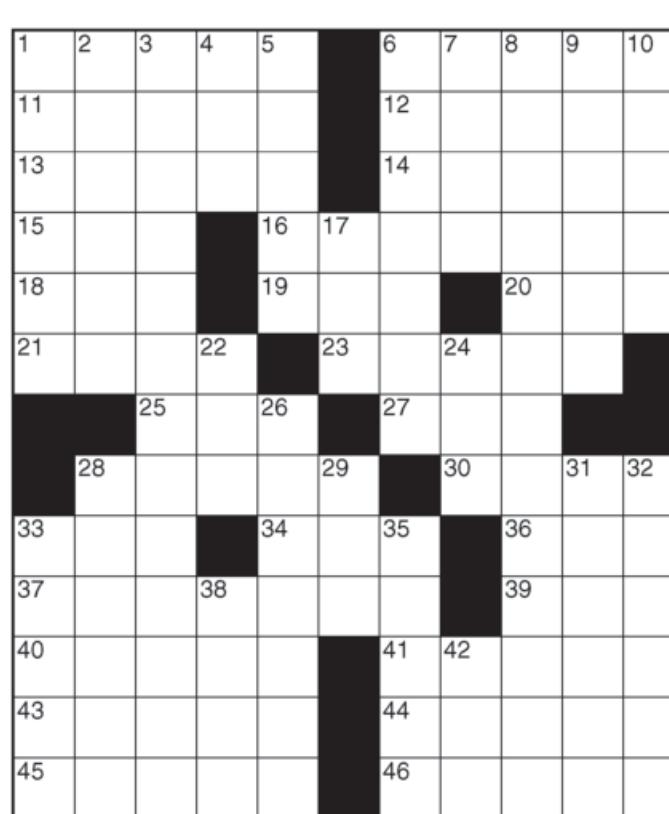
One thing is certain: old rules no longer apply. The Pakistan-Saudi Arabia defence treaty is a declaration that the post-Cold War, US-led order in the Middle East is slowly crumbling. What replaces it remains to be seen.

CROSSWORD

BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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R	E	P	A						
A	V	E	R						
T	E	N	S						

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO
dsopinion@gmail.com.



Jamuna devours 20 homes in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Jamuna river erosion has intensified over the past few days, devouring around 20 houses in Sadia Chandpur union under Chowhali upazila of Sirajganj.

Md Tanvir Hasan, chairman of the union parishad, said the erosion worsened since last Friday.

Dozens of people have been forced to relocate their homes, he said, adding that around 50 more houses and an educational institution in the union are also at risk.

"I lost my home to erosion last year and took shelter in Sadia Chandpur area. Now I have become homeless once again. I barely managed to save my belongings and relocate," said Saiful Islam, a local resident.



Atahar Ali Mondol, another erosion victim, shared a similar ordeal.

"Jamuna is eroding the riverbank areas rapidly over the last three days. At present, the river is 50 metres away from our school. If erosion continues at this rate, the school may be lost to the river," said Md Abdur Rashid, headteacher of Sadia Dewantola Sangkarhaati High School.

Md Solaiman Vuia, a sub assistant engineer of Water Development Board in Sirajganj, said officials visited the spot on Monday for inspection.

"Jamuna's water level rose recently and then started to recede, causing erosion in the last few days. We are trying to begin riverbank protection work as soon as possible," he said.



A woman lays out earthenware plates to dry in the open. People from the Pal community in Maheshpur village of Bakerganj upazila in Barishal earn their livelihoods by making such products. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Banana boon for farmers in Sherpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Banana farming in Sherpur, including in different hilly areas, has become a financial lifeline for many poor and marginal farmers.

This year, the target for banana cultivation was 660 hectares, but the figure has exceeded expectations, with 943 hectares brought under cultivation, said Mohammad Shakhawat Hossain, deputy director of the DAE in Sherpur.

He said cultivation is increasing every year.

The practice is gaining popularity as the soil and weather conditions in Sherpur are very suitable for banana farming. Farmers are showing more interest in cultivating the fruit as a cash crop, and many are becoming self-sufficient, he said.

The bananas produced in Sherpur are supplied to some 20 districts after meeting local demand.

Farmers are selling bananas worth Tk

80,000 to one lakh from 33 decimals of land, spending Tk 20,000 to Tk 30,000 on the same land, said the official.

DAE sources said banana is also being cultivated in various hilly areas of Jhenaigati, Nalitabari and Sribordi upazilas of the district.



Growers said the demand for Sherpur bananas is high due to their good taste and quality. A large quantity is sold at Chowkida Bari Bazar in Sribordi, where bananas worth around Tk 50 lakh are

sold every day during the season.

Taleb Ali, 50, a farmer of Sribordi Sadar union, said he planted 1,200 banana plants this season and expects sales of Tk six lakh.

Akkas Ali, another farmer of the same locality, said many in bordering villages

are now focusing on banana cultivation. Farmers said bananas can be harvested within eight months, making them a lucrative option as they are more profitable than many other traditional crops.

AGS candidates pledge reforms, student welfare

FROM PAGE 3
strengthening the cyber cell to protect female students from online harassment.

parent political bodies and local politics," said Likhon, an independent candidate.

Despite the university entering its 73rd year, he said problems such as housing shortages, poor food quality, and lack of facilities still shape student politics.

"To end seat allocation based on affiliation or patronage, the university must become self-sufficient. My manifesto centres on 'self-service,'" he added.

NASIM VOWS TO ENSURE TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY

Nasim Sarkar, from the Gontantrik Shikkharthi Porshod panel -- a platform formed to fight for student rights, believes a democratic campus can only be restored by dismantling teacher dominance and empowering students.

A student of Bangla

Language and Literature, Nasim has long been involved in student rights movements.

He blames "partisan control and fascist occupation" for problems such as partisan appointments in administration, politically driven hall seat allocation, and substandard food in dining facilities.

"We are not offering flashy promises, but focusing on fundamental issues," he said.

Sarkar pledged to dismantle the "feudal culture" in the university, where students are treated as subjects and teachers as rulers.

His manifesto includes an independent student-led faculty evaluation system, a permanent ban on partisan and fascist activities, ending corporate dependence in university funding, creating part-time jobs, and expanding

scholarships for underprivileged students.

MAHAYEER PRIORITISES ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Mahayeer Islam, from the Sorbonjon Shikkharthi Parishad panel, vowed to shift the university's focus from political dominance to academic excellence.

"The university's glorious history has often been overshadowed by political movements, while academic achievements were neglected. I want to restore that balance," said Mahayeer, a student of Arabic and former coordinator of the anti-discrimination student movement.

He said after the July uprising, students had hoped for a change in political culture, but parties quickly returned to violence -- something his group stayed away from.

If elected, Mahayeer promises to implement an academic master plan, ensure transparency in hall seat allocation, provide housing allowances for disadvantaged students, improve dining facilities, and fully develop TSC infrastructure.

He also pledged to introduce faculty evaluations by students and ensure transparent recruitment of internationally qualified teachers.

"The university must progress through research and knowledge, not politics. My goal is to return academic authority to students," he added.

PRAYER TIMING

SEPTEMBER 25

Faz Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-35 12-45 4-15 6-00 7-30
JAMAAT 5-10 1-15 4-30 6-05 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

GD-2080

4 bodies recovered in Narayanganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Police recovered four bodies in separate incidents in Fatullah and Siddhirganj of Narayanganj yesterday.

The deceased include two children -- Abdullah, 4, who was killed after being hit by a battery-run three-wheeler in Fatullah, and Saifa Akter, 8, who drowned in a pond in Siddhirganj.

Sub-Inspector Yasin Arafat of Fatullah Model Police Station said the accident killing Abdullah took place around 8:00am. Driver Sagar, 30, later took the child to Narayanganj 300-bed Hospital in Khanpur, where doctors declared him dead.

Meanwhile, Saifa drowned in a pond near her house while she was bathing, said Jahangir Alam, senior officer of Kanchpur fire station.

Around noon, police also recovered the floating body of boatman Idris Ali Bepari, 45, from the Buriganga River near the Jamuna Oil Company ghat in Fatullah.

Idris went missing on September 22 after reportedly falling from his boat, said Jahangir Hossain, sub-inspector of Pagla River Police Outpost.

On the same day, police recovered the body of Ritu Akter, 22, from Hajiganj in Fatullah. Her father, Kashem Mia, alleged that his son-in-law called him around 9:00am, claiming that Ritu had taken her own life.

Kashem suspects he killed her daughter. Police said he has gone into hiding since the incident.

Dhak, dhol makers struggle to keep tradition alive

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

In the bustling lanes of Notunbazar in Sreemangal, while shoppers crowd clothing stores, a different scene unfolds at a small shop. Upside down dhols of various sizes are neatly arranged as craftsmen quietly tie yarn around the drums in silence.

Seated in a corner is 79-year-old Soilendra Chandra Das, a master craftsman who has spent his life making dhaks, dhols, khol, tabla and harmoniums. His shop, filled with instruments crafted from cow and goat skin, stands as a fading reminder of a once-thriving profession.

"Earlier, I worked alongside my father and grandfather. There was so much demand that even five or six of us could not cope. Now, we only need to work for two to three months a year. It's no longer sustainable," he said.

Once, musicians and artisans were in demand across Sreemangal, and Soilendra recalls earning



up to Tk 1,500 a day. Today, finding a buyer for a single dhol is difficult. Prices range from Tk 2,000 to Tk 20,000.

"Interest in traditional instruments has faded. It's hard to even get Tk 100 for a drum now. I have been in this craft my whole life. It's in my blood," he said.

Another artisan, Ashutosh Rishi, 49, who runs a shop beside Soilendra's, echoed the same.

While demand rises during Hindu festivals such as Durga Puja, artisans often find little compensation. Once a regional attraction, the industry now struggles against modern instruments and shifting cultural tastes.

The instruments are made from neem and mango wood, with dhaks and dhols priced between Tk 5,000 and Tk 20,000 and tablas between Tk 3,000 and Tk 15,000. Despite their cultural and historical value, these instruments are being sidelined by cheaper modern alternatives.

Savar Paurashava

Savar, Dhaka

(www.savarmunicipality.gov.bd)

E-mail: mayor.savarmunicipality@gmail.com

Phone: 02-7741813

Date: 23/09/2025

e-Tender Notice No. 03/2025-2026(OTM)

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

Package No.	Tender ID No.	Description of the works	Last selling date & time	Last date and time for tender security	Closing & opening date & time
SPS/2025-2026/PESTICIDE	1151922	Supply of mosquito killing pesticides	22-Oct-2025 17:00	23-Oct-2025 13:00	23-Oct-2025 14:00

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

The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). The Tender Notice also uploaded in the Savar Paurashava website www.savarmunicipality.gov.bd

*Md. Amzad Hossain
Executive Engineer
Savar Paurashava, Dhaka*

GD-2080

Coal Power Generation Company Bangladesh Limited (CPGCLB)

(An Enterprise of Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh)

"জাতোকৃত দেশ, যতে পরিবেশ"

স্থারক নং - ২৭,৩২,০০০০,০০৮,২৬,০০২,২০,৮০২০; তারিখ: ২৩/০৯/২০২৫ খ্রি.

গাড়ি মেরামতকারী ওয়ার্কশপ তালিকাভুক্তির বিজ্ঞপ্তি

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের বিদ্যুৎ, জ্বালানি ও খনিজ সম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়ের বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগের আওতাধীন রাষ্ট্রীয়ত প্রতিষ্ঠান কোল পাওয়ার জেনারেশন কোম্পানি বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড (সিপিজিসিবিএল) এর দকান্ত কর্পোরেট অফিস ও মাতারবাড়ি সাইট অফিসে ব্যবহৃত গাড়ি সমূহের মেরামত ও রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ কাজ সম্পাদনের লক্ষ্যে কিছু সংখ্যক গাড়ি মেরামতকারী ওয়ার্কশপ তালিকাভুক্ত করা হবে। এ লক্ষ্যে সিপিজিসিবিএল দকান্ত কর্পোরেট অফিস সংলগ্ন/ পরিপার্শ্বস্থ গ্রামে ওয়ার্কশপ হতে এবং মাতারবাড়ি সাইট অফিস সংলগ্ন/ পরিপার্শ্বস্থ (কর্মসূচির জেলাস্থ) আগ্রাহী ওয়ার্কশপ হতে আগ্রহ্যকৃতরণ প্রতাব আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে।

আগ্রাহী ওয়ার্কশপ সমূহকে হালনাগাদ ট্রেইনিং, আয়োজন প্রত্যয়ন পত্র, ডাটা রেজিস্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট (BIN), সরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানের গাড়ি মেরামতের তালিকাভুক্ত/ অভিজ্ঞতা সংক্রান্ত ডকুমেন্ট (যদি থাকে) এবং ওয়ার্কশপের ফ্যাসিলিটিজ ও লোকবলের বিবরণসহ আগ্রহ্যকৃতরণ প্রত্যয়ন পত্রাব প্রক্রিয়াজ্ঞান প্রত্যয়ন পত্র (স্প্রিংডেক্স) আগ্রামী ১০/১০/২০২৫ খ্রি. তারিখের মধ্যে নিম্ন-ঠিকানায় ডাকযোগে/ ই-মেইলে/ প্রতিনিধির মাধ্যমে দাখিলের অনুরোধ জানান

CHORKI ANNOUNCES ORIGINAL FILM 'Little Miss Chaos' showcasing young talent

Chorki has announced its new original film *Little Miss Chaos*, a romantic dramedy by debut director Mahmuda Sultana Rima. Centred on the lively university life of Ira, played by newcomer Sadnima Binte Noman, the story blends food, fashion and friendship with themes of trauma, love and humour. Opposite her is Saad Salmi Naovi as Maruf, the calm figure who steadies Ira's chaotic world.

Rima, who also wrote the script, describes it as a reflection of urban youth – where past baggage meets the search for trust and belonging. Chorki CEO Redoan Rony said the platform is committed to young voices and fresh storytelling. A poster released on September 24 teased the vibrant tone, while the trailer and release date for *Little Miss Chaos* will follow soon.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF CHORKI



This award renewed my confidence

VICKY ZAHED

Tawsif received the honour.

"An award always inspires an artiste and motivates them to excel. I am thankful to The Daily Star for honouring me with the Best Director (Series) award in the popular category for my web series *Chokro*," said Vicky. "For the OTT industry, this award has become a benchmark for everyone behind and in front of the camera, and it reflects Blender's Choice – The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards' continued commitment to fostering healthy competition."

Experimenting with dark content has always been one of director Vicky Zahed's strengths as a storyteller. This time, his web series *Chokro*, based on a dark yet real-life plot, earned him the Best Director (Series) award at Blender's Choice – The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards this year.

The iScreen-produced web series, featuring Tawsif Mahbub and Tasnia Farin in the lead roles, was inspired by true events.

Vicky could not attend the award ceremony in person due to unavoidable circumstances. The director shared that he missed the moment, and on his behalf, lead actor

Akash received the honour. "An award always inspires an artiste and motivates them to excel. I am thankful to The Daily Star for honouring me with the Best Director (Series) award in the popular category for my web series *Chokro*," said Vicky. "For the OTT industry, this award has become a benchmark for everyone behind and in front of the camera, and it reflects Blender's Choice – The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards' continued commitment to fostering healthy competition."

The director further added that the recognition has made him more responsible as a storyteller. "Although I couldn't attend the ceremony, winning this award after *Redrum* (2022) is an indescribably special feeling. It has given me renewed confidence, encouragement, and energy to tell more stories in the future," he concluded.

Vicky's recent directorial project *AKA*, featuring Afran Nisho and Masuma Rahman Nabila, has also received much praise on social media and among audiences.

ENAMUL KARIM NIRJHAR features Konal, Dola, Masha and Antora in new album



A new album titled *Bujhlam*, presented by Gaanshala and Ek Nirjhar Gaan, releases tomorrow featuring four original blues tracks written and composed by Enamul Karim Nirjhar. The album brings together celebrated singers Somnur Monir Konal, Masha Islam, Dola Rahman, and Antora Rahman – a rare all-female lineup in Bangladeshi blues.

The tracklist includes *Drishyer Chhaya* by Konal, *Eki Bhabe Bujhlam* by Masha, *Bojhapora Shobdo* Ta by Antora, and *Thakle Sahash* by Dola, with musical arrangement by Autumnal Moon. Nirjhar said the songs explore solitude and inner conflict, blending words and melody into a "beauty of silence."



Warfaze seals first South Asian Zippo collaboration

Bangladeshi rock band Warfaze has become the first South Asian group to collaborate with Zippo for exclusive band-themed lighters. The agreement was signed on August 28 at Luxco Trading's Gulshan office. Two limited-edition designs, produced in the United States, will feature Warfaze album artwork on one side and the band's logo on the other.

Currently on a Canada tour celebrating 40 years of music, Warfaze expressed excitement over joining Zippo's global lineup that includes Metallica, Guns N' Roses and Bob Marley. Band leader Sheikh Monirul Alam Tipu called the collaboration a special tribute to fans, with a Dhaka press conference planned after their return.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

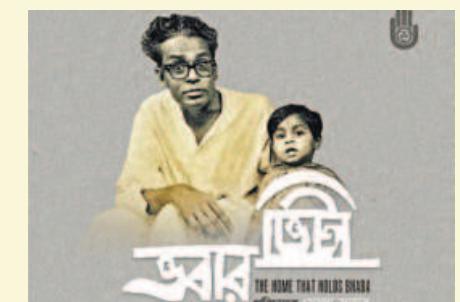
'Bhaba-er Bhita'

Acclaimed director Molla Sagar presents *Bhaba-er Bhita*, celebrating the birth centennial of legendary filmmaker Ritwik Kumar Ghatak. Honouring the creator of *Meghe Dhaka Tara*, *Komal Gandhar*, and *Subarnarekha*, the production revisits his revolutionary film language.

DATE: FRIDAY | SEPTEMBER 26, 2025

TIME: 6PM ONWARDS

VENUE: BENGAL SHILPALAYA



NEWS

No clear progress on ACC

FROM PAGE 16
consultant either already appointed or in the process of being appointed.

Iftekharuzzaman stressed that responsibility for implementation rests with the government. "Except for one or two, there was political consensus on almost all our recommendations. There are no major obstacles to ACC reform," he said.

"No matter how many legal and institutional reforms we make on paper, unless there are positive shifts in mindset and a genuine commitment to anti corruption practices, realising the commission's vision will be difficult."

Reflecting on the reform commission's proposals, Iftekharuzzaman said ACC Chairman Mohammad Abdul Momen

had expressed disappointment, not disagreement, noting that he found all 47 recommendations valid and necessary.

Asked, Momen said, "There's nothing new to add after Dr Iftekharuzzaman's comments. Repeating the same words becomes irritating. If there had been any disagreement between us, we would've started arguing right away."

He also acknowledged the government's acceptance of the 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by Transparency International, which ranked Bangladesh 151st out of 180 countries.

"Previously, the government would reject the CPI outright. But this time, we

accepted it as close to reality," he said.

Addressing corruption within the ACC itself, he added, "If my commission isn't free of corruption, then I lose the moral right to speak out against corruption elsewhere. Whenever we find evidence of corruption within our institution, we take immediate action."

The newly signed MoU between the ACC and TIB aims to strengthen anti-corruption efforts through joint initiatives, including public awareness campaigns, ethics promotion, procedural improvements, research, training, policy dialogue and advocacy.

Director General (Prevention) Akther Hossain signed on behalf of the ACC, while Dr Iftekharuzzaman represented TIB.

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THE SHELF

The nine faces of Durga and books that reflect each avatar

AGNILA ROY

The scent of marigolds hangs heavy in the air, mingling with the rhythmic clash of cymbals and the murmur of crowds waiting for a glimpse of the goddess. With the festive season returning and the air thick with dhaak beats, it is impossible not to feel the excitement of Durga Puja. Here are nine books that echo the spirit of Durga's nine faces, each reflecting the qualities the goddess embodies.

strength lies not in dominance but in grounding oneself and facing reality.

Brahmacharini: Mother of devotion and penance
Of Women and Salt (2021)

Gabriela Garcia
She walks barefoot across rough ground, the beads of a rudraksha mala hanging by her fingers. Being the ascetic form of Durga, she is worshipped for her austerity and steadfast faith. What could be more

the embodiment of righteous anger, a reminder that sometimes the only way to face darkness is to confront it head-on. Have you ever felt that moment when fear threatens to swallow you whole, and you wish for a power within to rise and fight back? Debi channels this very energy through its haunting heroine, Ranu. Gifted—or cursed—with psychic abilities, Ranu can sense truths others cannot, a burden that isolates her yet gives her uncanny strength. The novel does not present her as

within himself. Just as Kushmanda animates the universe with her energy, Santiago's journey reminds us that embracing curiosity, courage, and wonder can turn ordinary life into something miraculous.

Skandamata: The mother of a warrior
Soldier Sailor (2019)

Claire Kilroy
Smokecurls from incense, drums beat in the distance. Amid the golden glow, she sits serene, her hands cradling her son Kartikeya as if the world's weight rests in her palms. *Soldier Sailor* reflects that same maternal power in an intensely personal way. Told as an inner monologue from a mother to her sleeping child, the novel plunges into the brutal, visceral war of early motherhood—the exhaustion, the isolation, and the seismic shift in identity that comes with raising a young child. Like Skandamata, the mother embodies strength through presence, guiding and nurturing silently. True courage, the book reminds us, often resides in these quiet, uncelebrated acts of love.

Katyayani: The fierce warrior
The God of the Woods (2021)

Liz Moore
The forest breathes around her, shadows twisting like lurking demons, yet she stands unmoved. Katyayani teaches us to summon courage, confront danger, and act decisively when fear threatens to paralyse us. *The God of the Woods* channels this same relentless spirit. When Barbara Van Laar disappears from her family's summer camp, the town and its residents are forced to reckon with long-buried secrets and moral dilemmas. As the story unfolds, each character must wrestle with the shadows within themselves—greed, fear, and guilt—mirroring Katyayani's call to stand firm and act against injustice.

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Kalaratri: Goddess of courage
Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead (2009)

Agnila Roy is hoping Goddess Durga will lend her an extra pair of arms this year, preferably before puja ends.

Olga Tokarczuk, Antonia Lloyd-Jones (Translator)

Her skin gleams like a midnight storm, eyes blazing with fearless resolve, as she rides into battle with a sword that cuts through shadow and fight alike. She is the tenacious face of Durga who destroys evil energies and liberates those trapped by fear and attachment. Legends say she appeared when all else failed, her presence so intense that even the bravest trembled, reminding us that after every dark night comes a bright dawn. The novel channels that same audacious courage. It follows Janina, an elderly woman living in a remote Polish village, who begins investigating a series of suspicious deaths of local hunters. Alone, dismissed and considered eccentric by her neighbours, Janina relies on her sharp intellect, moral conviction, and fearless determination to uncover the truth.

Mahagauri: Goddess of purity
The Remains of the Day (1989)

Kazuo Ishiguro
Holding a trident and a damaru, she is the radiant form of Goddess Parvati after she cleansed herself of the darkness and ashes from her ferocious battles as Kalaratri. Mahagauri teaches us to release anger, resentment, and attachments that cloud the mind. Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* captures this same quiet strength through Stevens, an English butler whose life is shaped by rigid devotion to duty and an unwavering pursuit of perfection. As he journeys across the countryside, revisiting memories of loyalty, missed opportunities, and unspoken emotions, the novel lays bare the subtle, sometimes painful costs of a life lived in restraint.

Siddhidatri: The bestower of supernatural powers
Taranath Tantrik Shomogro (2019)

Bibhutibhushan and Taradas Bandopadhyay
She sits serenely on a lotus, guiding seekers toward wisdom, insight, and mastery over the unknown. She teaches that true strength is not just in conquering forces outside but in understanding the unseen. This essence comes to life through the enigmatic figure of Taranath, a tantric practitioner living on the edge of the natural and supernatural. The collection includes stories of Taranath Tantrik and the novel, *Alatchakra*, where he recounts eerie, thrilling encounters with spirits and mystical phenomena. Like Siddhidatri, Taranath navigates the delicate balance between fear and knowledge, showing that actual power comes from insight and discernment.

Kalaratri: Goddess of courage
Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead (2009)



PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA, ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

Shailaputri: The daughter of mountains
Arronyer Dinratri (1968)

Sunil Gangopadhyay

Like the mountain she is born of, Shailaputri teaches us to remain rooted, unshaken by the storms that swirl around us. Have you ever longed for a stillness so profound that it anchors you even when everything around you threatens to collapse? As the reincarnation of Sati, she embodies inner fortitude. *Arronyer Dinratri* reflects this spirit in an unexpected way: four men flee Calcutta's bustle for the forests of Palamau. They arrive with arrogance, carrying the weight of their urban education like a badge. Yet the wilderness does not bow to them. It strips them bare and humbles their certainties. What begins as an escape turns into a confrontation with their own fragility, showing that true

humbling than a goddess who teaches us that true strength is not in grandeur, but in the grit to keep walking when the path feels endless? Spanning generations of Cuban and Mexican women, the novel traces migration, addiction and motherhood—each woman carrying her own burden of struggle yet pressing forward with unrelenting will. Like Brahmacharini, these women demonstrate that perseverance transforms struggle into an act of devotion—a radical form of love and strength.

Chandrughanta: Destroyer of demons
Debi (1990)

Humayun Ahmed

When Parvati wields a bell-shaped crescent moon upon her forehead, she becomes the warrior goddess whose roar scatters demons and whose presence terrifies evil itself. She is worshipped as

a polished warrior but as a fragile, complex woman who wrestles with her gift while navigating scepticism and the raw edges of human fear. Like Chandraghanta, Ranu embodies a paradox of vulnerability intertwined with ferocity.

Kushmunda: The cosmic creator

The Alchemist (1988)

Paulo Coelho

The goddess whose radiant smile gave birth to the universe. She embodies the light that awakens possibility in even the darkest corners. *The Alchemist* mirrors this celestial force. Santiago, a shepherd boy, leaves the comfort of his flock to chase a treasure that feels both mythical and inevitable. Across scorching deserts and vibrant markets, he deciphers omens, meets alchemists, and learns that the magic of creation lives not only in the world but also

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

Bangladeshi theatre: A sociopolitical study

Review of Dr. Babul Biswas' *Bangladesher Natoke Shomajbastobota* (Nalonda, 2020)

ABDUS SELIM

Theatre in Bangladesh has never been merely a form of entertainment. It has always served as a mirror to society, reflecting its contradictions, struggles, and aspirations. In his seminal work, *Bangladesher Natoke Shomajbastobota*—adapted from his PhD thesis—Dr Babul Biswas takes on the ambitious task of exploring how Bangladeshi theatre has engaged with social realities throughout history and, in particular, in the years following independence. The outcome is an illuminating study that is at once scholarly, analytical, and profoundly relevant to contemporary cultural discourse.

At the outset, Dr Biswas situates his work within the context of a nation in flux. He reminds us that independent Bangladesh was born in the crucible of communal tension, hegemonic domination, and imperialist designs. Alongside these structural forces came new forms of consumerism and religious dogmatism that reshaped social consciousness. Against this backdrop, theatre emerged not only as a cultural practice but also as a form of resistance and a means of social commentary.

In this book, eminent playwright Selim Al Deen, among others, is credited with framing theatre in sociological and historical terms, and it is within this lineage that Dr Biswas anchors his own analysis.

The book is organised into five substantial chapters, each addressing a distinct periodic study in Bangladeshi theatre. The opening chapter provides a historical sweep, tracing cultural practices from the Pala period through the medieval, colonial, and postcolonial eras. This long historical arc reveals how shifts in political and religious authority left lasting imprints on literature

and theatre studies. Particularly striking is the analysis of how Western dramatic traditions were adopted during British colonial rule, gradually altering Bengali theatre's orientation. Dr Biswas carefully links these transformations to questions of class, domination, and identity, laying a solid foundation for his later arguments.

The second chapter examines pre-independence theatre, from the pre-British to Pakistani periods. Here, theatre is shown as a site of cultural assertion against colonial and authoritarian structures. The Language Movement of 1952 and subsequent cultural struggles are presented not merely as political events but as catalysts for theatrical innovation, demonstrating how theatre carried forward the fight for identity and autonomy.

It is in the third and fourth chapters, however, that the book truly comes alive.

The scope of the book is admirably wide. By juxtaposing Bangladeshi theatre within global processes of colonialism, consumerism, and hegemonism, Dr Biswas shows that the nation's cultural struggles are neither isolated nor unique.

Focusing on the Liberation War and the turbulent years that followed, Dr Biswas explores how theatre absorbed and represented the crises of a nation. Plays

such as "Ekti Michhil" are highlighted as pivotal texts that encapsulate the birth of Bangladesh, the trauma of war, and the vision of a new society. Liberation War-themed plays are reviewed in detail, with attention to how they reflected not only nationalist aspirations but also the disillusionment that followed. Post-independence theatre, he argues, became an arena where the manipulation of religion, the rise of authoritarian rule, and the spread of consumerism were critically examined. The realist framework adopted by playwrights is shown to be deeply connected to the lived experiences of a society grappling with betrayal, instability, and shifting values.

Perhaps the most compelling contribution of this book lies in its fifth chapter, which foregrounds women in theatre. Dr Biswas argues that the promise of equality and

empowerment for women remained largely unfulfilled in post-independence Bangladesh. Instead, women were subjected to new forms of oppression under the twin pressures of religious conservatism and capitalist consumerism. Through the analysis of three plays, he demonstrates how women's struggles for freedom, recognition, and dignity were represented on stage. Importantly, he also highlights the role of female playwrights in reshaping post-independence theatre, ensuring that women were not merely subjects but also creators of cultural narratives.

Methodologically, Dr Biswas employs a rigorous approach. His reliance on textual analysis, archival documents, supporting books, and interviews with experts allows him to weave together literary criticism with

social science perspectives. The application of new theoretical frameworks lends freshness to the study, while his careful attention to both historical continuity and contemporary change ensures a balanced perspective.

The scope of the book is admirably wide. By juxtaposing Bangladeshi theatre within global processes of colonialism, consumerism, and hegemonism, Dr Biswas shows that the nation's cultural struggles are neither isolated nor unique. Rather, they are part of a larger narrative of resistance and adaptation that spans continents. Yet, he never loses sight of the local, grounding his analysis in the particularities of Bengali nationalism, cultural practice, and historical experience.

What makes the book especially timely is its relevance to today's Bangladesh. As the nation continues to grapple with religious extremism, gender inequality, and consumerist values, theatre in Bangladesh remains a vital space for reflection and critique. By showing how our theatre has historically responded to such challenges, Dr Biswas implicitly calls for its continued role in shaping a more just and conscious society.

In sum, this book is an invaluable addition to the field of theatre studies and cultural history in Bangladesh. It will appeal not only to scholars and students of literature and theatre studies but also to anyone interested in the intersection of culture, politics, and society. Dr Biswas has produced a work of both academic rigour and cultural significance, one that ensures Bangladeshi theatre is recognised not only as art but as a vital record of social reality.

Abdus Selim is an eminent academic and translator. He can be reached at selim70plus@gmail.com.



ILLUSTRATION: MAHMUDA EMDAD

ANOTHER SEMIFINAL disguised as Super 4 clash

EKUSH TAPADER from Dubai

The Asia Cup has often thrown up fixtures that feel like knockouts long before the final itself, and the ongoing 17th edition is no different.

Bangladesh and Pakistan meet tonight in Dubai, once more with everything on the line -- effectively a semifinal disguised as a Super Four clash.

The situation seven years ago was strikingly similar, though in a 50-over format rather than T20. Then too, Bangladesh and Pakistan faced what was essentially a do-or-die clash, and the pre-match atmosphere leaned heavily towards Pakistan progressing and meeting India but, eventually, it did not happen.

This time, Pakistan pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi resisted the temptation to fuel talk of a final against India in yesterday's press conference. "India haven't reached the final yet... Right now, we're here to win the final and lift the Asia Cup."

Back in 2018, Shoib Malik preferred not to dwell on the opposition, but Afridi openly acknowledged the challenge Bangladesh pose. He pointed out captain Litton Das and others as players Pakistan could not take lightly. Litton, however, was rested as a precautionary measure following a minor injury as the Tigers took on India yesterday.

"Bangladesh have been playing really well recently... Whenever you play against such a side, you must attack first; we can't give them any opportunity."

On head-to-head T20 record, Pakistan hold the clear upper hand. Yet the picture is less one-sided in recent years. The last two



- Bangladesh have a bleak head-to-head T20I record against Pakistan, winning five and losing 20 of the 25 games.
- The Tigers, however, are unbeaten in Asia Cup T20Is against Pakistan -- Bangladesh won the only game played, securing a five-wicket win in Mirpur in 2016.
- Pakistan have played 36 matches at

the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, winning 19, losing 16, and tying 1. Of those 16 defeats, 8 came while batting first and 8 while chasing.

● Since the start of 2021, Pakistan have suffered 6 losses at the venue, 5 of which came when batting first (they also won 5 matches during this period). Their first-innings totals in those 5

defeats were 176-4, 147, 121, 127, and 171.

also bounce early for strokeplay.

Pakistan, for their part, have looked short of their best, especially in their consecutive defeats to India. Bangladesh, though relatively consistent, defeated Afghanistan in the group stage and Sri Lanka in their Super Four opener, keeping themselves firmly in contention to reach the final hurdle regardless of their result over India.

The key worry for Pakistan remains their misfiring top order, with Fakhar Zaman and Sahibzada Farhan in comparatively decent form. Bangladesh appear more balanced in that regard, with Towhid Hridoy rediscovering touch and opener Saif Hassan proving to be somewhat of a revelation. Wily fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman's rhythm, supported by spin options and discipline at the death overs, could well make the difference.

Pakistan's campaign has not been without recovery signs, but their victory over Sri Lanka reflected their resilience. Afridi is again leading with the ball, Abrar Ahmed has offered control, and even their depth has been questioned with Haris Rauf left out early on. Yet eyebrows were raised when Mohammad Nawaz was overlooked in successive matches, despite coach Mike Hesson once hailing him as the "world's best left-arm spinner" -- a claim that drew derision online.

Now, two-time champions Pakistan must win tonight to keep their final hopes alive, while the Tigers -- yet to secure silverware in multi-nation competition -- will again aim to be on the cusp of a historic chapter.

The backdrop is familiar, the stakes immense.



SPORTS REPORTER

The election commission of the upcoming Board of Directors' polls for the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) confirmed on Wednesday that it has received 30 objections to the draft voters' list and would hold hearings on those complaints today.

"A total of 30 complaints were received today... We will start hearings tomorrow from 10:00 am. We have appointed Monir Hossain as our commission secretary, and he received the complaints lawfully today," said EC Sibgat Ullah, Additional Inspector General of Police and chief of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), while speaking to The Daily Star.

Among the objectors were 15 clubs that were denied councillorship due to various irregularities and are currently under investigation by the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC). These clubs have appealed against their exclusion from the voters' list.

Initially, the BCB had included these 15 clubs in the Category-2 voters' list before submitting it to the EC. However, the EC later chose not to retain them in the list, citing "greater national interest" -- as mentioned in a letter attached to the draft list revealed on Tuesday.

Incumbent BCB director Iftekhar Rahman Mithu, representing Viking Cricket Academy -- one of the 15 excluded clubs -- argued that according to the BCB constitution, such clubs cannot be disqualified unless proven guilty.

"We have applied for natural justice now. I believe it's a violation of the BCB constitution... We are now waiting for tomorrow's hearing. If the verdict doesn't go in our favour, we will take legal steps," said Mithu, expressing hope for a fair decision from the EC.

In addition to the clubs' objections, multiple complaints were filed against the councillor nomination of former BCB president Faruque Ahmed, who was nominated by Rangers Cricket Academy despite reportedly submitting his form after the deadline.

Meanwhile, a representative reportedly filed a complaint on behalf of former cricketer Sayed Halim Shah, who claimed that Halim is a committee member of Old DOHS Sports Club, objecting about the councillorship of Tamim Iqbal.

In the objection letter, which did not bear Halim's name, it was claimed that Tamim has no affiliation with the club while being a running player. As Tamim is yet to retire from all forms of competitive cricket, he can't represent at the BCB, according to the complaint.

It has been learnt that the objection wasn't received as Halim, who lives abroad, didn't submit the letter physically, however, EC Sibgat Ullah didn't want to make a comment on the matter.

The Daily Star tried to contact Halim multiple times but he could not be reached.

Additionally, former BCB director Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan also submitted an objection after his councillorship from Nakhalpara Cricketers was denied due to the same issue affecting the 15 clubs.

Following today's hearings, the EC is expected to publish the final voters' list on Friday ahead of the BCB elections scheduled for October 6.

Afghan women's refugee team set for international debut

AGENCIES

The Afghan women's refugee football team is set to make its international debut next month at a tournament in the United Arab Emirates, FIFA announced on Wednesday.

The 23-member team will take part in the four-nation "FIFA Unites: Women's Series" from October 23-29 in Dubai, alongside the UAE, Chad, and Libya.

Its creation follows the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in 2021, which brought sweeping restrictions on women's rights, including bans on sports, education, work, and access to parks and gyms. Many female footballers fled the country fearing persecution.

FIFA approved the formation of the refugee team in May to support Afghan women players and provide



them a platform on the international stage.

"Ensuring that all women have access to football is a priority for FIFA and a key element in shaping the future of our sport," FIFA president Gianni Infantino said. "These friendly matches represent more than just a competition; they are a symbol of hope and progress for women all over the world."

Before the Taliban's takeover, Afghanistan had 25 contracted women players, while the men's team continues to play normally. The debut of the Afghan women's refugee team marks a significant step in giving displaced female athletes the chance to play internationally and raise awareness of the challenges women face under oppressive regimes.

'I'm not finished yet': Mabia after career-best showing

SPORTS REPORTER

Less than four months after setting a new personal best, South Asian Games gold medallist Mabia Akter Simanta outdid herself again on Wednesday, lifting a career-best total weight of 210kg -- 92kg snatch and 118kg clean and jerk -- to win gold in the newly-introduced 69kg weight category in the 41st Men's and 18th Women's National Senior Weightlifting Championships at the Shaheed Captain M Mansur Ali Handball Stadium.

Earlier in May, Mabia had lifted 204kg -- 89kg in snatch and 115kg in clean and jerk -- in the 71kg weight category during the Asian Weightlifting Championships in China.

On Wednesday, the Bangladesh Ansar weightlifter was far ahead of her competitors as silver winner Unnati Biswas lifted 144kg -- 65kg snatch and 79kg in clean and jerk -- while Shayela Akter Jannat lifted a total of 128kg to win bronze.

"I was determined to perform because I was left out of the scholarship, and the coach didn't want to train me. I wanted to maintain my performance, and show my critics that I am not finished yet," Mabia told The Daily Star.

Mabia, who won gold in the 2016 and 2019 SA Games in the 63kg and 76kg category respectively, said it was a challenge to get down to the new weight.

"It has been challenging for me because I had to lose weight to compete in the 69kg weight category, newly introduced internationally in place of 71kg, the category I competed in China in May," she said.

"I am happy after breaking my personal record," said Mabia, who also thanked Bangladesh Ansar and Bangladesh Weightlifting Federation for their support.



It was a night to remember for an 18-year-old Franco Mastantuono, who netted his first Real Madrid goal in their 4-1 win over Levante at the Ciutat de Valencia stadium on Tuesday. Vinicius Junior opened the scoring on the night with a brilliant outside foot finish, and Mastantuono smashed one in the top corner, before Kylian Mbappe hit another brace. Mbappe leads the league's scoring chart with seven goals, as Xabi Alonso's Real Madrid stayed perfect with their sixth straight win in LaLiga, and seventh in all competitions.

PHOTO: AFP

ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD MARITIME DAY 2025

MESSAGE FROM



BANGLADESH MERCHANT MARINE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION
Our Ocean Our Obligation Our Opportunity

On World Maritime Day 2025, the Bangladesh Merchant Marine Officers' Association (BMMOA) joins the local and global community in celebrating the maritime industry's vital role in our daily lives and the global economy. This year's theme, "Our Ocean, Our Obligation, Our Opportunity," resonates deeply with Bangladesh, a nation rich in maritime heritage and immense potential.

The maritime sector is the backbone of international trade, transporting more than 80% of the world's goods. It is indispensable for our economy, ensuring the global supply of essential commodities like food, energy, raw materials, and manufactured goods. In Bangladesh, this sector is a key driver of economic growth, creating jobs, generating foreign currency, and supporting industrial development.

The maritime sector in Bangladesh is an interconnected ecosystem, with various stakeholders working in tandem to keep our economy afloat. From the seafarers who navigate the world's oceans to the port authorities, port operators, ship owners & shipping companies, shipping agencies, freight forwarders, C&F agents, shipbuilders, ship recycling yards, maritime training institutions, and government agencies -- each plays a crucial role. This synergy is the backbone of our maritime success. However, our progress is challenged by incommensurate research, a lack of modern infrastructure, and limited access to financing. Overcoming these hurdles will unlock immense opportunities.

Currently, Bangladesh's maritime sector earns approximately \$1.75 billion in foreign currency annually through shipping, shipbuilding, ship recycling yard, and the employment of our seafarers on international vessels. By resolving barriers like seafarer visa issues, improving financing and taxation for ship procurement, and establishing global standard policies for shipbuilding, we can increase these earnings to \$7 billion annually.

We urge the government to address these challenges, support entrepreneurs in the sector, and allow the maritime industry to play a more significant role in our nation's sustainable economic future.

The time to act is now. Let us navigate these challenges together and chart a course toward a prosperous maritime future for Bangladesh.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.BMMOA.ORG



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Law and order tops voter priorities

39% think BNP 'most suitable' to form next govt, 28.1% Jamaat, 17.7% AL, 4.9% NCP, finds survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Improving law and order has overtaken price control as the top public expectation from the next government, according to the latest round of the People's Election Pulse Survey.

SURVEY AT A GLANCE

Generational divide

- AMONG GEN Z: **34.3%** support BNP, **32.8%** Jamaat, **18.8%** AL, **6.8%** NCP
- BNP backed mainly by older voters; Jamaat stronger among youth
- 65.5%** consider candidate qualifications most important
- 20%** party manifesto, **14.7%** party symbol

Of the 10,413 respondents, 57.5 percent identified law and order as their foremost concern, while 54.6 percent pointed to controlling price hikes.

Reducing corruption was cited by 36.9 percent, and 20.3 percent called for legal reform.

The second round (phase 2) of the survey, conducted by Innovation Consulting between September 2 and 15, marks a notable shift in public expectations.

In the first round held in March, 71.2 percent of respondents placed price control at the top of their list, compared to 52.2 percent who prioritised law and order.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 2



Mourners carry the bodies of Palestinian children, who were killed in an Israeli strike on a building where displaced people were taking shelter, at Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Israeli strikes on shelter, fleeing people kill dozens

Tanks push deeper into Gaza City as Trump talks peace with Muslim leaders

AGENCIES

Israeli forces killed dozens of people across the Palestinian territory yesterday, as the military pressed its assault on Gaza City, from where hundreds of thousands have been forced to flee.

Israel has launched a major air and ground offensive on Gaza City in a bid to root out Hamas after nearly two years of war.

The United Nations estimated at

the end of August that around one million people lived in Gaza City and its surroundings, where it has declared a famine.

The Israeli military says roughly 550,000 people have since fled the city and moved southward, while Gaza's civil defence agency -- a rescue force operating under Hamas authority -- puts the number at around 450,000.

Thaer Saqr, 39, told AFP on Wednesday he had left the Sheikh

Radwan neighbourhood of Gaza City the day before to head southwards with his wife, children and sister.

"The tanks on the coastal road... opened fire on us, and my sister was killed," he said.

Saqr said he returned to Gaza City's Al-Shifa Hospital and "will not leave, even if they kill us all."

"I appeal to the world: help us. I say to Israel: you want us to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Saif Hassan was the lone warrior for Bangladesh in their unsuccessful 169-run chase against India in the Super Four stage of the Asia Cup in Dubai yesterday. The Tigers managed just 127 all out in 19.3 overs despite Saif's 51-ball 69, succumbing to a 41-run defeat, as India sealed a berth for the final. The outcome also meant Sri Lanka were eliminated, while Bangladesh's game against Pakistan today at the same venue turned into a virtual semifinal.

PHOTO: AFP

India imposes new condition on non-basmati rice exports

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The Indian government has announced that exports of non-basmati rice will now be allowed only after registration with the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), an arm of the Commerce Ministry.

Bangladesh is one of the main importers of non-basmati rice from India.

"The export policy of non-basmati rice has been amended by incorporating an additional policy condition to the extent that export of non-basmati rice shall be permitted only upon registration of contracts with the APEDA," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in a notification yesterday.

India, one of the world's largest rice exporters, saw shipments of the grain rise 6.4 percent to \$4.7 billion in the April-August period in the current fiscal year.

In September last year, the DGFT, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, lifted a blanket

Saudi Arabia's grand mufti passes away

AP, Dubai

Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al-Sheikh, Saudi Arabia's grand mufti who served the kingdom's top religious figure over a quarter century that saw the ultraconservative Muslim nation socially liberalise, died Tuesday. He was in his 80s.

Sheikh Abdulaziz's role as grand mufti put him as one of the top Islamic clerics in the world of Sunni Muslims. Saudi Arabia, home to the holy cities of Makkah and

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4

**তাসল নোট চিনুন
নিরাপদ লেনদেন নিশ্চিত করুন**

গতর আহমান হাবিব মনসুর স্বাক্ষরিত 'বাংলাদেশের প্রত্নতাত্ত্বিক স্থাপত্য' শীর্ষক নতুন ডিজাইন
ও সিরিজের ১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমানের ব্যাংক নোটের প্রধান নিরাপত্য বৈশিষ্ট্যসমূহ:

১. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '1000' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি। নেটো নাড়াচাঁচা করলে এর রং মাটিতে থেকে সরু রয়ে পরিবর্তিত হয় এবং মূলমানের ডেকের কোনান্তিভাবে মুক্তি '1000' দেখাটি দৃশ্যমান হয়।

২. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে। নেটো নাড়াচাঁচা করলে এর রং সোনালী দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

৩. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের ডানদিকে আড়াআড়িভাবে অসমতল ছাপায় (ইন্টার্ট্রিপ কালিটে) গুড়ি লাইন মুক্তি আছে যা হাতের স্পর্শে সহজেই অনুভব করা যাবে।

৪. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের ডানদিকে উন্মুক্তারে মুক্তি এবং নিচে উন্মুক্তারে মুক্তি ইন্টেলিগেন্ট স্ট্রাইপে ইন্টেলিগেন্ট নোটের মূলমান এবং বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের মূলমান রয়েছে।

৫. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

৬. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

৭. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

৮. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

৯. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

১০. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

১১. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

১২. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

১৩. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

১৪. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

১৫. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

১৬. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

১৭. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

১৮. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

১৯. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

২০. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্তি রয়েছে।

২১. পরিবর্তনশীল কালি
১০০০, ১০০, ৫০ ও ২০ টাকা মূলমান নোটের সম্মুখভাবে ডানদিকে কোনায় মুক্তি মূলমান '100' রং পরিবর্তনশীল উন্মুক্তারের নিরাপত্য কালি দ্বারা মুক্ত