

**TOTAL NUMBER OF RIVERS**

**1,415**

Major rivers **238**

Transboundary rivers **57**

**54** with India

**3** with Myanmar

(Data: Ministry of Water Resources)



SOMESHWARI RIVER, NETROKONA



BARAL RIVER, NATORE

**DEAD OR DRIED UP**

Rivers classified as dead or heavily dried up include Atrai, Baral, Bhairab, Bhola, Chitra, Dhaleshwari, Dharla, Dudhkumar, Gomti, Gorai, Ichamoti, Kaliganga, Karatoya, Kholpetua, Kopotakkho, Kushiyara, Mahananda, Mathabhanga, Muhuri, Nabaganga, Teesta, Surma, and Titas



KARNAPHULI



**LAND OF  
(DYING)  
RIVERS**

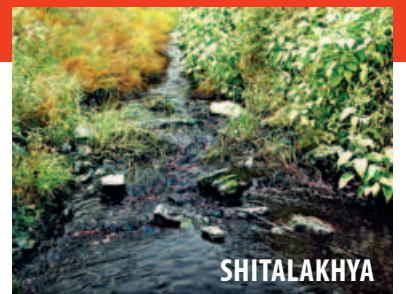
*Rivers no longer live; they merely exist. They exist as relics of their glory days, when rivers were wild, mysterious and free – or as characters in their own story, told through poetry and music. Now they linger in inherited nostalgia. In 2009, the High Court granted rivers the legal status of “living entities”. But in reality, almost all the country’s rivers are struggling to survive under the weight of encroachment, pollution and sand-lifting. On World Rivers Day, we look into the current state of our rivers and how these once majestic rivers are being held hostage to greed and negligence.*

**MAJOR POLLUTANTS**

Industrial discharge

Waste dumping

Plastic pollution



SHITALAKHYA

**UNDER ASSAULT**

**DHAKA**

Buriganga, Turag, Tongi Khal, Balu, Shitalakhya, Dhaleshwari, Ichhamati, Meghna, Khiru, Labondoho, Banar, Old Brahmaputra, Bangshi (Savar and Tangail), Chilai, Haridhoa, Sutia (Gazipur, Mymensingh), Karnatali

**BARISHAL**

Sonai, Kathi, Kirtankhola, Sandhya, Payra, Bishkhali, Bholakhal, Ramnabad, Andharmanik, Khapradanga and Baleswar

**KHULNA**

Pasur, Rupsa, Bhairab, Mayur, Chitra, Alaikuri and Mathabhanga

**RANGPUR**

Alaikuri, Ghagat, Khoksa Ghaghot and Shyamasundari Khal

**SYLHET**

Khowai, Sutang, Surma, Korangi and Jadukata

**CHATTOGRAM**

Titas, Karnaphuli, Bakhkhali, Matamuhuri, Halda, Naf, Chingri and Feni,

**RAJSHAHI**

Atrai, Karatoya

**GRABBING**

63,249 grabbers identified in 776 rivers

18,579 evicted (in 2020)

490 polluting industries in Dhaka



BRAHMAPUTRA

**River and Delta Research Centre in its 2025 survey found at least 79 rivers either drying or have already dried up**

Khulna: 25  
Rajshahi: 19  
Rangpur: 14  
Chattogram: 6  
Mymensingh: 5  
Dhaka: 4  
Barishal, Sylhet: 3 each

**POLLUTION**

Physical survey and testing the water of 56 selected rivers in Dhaka, Khulna, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Barishal and Chattogram divisions, the Rivers and Delta Research Centre in 2022 found that each one of them is polluted

Rivers around greater Dhaka remain polluted for over two decades, especially during the lean period



MAHANANDA



# BURIGANGA

## runs pitch-dark even in monsoon

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

PINAKI ROY

Even at the peak of monsoon, the Buriganga water remains almost pitch-dark at Doleshwar point in Dhaka's Shyampur area.

The water should have appeared normal at this time of the year, as torrential rains have caused the river to swell, significantly improving its flow. But the relentless discharge of liquid waste from nearby industrial units continues to take a heavy toll on the river, a lifeline for the capital.

In addition to pollutants from industrial units, household waste is being dumped into the river through a large sewage pipe.

"Officials from the Department of Environment [DoE] visited the area after one of my video clips on river pollution went viral on social media. But nothing has been done yet to stop the pollution," Mizanur Rahman, a local environmental activist, told The Daily Star last week.

Kalu Molla, a boatman who ferries people from Keraniganj to Kadamtali station, said the water quality was good before factories were built in the area.

"We used to catch a wide variety of fish in the river, but it's all gone now. Things are getting worse day

**102 industrial waste outlets, 75 municipal sewer lines, and 216 small private outlets discharge untreated waste into Buriganga, Turag, Shitalakkhya, and Dhaleshwari as well as other water bodies in and around Dhaka city, shows a study by the River and Delta Research Centre.**

by day," he said.

In the 1990s, industrial plots were allocated for setting up steel re-rolling mills and dyeing and chemical factories in the Shyampur area.

DoE sources said around 150 industrial units are operating in the area, and 33 of them are required to have effluent treatment plants (ETPs) as they generate liquid waste.

Of the 33 units, 27 have installed ETPs. The remaining ones were asked by the DoE to halt production for violating environmental regulations, but have since been allowed to continue operations under court orders, the sources added.

When Asked, DoE Assistant Director Hossain Shuvo Munjuri, tasked with monitoring factories in Shyampur industrial zone, said they have only five inspectors to monitor around 4,000 industrial units, hospitals and clinics in Dhaka city.

Regarding the rampant pollution at Doleshwar point, he said, "It is hard to catch the polluters, as the discharge points of the factories in the area are connected to sewage lines that channel waste into the river."

The situation in Shyampur reflects the dismal state of not

only the Buriganga, but also other rivers around Dhaka city, indicating the severity and scale of the toxic waste being dumped by industrial units.

A recent study by the River and Delta Research Centre, a non-profit organisation, uncovered alarming levels of pollution in Buriganga, Turag, Shitalakkhya, and Dhaleshwari last year.

Through field surveys and satellite imagery, the study identified 102 industrial waste outlets, 75 municipal sewer lines, and 216 small private outlets that discharge untreated waste into the four rivers and other water bodies.

Moreover, contaminants are being channelled to the rivers through 38 sluice gates, 62 service canals and 441 dumping stations and points. The pollution is compounded by waste from dockyards and kitchen markets.

The DoE has recently finalised the draft of "Surface and Groundwater Quality Report 2023", which reveals poor water quality in four rivers -- the Buriganga, Shitalakkhya, Turag and Dhaleshwari -- especially during the dry season.

Samples from 21 locations across the four rivers were collected and analysed in

laboratories for 12 parameters, including the level of dissolved oxygen and salinity.

Industrialisation and urbanisation, along with seasonal variation in flow, are cited as key factors behind the deteriorating water quality in rivers around Dhaka, according to the draft report.

The level of dissolved oxygen in the Buriganga dropped to as low as 0.1 milligram per litre (mg/L) at Postogola bridge point in March 2023. It rose to 6.01 mg/L at the same location during monsoon in July.

In March 2022, the dissolved oxygen level was also 0.1mg/L at the same point.

Water samples from Turag, Shitalakkhya and Dhaleshwari showed similar results.

A decrease in the dissolved oxygen level below 5.0mg/L causes stress to aquatic life. If the level falls below 1mg/L for a few hours, it could result in large-scale fish kills.

Direct discharge of untreated industrial, municipal and tannery waste into rivers and a reduced flow of water are among the reasons for depletion of dissolved oxygen during the dry season, the report states.

Currently, 2,500 industrial

units, which account for 86 percent of industrial units in Dhaka and its suburbs, have ETPs, but most of them don't treat waste to maximize profits, said a DoE official seeking anonymity.

Asked about the rampant pollution by industrial units, DoE Deputy Director Abul Kalam Azad blamed manpower shortages for the lax monitoring.

"If we want to cover only Shyampur area properly, we will need at least four inspectors," he said.

Kalam further said the DoE now has 80 inspectors against 157 sanctioned posts to monitor whether industrial units are following environmental regulations across the country.

Mujibur Rahman, who has been working on water pollution for over two decades, said that not only industrial waste, almost all household waste is dumped into the rivers around Dhaka city.

"In the past, we proposed setting up cluster ETPs in industrial areas, including Shyampur, and treating liquid waste centrally. But none of the successive governments implemented those suggestions," added Mujibur, also a professor of civil engineering at the United International University.

## The Khowai gasps for life

Encroachment, waste dumping choke the once vibrant waterway

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

The Khowai river, once a vibrant waterbody flowing through the heart of Habiganj town, is now choked by indiscriminate dumping of waste and relentless encroachment on both banks.

Over the years, the river has been turned into a dumping site for household, commercial and clinical waste, particularly at the Kibria Bridge point. With no dedicated dumping ground, the municipality disposed of garbage collected from across the area by discarding it in the river.

Although the municipality stopped using the river for waste disposal three years ago, many locals continue to dump garbage along its banks. Meanwhile, influential groups have encroached on the river's land by building structures on both banks.

Even slight rainfall now submerges parts of the town due to the damaged embankments and clogged drainage system.

"The river once supported my livelihood. Now it is almost dead due to pollution and illegal grabbing. The stench is unbearable. The ghat is now abandoned and piled up with garbage. There is no fish in the river anymore," said Rafiq Ahmed, a local fisherman.

Latif Mia, who lives near Kibria Bridge, echoed him.

Sharif Jamil, central member secretary of environmental group Dhoritri Rokhaya Amra (DHORA), said, "Before any restoration effort,



encroachment must be stopped, and waterlogging must be addressed."

Experts stressed the need for a comprehensive plan.

Since there is no Cadastral Survey data available for Habiganj, they called for a scientific and transparent survey to demarcate the river's original boundaries, with local environmentalists and community leaders involved in the process.

Professor Dr Mohammad Zahirul Haque, vice chancellor of Sylhet Metropolitan University, said the name "Khowai" originated from the Tripura language as a combination of two words -- "Kho" (up) and "Yai"

(stream) -- meaning "a stream of water coming down from above".

The Khowai is a transboundary river originating from the Atharmura hills of India's Tripura state and entering Bangladesh through the Bangladesh-India border before merging with the Meghna. The river stretches 94 kilometres in Bangladesh with an average width of 106 metres.

It is not only the main river of Habiganj but also the third largest in Tripura.

The Khowai, if restored, could help address many of the city's infrastructural problems, including

drainage and waterlogging, he added.

Tofazzal Sohel, waterkeeper of the Khowai river, called for efforts to restore the river and transform its banks into community space.

Contacted, Sayedur Rahman, executive engineer of the Water Development Board in Habiganj, said a tender has been invited for a comprehensive feasibility study to assess the river's current state and identify interventions needed to restore and protect it.

Authorities hope the findings will provide the foundation for a long-term, sustainable river management and conservation plan, he added.



PHOTOS: STAR



## IMPLEMENTING JULY CHARTER Commission readies multiple options for govt

MD ABBAS

The National Consensus Commission is considering recommending multiple pathways to the government for implementing the constitutional matters in the July Charter.

One package under discussion would outline three possible routes. The first is issuance of a Constitutional Order followed by a referendum on the order.

The second is to seek an advisory opinion from the Supreme Court under article 106 of the constitution. The article states that if the president deems a legal question important to the public, he or she may seek the Supreme Court's opinion. The Appellate Division then may report its opinion to the president.

The third option is to hold a referendum and secure public endorsement of the constitutional matters of the July Charter through a yes-or-no vote.

Another package could involve the formation of a Constituent Assembly, or a Constitutional Reform Assembly.

These options were discussed at a virtual meeting between the commission and legal experts on Friday night, according to sources present at the meeting.

Contacted, Monir Haider, special assistant to the chief adviser involved in building national consensus, said the legal experts emphasised the importance of verifying the will of the people in the process. "But there is no concrete decision yet," he added.

A press statement from the commission yesterday confirmed that it decided to present multiple recommendations to the government on the July Charter's implementation.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

### POSSIBLE PATHWAYS

- Issuing a Constitutional Order
- Seeking Supreme Court's opinion
- Holding a referendum
- Forming a Constituent Assembly



A schoolboy stands at the helm, not with oars but by gripping a rope tied to the riverbank, as he ferries his friends across the Shib river to Naogaon Govt Primary School in Rajshahi's Mohonpur upazila. A bamboo bridge built by locals collapsed years ago, and despite repeated promises, the authorities have yet to construct a permanent one. Due to the risky journey, attendance has sharply fallen as parents have stopped sending their children to the school. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

## A peek into London lives of ousted AL leaders

BULBUL HASAN from London

Within days of the Awami League regime's collapse on August 5 last year, a steady stream of former ministers, MPs, and high-profile loyalists slipped out of the country, seeking safety in foreign shores.

Now, more than a year later, many of them have resurfaced in London, no longer hiding in silence but circling back into public view, trying to signal relevance even as their reputations remain under a cloud.

In the first few months of exile, they were in hushed conversations among the diaspora. They stayed indoors, tucked away in houses mostly in

East London and in anonymous outer boroughs.

But gradually, they have become visible, appearing at political gatherings of party activists, attending social events, even showing up at demonstrations. The Bangladeshi community in London has begun to see the outlines of a once-powerful machine struggling to reassemble itself abroad.

Several former leaders have re-emerged through the UK Awami League (UK AL). Among them are Shofiqur Rahman Choudhury, former state minister for expatriates' welfare, Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury, former mayor of Sylhet City Corporation and currently a joint

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## Revive, reform NHRC to protect human rights

Speakers tell dialogue; Iftekharuzzaman names agencies behind 'surveillance society'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Until the National Human Rights Commission, the country's top rights watchdog that has been inactive for nearly a year, is revived and reformed, rights violations will continue unchecked, said Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh.

He said the government must explain why the NHRC has remained dormant, with no chairperson or members, describing the situation as "embarrassing" for the authorities.

The remarks came as speakers discussed a draft ordinance for the NHRC, at a citizens' dialogue organised by Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, under the initiative of Bangladesh Reform Watch, held at a city hotel.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Protesters hold placards and Palestinian flags as they march through the city centre during a civil society and faith-based organisations' mass rally for Gaza in Cape Town, South Africa, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## 91 more killed in Gaza

Trump says talks to continue 'as long as needed' for a ceasefire deal

AGENCIES

Israeli assault on Gaza killed at least 91 Palestinians yesterday, a day after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to "finish the job" against Hamas during a speech at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The killings came as US President Donald Trump said he is hopeful about a Gaza ceasefire plan after talking with Muslim and Arab leaders on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

The developments came after Israeli newspaper Haaretz cited sources saying Hamas had agreed in principle to release all the Israeli hostages it holds in return for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners and the gradual withdrawal of Israeli troops under Trump's plan.

Also included in the proposal were the end of Hamas rule in Gaza, and Israel agreeing not to annex the territory and drive out Palestinians living there, Haaretz reported.

"Hamas has not been presented with any plan," a Hamas official who asked not to be named told Reuters.

In his comments to reporters on

- Gaza's health system on the verge of collapse
- Trump to host Netanyahu tomorrow
- Pro-Palestinian rallies held in many countries

Friday in which he said "it's looking like we have a deal on Gaza", Trump offered no details of its contents and gave no timetable. Israel has not yet made any public response to Trump's comments.

Trump is due tomorrow to meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who heads a hard-right governing coalition opposed to ending the Gaza war until Hamas is destroyed.

Trump also said on Friday talks on Gaza with Middle Eastern nations were intense and would continue as long as required.

His special envoy Steve Witkoff said the US president had presented proposals to the leaders of multiple Muslim-majority countries this week that included a 21-point Middle East peace plan.

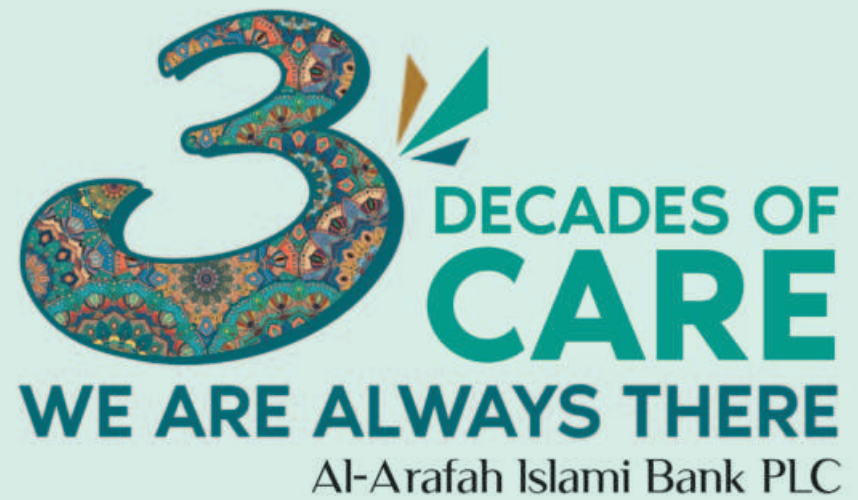
In Gaza meanwhile, the assault continued.

The Israeli military said its aircraft struck 120 targets across the strip over the past day as troops pressed deeper into Gaza City. The Palestinian Health Ministry said 74 people were killed in Gaza in the last 24 hours.

Later, quoting health officials, Al Jazeera reported that more than 91 Palestinians were killed in relentless Israeli attacks throughout the Gaza Strip, including at least 46 in Gaza City.

In a post on social media platform X, the military's Arabic spokesman repeated calls for Gaza City residents to evacuate.

The UN World Food Programme estimates that some 350,000-400,000 Palestinians have left since Israel began its expanded ground offensive in Gaza City a couple of weeks ago, but hundreds of thousands remain.



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# DURGA PUJA and Dhaka's shared past



RBR

Once again, the majestic visitor of Sarat, or autumn, descends to her father's abode on her annual visit. This year, Goddess Durga is riding an elephant, which, according to traditional Hindu belief, is the regal and auspicious mode of transport that promises good times for her devotees.

Durga's mode of arrival and departure is always seen to carry



divine signals for the year ahead, and the news of the moment is that Earth will be lush with good crops, replenishing rains and prosperity for society's well-being.

This belief was shared by Tarock Nath Ghosh, a goldsmith by profession and a classical tabla player by passion. His ancestral home, beside the Lalbagh Fort and the old Durga

temple of Sri Sri Girigovardhan Jiu at Pushparaj Saha Lane, is said to have a history stretching back 300 years.

The geographical boundary and politics of culture have changed with time, but the ageing Tarock Nath Ghosh was quick to point out that Bengal has always maintained a peaceful synergy between people of different religions.

"Puja celebrations in Dhaka have evolved, but there was a time when there was no distinction between a Hindu devotee and a Muslim enthusiast," he recalled fondly. "It was a community festival where everyone took part, just as Hindus celebrated Shab-e-barat and Eid in Old Dhaka for ages."

Ghosh added, "There were many types of competitions held during the festivals of Hindus and Muslims in Old Dhaka. A spirited devotional dance during Durga Puja with traditional earthen incense burners, called Dhunuchi Naach, was performed by my Muslim friends. They invited themselves to luchi-

niramish and dhak-dholi events. Similarly, I used to partake in making handmade firecrackers called moura atoshbaji and eating halwa roti during Shab-e-barat."

It is a documented fact that the common people of Bengal have long shared cultural ties that extend beyond festivities. In the 19th and early 20th century, people dressed in dhoti-kurtas, and it was not until the height of colonial power that dress codes began to differ along religious lines.

Through the oral history of people like Tarock Nath Ghosh, we are reminded that celebrations such as Durga Puja are more than just customs; they are powerful tools for fostering harmony within the community.

Historically, they have brought people together, and as Goddess Durga descends to her mortal abode, she brings more than prosperity. She ushers in hope that people in these turbulent times will learn from the past — a time when communal harmony carried us beyond the boundaries of faith.

## 'People won't need to take to streets for due rights'

### Jamaat ameer outlines three pledges if voted to power

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday said if his party comes to power, no one will have to stand on the streets to demand their due rights.

"Guided by justice, everyone will receive what they are rightfully owed," he said while addressing the annual session of the Forum of Diploma Engineers Bangladesh at the Institute of Diploma Engineers auditorium in the capital's Kakrail.

At the programme, the Jamaat chief outlined three fundamental commitments the party pledges to implement if voted to power — reforming the education system, eradicating bribery and corruption, and restructuring wages to reflect responsibilities across all sectors.

"First of all, we'll not keep this broken education system. We'll not promote the kind of education that breeds immorality, corruption, or degrades human values. Instead, we will offer the kind of education that teaches respect," he said.

Citing the need to align global education with lessons of morality, he added, "Once a boy or girl completes their education, they'll find work suited to their qualifications. Either they will become entrepreneurs, or they will secure a job in the service sector. No one will remain unemployed."

On the second commitment, Shafiqur said if Jamaat comes to power, it will eliminate bribery and corruption. He further promised to align wages with the nature of work across sectors.

Highlighting that police carry out their duties at great personal risk, the Jamaat ameer said, "If they are paid a beggar's wage, why would they take such risks? They must be treated with dignity. Because this isn't ensured, there is no peace in society today."



## A peek into London lives of ousted AL leaders

FROM PAGE 1  
secretary of UK AL, and Habibur Rahman Habib, former MP for Sylhet-3.

All three, with longstanding ties to Britain and formal residency status, are active in party activities. Their involvement with UK AL is viewed as an effort to preserve political identity abroad despite facing corruption and criminal charges at home.

Other exiled figures have also surfaced at public events. Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, the former state minister for shipping, and Abu Sayeed Al Mahmood Swapon, a former MP and parliament whip, have both been seen at community gatherings.

Abdur Rahman, the former fisheries and livestock minister and Presidium member of the AL, has appeared at rallies and demonstrations in East London.

SM Rezaul Karim, former fisheries and livestock minister, has become a visible presence in London, continuing his role as an active party leader.

Kabir Bin Anwar, who retired as cabinet secretary in early 2024 before joining the AL ranks, made his first public appearance in London earlier this year.

By contrast, some leaders remain out of the spotlight. Ranjit Chandra Sarkar, former MP for Sunamganj-1, and Kazi Abdul Wadud Dara, former state minister for rural development, rarely appear at public gatherings.

Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, the former land minister, has not been seen in public, though his property holdings in the UK have drawn scrutiny as part of corruption probes.

Hasan Mahmud, the former foreign minister now based in Brussels and reported to have secured UK residency rights, is wanted in Bangladesh for alleged crimes against humanity during the 2024 student-people uprising. He nevertheless attends select diaspora events linked to his party.

For some, the road to London was a story in itself. One former minister described his escape as something "fit for a Netflix thriller".

Speaking to The Daily Star, he recounted how, in the chaotic days after the collapse, he walked for days through the borderlands, eventually slipping into India under cover of darkness. There, he hid for several nights, relying on sympathetic contacts, before being moved discreetly through immigration patchwork that ultimately secured him safe passage to the United Kingdom.

"It was a story of fear, hunger, and uncertainty," he said, half boasting, half lamenting, "the kind of ordeal people would only believe if they saw it on screen."

The journey to Britain was not straightforward for others either. Immigration lawyers who spoke to The Daily Star said many of the politicians first crossed into India before making their way to the UK through a tangle of immigration channels.

A few had the privilege of long-term visas or indefinite leave to remain. Some reportedly never surrendered British citizenship obtained years earlier. Others arrived empty-handed and are now seeking asylum, telling officials that their lives would be in grave danger if they were forced back to

Bangladesh.

Their families, too, form part of the exodus. The wives and children of influential leaders have quietly arrived in Britain, some joining relatives who had been settled here for years. Others remain stranded at home, their journeys blocked by tighter immigration rules.

Beyond the politicians, a secondary wave of pro-AL lawyers, journalists, bureaucrats, and businessmen has also taken root in Britain since August 2024. Some face serious criminal charges back home, including corruption and even murder.

For those who managed to escape with families, London offers a veneer of normalcy: quiet evenings in



Exiled Awami League leaders in London recently gathered at Altab Ali Park after the UK AL president's passing. From left: Habibur Rahman Habib, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, Abdur Rahman, Shofiqur Rahman Chowdhury, SM Rezaul Karim, Abu Sayeed Al Mahmood Swapon, Kazi Abdul Wadud Dara, Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

community restaurants, weekends at private parties, and the semblance of a routine that masks the uncertainty beneath.

For those who arrived alone, isolation gnaws at them, though they are often seen in online talk shows and virtual strategy sessions with comrades scattered across Bangladesh, India, and other diaspora strongholds. At political meetings in London halls, they speak with defiance, insisting that exile is a temporary setback.

In private, the cracks are visible. One former minister admitted to this correspondent that acknowledging mistakes made in July 2024 would be political suicide.

"If we say we were wrong, the ground beneath our feet disappears," he said, his voice heavy with bitterness.

Another, more buoyant, spoke with optimism. "By December, something will happen," he insisted, "and Awami League will once again have space to breathe."

Much of their confidence rests not only on internal party calculations but also on geopolitical factors. Several of the exiles hinted that India, unsettled by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus at the helm of the interim administration, may yet flex its muscles through trade barriers to tilt the balance.

But beneath the defiance lies a question that refuses to go away: how are they surviving? London is one of the most expensive cities in the world,

and many of these figures lack the right to work or access public funds. Yet they reside in comfortable homes and appear untroubled by financial hardship.

Party loyalists claim the leaders had anticipated this moment for years, quietly investing in properties under trusted names, moving funds across borders, and leaning on loyal associates within the diaspora to safeguard their wealth.

Critics see these maneuvers as nothing more than money laundering, yet one fact remains undeniable: exile has done little to strip them of their comforts or influence.

Almost every one of the party leaders who fled, many facing serious

## Commission readies multiple options for govt

FROM PAGE 1

It noted that there had been discussions on proposals from political parties, which included forming a Constituent Assembly, issuing a Constitutional Order, seeking the Supreme Court's opinion, and holding a referendum.

Commission member Badiul Alam Majumdar also told The Daily Star yesterday that the body is currently weighing four broad options: a Constitutional Order, a referendum, opinion from the Supreme Court, and a Constituent or Constitutional Reform Assembly.

"Talks will be held with political parties on this matter," he said. The next round of talks with parties is set to begin on October 5.

Several sources at the meeting with experts indicated that if a referendum is approved, it could be held on the same day as the general election planned for February next year.

In the case of a Constituent Assembly or Constitutional Reform Assembly, elections for the assembly and the national parliament could be held together.

The assembly would then carry out its reform mandate alongside regular legislative functions, while the president would issue any necessary Constitutional Order.

Experts who joined Friday's meeting included Justice MA Matin, a retired judge of the Appellate Division; Justice Moinul Islam

Chowdhury, a retired judge of the High Court; Mohammad Ikramul Haque, dean of Dhaka University's law faculty; and lawyers Sharif Bhuiyan, Tanim Hossain Shawon, and Imran Siddique. Commission participants included its Vice-President Prof Ali Riaz, and members Badiul Alam Majumdar, Justice Md Emdadul Haque, Iftekharuzzaman, and Md Aiyub Mia.

Political parties have been grappling to reach a consensus on how to implement the July Charter reform proposals tied to the constitution. Many of the 84 proposals are constitutional matters.

Earlier rounds of consensus commission dialogue stalled, with the September 17 session ending fruitlessly for a third consecutive day.

To break the impasse, the commission floated the idea of issuing a Constitutional Order and holding a referendum alongside the next general election.

The BNP rejected the proposal, warning it could create "constitutional disorder" and set a "bad precedent."

The Jamaat-e-Islami, in contrast, supported the move but demanded the referendum take place before election day.

The National Citizen Party remained undecided, pending consultations with legal experts.

Political parties and experts had earlier floated a range of

options: a referendum; a Special or Provisional Constitutional Order by the president; enactment through the next parliament or a constituent assembly; designating parliament itself as a reform assembly; or seeking the Supreme Court's advice.

Party positions varied. BNP proposed that all parties commit to the charter in their manifestos, with the winner responsible for reforms within two years.

Jamaat called for a "Provisional Constitutional Order" effective from August 5, 2024, placing the charter above all existing laws.

The NCP and AB Party demanded a constituent assembly, while Islamic Andolan Bangladesh suggested a presidential proclamation.

Ganosamhati Andolan sought a "Constitutional Reform Council", with implementation within six months of the next government and full execution in a year. Rastrosongskar Andolon proposed electing a "Constitution Reform Convention/Assembly" alongside parliamentary polls.

Several parties, including AB Party, Khelafat Majlish, Zaker Party and Gono Odhikar Parishad, supported a referendum, while the Samajtantrik Dal (Marxist) favoured one only if broad consensus was reached. The Communist Party of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, and Gonoforum insisted reforms should be left to the next parliament.

## Revive, reform NHRC to protect human rights

FROM PAGE 1

"National security cannot be ensured without guaranteeing people's rights," Iftekharuzzaman said, suggesting that the NHRC be empowered to visit and inspect institutions such as the army and intelligence agencies whenever rights violations are reported.

"The NHRC and similar other commissions have turned into a 'rehabilitation centre' for retired bureaucrats," he added, stressing the need for clear eligibility criteria for appointing the chairperson and members.

Iftekharuzzaman, who also heads the Anti-Corruption Commission Reform Commission, said aspirations for reform will not succeed without institutional change.

He said the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, National Security Intelligence, Detective Branch of police, and National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre were instrumental in creating "a surveillance-based society through consistent human rights violations".

"People once kept their phones away at public events, fearing surveillance, but now they have developed 'a fake confidence' that they are no longer being watched.

"But I can guarantee you these are all being recorded and will be made public when necessary. They [these institutions] have that capacity."

He said several recommendations, both national and international — including from the United Nations — have clearly called for reforms to these institutions and the abolition of the Rapid Action Battalion. "Why is the interim government not announcing its position on the matter or taking any action?"

Noted economist Debapriya Bhattacharya, convener of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs and moderator of the dialogue, said past experience shows the NHRC chair must not only be honest and virtuous but also courageous enough to stand up to the powerful.

"The commission in the past had neither claws nor teeth. As a result, it could not bite. We don't want such a commission again," he said, adding that the public does not want "a good individual but without backbone" to lead the NHRC.

Supreme Court lawyer Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua said appointing former bureaucrats to the NHRC had created a "conflict of interest" in the past and urged that the new ordinance include a clause disqualifying them.

Barrister Sara Hossain, honorary executive director of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, said previous commissions had some achievements but ignored serious issues such as enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

She said a new commission has become necessary amid rising rights

violations, with "mob violence" now frequent.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, said hundreds of people have been jailed without bail while extortion remains rampant. "Yet there is silence on these issues in the absence of the commission."

She added that the NHRC cannot function effectively if the government itself gets involved in serious rights violations.

Eminent jurist Shahdeen Malik called for lowering public expectations of the NHRC, saying such commissions worldwide are rarely empowered to investigate serious rights violations and mostly function as an "advisory body" to the government.

Justice Moinul Islam Chowdhury, head of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, said the NHRC will administer the Enforced Disappearance Prevention and Redress Ordinance-2025, a draft of which was approved by the interim government in August.

Meanwhile, Shireen Huq, head of the Women's Affairs Reform Commission, said activating the long-dormant office of the ombudsperson — absent for 54 years since independence — would help address many rights complaints and free up the NHRC to focus on violations committed by the state.



## Unite to build a just, prosperous Bangladesh

Yunus urges all

BSS, Dhaka

To build a prosperous country free from discrimination and corruption, everyone must work together, forgetting religious and caste differences, said Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday.

He made the remarks while greeting all Hindu citizens of the country on the occasion of Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Bangalee Hindu community, which begins today. SEE PAGE 9 COL 2



Buses, pick-up trucks, and rickshaws drift through a dilapidated, waterlogged road, half of which has been closed off for the construction of the elevated expressway. The construction work has left the road in poor condition, causing waterlogging even after light rain. The photo was taken in the capital's Khilgaon area yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## MJF condemns rape of eighth grader in Khagrachhari

Calls for swift arrest, trial of perpetrators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) has strongly condemned the rape of a 12-year-old schoolgirl in Khagrachhari, calling for the swift arrest and trial of those involved.

In a statement issued yesterday, the rights organisation termed the assault a "horrifying reminder of the persistent violence faced by children and women in Bangladesh".

"This tragic assault is not an isolated case. It reflects a culture of impunity where women and girls remain vulnerable, and perpetrators act without fear of arrest or punishment," said MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam.

The organisation urged the government and law enforcers to take immediate and effective action, including enforcing strict legal penalties for violence against children and women, and expanding support for survivors through access to shelter, counselling, and livelihood programmes. The statement comes amid rising tensions in Khagrachhari.

The district administration imposed Section 144 yesterday following a dawn-to-dusk road blockade organised under the banner of "Jumma Chhatra-Janata" demanding justice for the victim.

The Class 8 student was allegedly raped on the evening of September 23 while returning from private tuition.

Her father filed a case with Khagrachhari Sadar Police Station the following day.

Meanwhile, police have arrested one suspect, who has been placed on a six-day remand by a court.



# Children face toxic toll of pollution

Experts warn of deadly impacts of air, noise and e-waste pollution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is grappling with alarming levels of air and noise pollution and electronic waste, all of which pose serious health risks to children, experts cautioned at an event yesterday.

They were speaking at the launch of a new handbook on Children's Health and the Environment at CIRDAP in the capital, jointly organised by the Directorate General of Medical Education and Unicef.

According to the handbook, Bangladesh was ranked the world's most polluted country in 2023, while Dhaka remained the second most polluted city globally between 2018 and 2021. It also noted that in 2021 alone, air pollution caused more than 2,35,000 deaths, including 19,000 children under the age of five.

Household air pollution from burning wood, coal, charcoal, kerosene, animal dung, and crop waste accounted for around 69,000 premature deaths and contributed to a further 13,500 deaths linked to ambient PM2.5 exposure, it added.

Emerging research links prenatal and early childhood exposure to fine particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide with higher risks of autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and childhood leukaemia, the handbook mentioned.

It also highlighted that noise pollution has become a major public health hazard, particularly in urban areas.

Dhaka now ranks as the noisiest city among 61 major cities worldwide,

with average sound levels reaching 119 decibels, far above the WHO's safe limit of 55 decibels.

Vehicle traffic is the main source, producing 75 percent of the city's noise, with some areas recording levels as high as 110-132 decibels, comparable to a rock concert or chainsaw, it said.

Citing data from Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, the handbook showed that 5-7 percent of patients at Bangladesh Medical University suffer from noise-induced hearing loss. Children

recycling sites are exposed to toxic air that can reduce lung function, increase the risk of stillbirth and premature birth, and damage the immune system, growth parameters, DNA and genes.

Reported symptoms include insomnia, headaches, muscle weakness, chest pain and dizziness, the handbook said.

Unicef supported the DGME in developing the document, which is based on the WHO-Unicef online course "Protecting Children's Health from Environmental Threats".

Prof Dr Md Abu Jafor, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services, said, "Our children are among the most affected by climate change, and air pollution is one of the biggest challenges we face. It directly impacts neuroendocrine development, especially in children under five. Around 90 percent of neuronal development occurs within the first six to seven years of life, so preventing air pollution is critically important for protecting their health and future."

Unicef Deputy Representative Deepika Sharma said, "Climate change demands a united response. All concerned organisations must work together to address these challenges and implement effective policies."

Prof Dr Nazmul Hosain, director general of the Directorate General of Medical Education, added, "Strong policy measures are essential to reduce the environmental impacts of climate change. This requires everyone - government, institutions and communities - to work in coordination."

**Our children are among the most affected by climate change, and air pollution is one of the biggest challenges we face. It directly impacts neuroendocrine development, especially in children under five.**

PROF DR MD ABU JAFOR  
Director general of DGHS

attending schools near busy roads, including Motijheel Ideal School and College and Willes Little Flower School, are already showing signs of harm.

Bangladesh generates an estimated 2.81 million tonnes of e-waste each year, a figure projected to rise to 4.62 million tonnes by 2035, according to research by the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet). Children living near e-waste

## 'Form independent info commission immediately'

TIB slams govt for failing to reconstitute it in over a year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Slamming the government for its failure to reconstitute an Information Commission more than a year after the fall of the Hasina regime, Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday called for the immediate formation of an effective and independent commission.

"Although the interim government has taken several initiatives towards state reforms, no steps have been taken to make the Information Commission functional or to reform the RTI Act," said TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman in a statement issued on the occasion of International Day for Universal Access to Information.

"Despite repeated recommendations from civil society and statements in the media, no action has followed. This indifference to protecting citizens' right to information is deeply unfortunate - and marks one of the interim government's major failures," said Iftekharuzzaman.

The anti-corruption watchdog urged the appointment of qualified individuals, free of conflicts of interest, as commissioners through a transparent process.

At the same time, TIB called for necessary amendments to the Right to Information (RTI) Act 2009 and comprehensive reforms to transform the Information Commission into an effective and independent institution.

Iftekharuzzaman further noted that even when citizens file RTI applications, in the absence of an active commission, complaints remain unheard and unresolved.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

## 'It's very difficult to work in Bangladesh'

CEC Nasir cites challenges ahead of upcoming polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin yesterday said they are facing "many seen and unseen challenges" as they are preparing for the upcoming national polls.

He said it is very "difficult" to work in Bangladesh, particularly considering the current situation in the country.

"While a few find it easy to get work done, the majority struggle with it. This is the reality we face today," the CEC said while addressing the Election Officers' Conference 2025 at the EC headquarters yesterday afternoon.

Urging election officials to remain impartial,

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

## Shahidul Alam joining Gaza-bound media flotilla

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Photographer Shahidul Alam is set to join the Freedom Flotilla Coalition's (FFC) Media Flotilla as the first Bangladeshi, in an attempt to break the information-media blackout in Gaza.

He will depart for Italy today, from where they will embark on a journey for Gaza.

Shahidul presented the goals of this programme and expressed a message of solidarity with the struggling people of Palestine at a press conference held at Drikpath Bhaban on Panthapath in the capital at 3:00pm yesterday.

On joining the global media flotilla, he said, "A genocide is going on right now. Israel and the

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

## TONGI FIRE Another firefighter dies, death toll now 4

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Gazipur

The death toll from the Tongi warehouse fire has risen to four after another injured firefighter succumbed to his burns yesterday.

Khandaker Jannatul Naem, 37, a warehouse inspector of fire service, passed away around 10:00am at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery in the capital. He had suffered 42 percent burns, said doctors.

Hailing from Sherpur, Naem had joined the fire service in 2016.

He was among the four firefighters who were burned while extinguishing the blaze at a warehouse in Sahara Market of Tongi, Gazipur on September 22.

Earlier, firefighters Shamim Ahmed died on September 23 and Nurul Huda on September 24 while undergoing treatment.

## Case filed over shaving of fakir's hair in M'singh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A case was filed yesterday over the incident of forcibly shaving the hair of 70-year-old Halim Uddin Akand in Kodalia Kashiganj village of Mymensingh's Tarakanda upazila.

Halim's son Md Shahid Akand lodged the case with Tarakanda Police Station, accusing five to six people involved in the incident, said Md Tipu Sultan, officer-in-charge of the police station.

However, the OC did not disclose the names of the accused for "the sake of the investigation".

A viral video of the incident has triggered nationwide outrage and condemnation.

The video, widely shared on social media, shows Halim walking down a road when three men in grey vests chase him, drag him aside, and pin him down. As he struggles and cries out "Allah, Tui Dehis!" (O Allah, You are witness!), they shave off his hair.

The incident happened just before Eid-ul-Azha this year, said Rezaul Karim Aslam, general secretary of the Mymensingh Baul Association.

Halim had been keeping his matted hair for 37 years. Once a farmer, he now leads a quiet spiritual life.

The perpetrators came to Kashiganj Bazar from Dhaka that morning after receiving a tip that "a madman was roaming the market".

"They chased Halim for a long time before capturing him and cutting his hair, ignoring locals who tried to intervene," said Aslam.



A farmer arranges watermelons for sale at a wholesale market in Khulna's Dumuria. Farmers in Dacope, Batiaghata, and Dumuria have profited greatly from cultivating off-season watermelons using the mulching method. At present, the fruits are being sold at Tk 35-45 per kg in the wholesale market, depending on size. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

# Four killed in Gopalganj road crash

A CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

At least four people were killed and two others critically injured as a bus hit an easy bike in Kashiani area of Gopalganj yesterday.

The deceased were identified as: Obaidur Rahman Sheikh, 48, of Helencha village in Faridpur's Alfadanga; Motaleb Paik, 75, his wife Delowara Begum, 60, and their daughter Ruma Khanam, 35, of Randhanpur village in Madaripur's Kalkini.

Ruma's daughter and another person were admitted to the Gopalganj 250-Bed General Hospital with critical injuries.

The accident happened at around 11:50am near Majhigati Bus Stand on Dhaka-Khulna Highway when a Dhaka-bound bus of Emad Paribahan hit the easy bike, leaving two dead on the spot. The injured were rushed to hospital where doctors declared two others dead, said Md Russel Mia, a traffic sergeant of Bhangha Highway Police.

Both the vehicles were seized, but the bus driver fled the scene. Legal procedures were underway, he added.



As daylight fades, a flock of barn swallows sit perched on the branches of a dead tree, resting. These birds not only enhance the beauty of rural landscapes, but also help ensure the biodiversity in the nearby areas. The photo was taken from the Kalabagi village of Dacope upazila of Khulna recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

# Hope sails on floating schools

### Boat classrooms bring education to haor children in Kishoreganj

TAFSILUL AZIZ, Kishoreganj

A large steel boat lies anchored on the riverbank. Children step aboard by climbing a narrow wooden stair, their laughter rising as they take their seats on the neat rows of benches set under a canopy.

Inside, it feels like any other classroom -- except that the walls are water. This is a floating school.

From pre-primary to class five, lessons take place here.

The children receive not just education, but also free books, notebooks, pens, geometry boxes, school uniforms, bags, shoes, tiffin and healthcare.

For many families who struggle to make ends meet, this support



Mojahidul Islam, one of the teachers, said, "We go from house to house, bring the students by boat, and after teaching them at the floating school, they are again taken home by boat."

Parents, too, are relieved. "In this village, there was no government primary school, so the children had problems in their studies," said Jebunnesa Akhter of Kashipur.

"Now, our children no longer have to travel far. They can study near their homes," he added.

Project coordinator Md. Zahurul Islam said, "About 1,500 students have completed their primary education from our floating school. Many of them are now studying in various secondary schools, colleges and universities."

POPI's executive director Murshed Alam Sarker added, "The first two floating schools were opened in 2010 in the landslide-hit areas of Chhatirchar and Goradigha in Nikli. With growing demand, these schools were later set up in other deprived villages. The latest was opened in Kashipur in 2025. At present, eight schools are operating in Nikli, and we plan to open more in other areas of the haor."

Lauding the initiative, Chhatirchar UP Chairman, Shamsuzzaman Chowdhury said underprivileged children are getting an opportunity for education because of the floating schools.



once missed out on education can now enjoy the full rhythm of school life.

Parents and locals simply call them "floating schools."

The project began when People Oriented Program Implementation (POPI), an NGO, noticed the hardship in two unions along the Ghorautra River -- Chhatirchar and Singpur.

Most people there are farmers or fishermen living below the poverty line. For many children, education was once a distant dream. Starting in 2010, POPI set up four floating schools in each union, some single-storey, others double-storey. They also arranged boats to

ferry children from ghat to ghat, making sure the journey to school never became a barrier.

Classes run from 8:00am to 3:00pm. Each boat school has a small library, a gallery of educational photographs and space for sports.

At present, 360 students are enrolled.

Sabiha Akhter of Chhatirchar Floating School said, "Being close, we do not have any problem going to school even on rainy days."

Her classmate Amir Hossain added, "The school provides us with free books, notebooks, pens, geometry boxes, school dresses, bags, shoes and tiffin. This greatly facilitates our studies."

# Man dead, 2 missing as boat capsizes in Padma

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A man died and two others went missing after a boat capsized in the Padma river while heading for Rajshahi's Godagari upazila yesterday morning around 10:00am in the Premtoli area.

The deceased was identified as Jiten Mondol, 60. The missing are Dilip, 32, and Horen Saha, 65, said Maksudur Rahman, in-charge of Premtoli Police Investigation Centre.

The body of Kanai Karmakar, 70, was being taken for cremation on the boat with around 20-25 on board as it capsized. While most swam ashore, three went missing.

Locals later rescued Jiten and took him to Premtoli Health Complex, where doctors declared him dead. Firefighters and locals were searching for the missing others till last reported.

# No four-lane upgrade for Ctg-Kaptai Road

## RHD goes for nominal widening, drawing frustration from Cuet students, locals

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

The longstanding demand for turning the busy Chattogram-Kaptai Road into four lanes has once again been ignored, leaving students of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology and locals frustrated.

The 33-kilometre road, connecting Chattogram with Rangamati, is currently six to seven metres wide, functioning as a narrow two-lane highway without any central divider. Several hundred passenger vehicles and goods-laden trucks use it daily at great risk. The road also serves as the lone route of commute for more than 4,500 Cuet students, as well as teachers and staff.

Students staged demonstrations demanding expansion of the road after two Cuet students were killed in a bus accident there in April 2024. At the time, government officials assured them that the road would be upgraded to four lanes within a year.



"We were given assurance that the road would be upgraded to four lanes, but RHD has instead gone for nominal widening, keeping the risks unaddressed," said Adil Raihan, a student of Computer Science and Engineering at Cuet. "We will sit with RHD to press our demands," he added.

The current project, launched last December, covers only a 13.4-km stretch from Mohra in the port city to Goshchi in Raozan. Two contractors are carrying out the work.

The work is expected to be completed by December 30 this year. Once finished, the average width will be 9.5 metres -- still narrower than a three-lane road -- and without a divider.

Asked, Mohammad Moshleh Uddin Chowdhury, executive engineer of RHD in Chattogram, said, "The road was initially planned for four lanes and a project proposal was sent to the ministry, but it did not move forward. That is why we are carrying out basic widening instead."

During visits to different spots along the road such as Golaper Dokan, Nazumia Hat, Madunaghat, Brahman Hat and Nayahat, it was found that vehicles remain at constant risk of head-on collisions.

"Most accidents that occur on this road are head-on collisions. Without a divider, widening alone will not solve the problem," said Mohammed Anis, a banker from Hathazari who commutes daily on the road.

The RHD executive engineer, however, said the current project has no budget allocation for building a divider.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Office of the Executive Engineer  
Nilphamari PWD Division, Nilphamari  
Telephone No. 02589955398

Memo No. 25.36.7300.220.1966 Date: 25/09/2025

e-Tender has been published through National e-GP System Portal for the procurement of following works:

SI No.	Tender ID No.	Name of work	Last selling date and time	Closing date and time
1	1156816	Construction and expansion of administrative and barracks buildings of police stations in various place of the country (Jaldhaka-Nilphamari Police Station Building, Rural Type-2).	27-Oct-2025 17:00	28-Oct-2025 11:00

- This is an online tenders, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.
- To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal is required.
- Further information and guidelines are available on the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) and at e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

**Abul Falah Md. Masbahul Haque**  
Assistant Engineer  
PWD Division, Nilphamari

**Md. Shakiuzzaman**  
Executive Engineer  
Nilphamari PWD Division,  
Nilphamari

GD-2109

**For many families who struggle to make ends meet, this support makes the difference between a child staying at home or going to school. Eight such schools now drift quietly in the haor of Nikli in Kishoreganj, bringing learning to the doorsteps of the most remote villages.**

**সেনাবাহিনী সদর দপ্তর**

১। বাংলাদেশ সেনাবাহিনীর জন্য নিম্নবর্ণিত বিভিন্ন আইটি সরঞ্জামাদি, যন্ত্রাণ ক্রয় ও স্থাপন করা হবে:

ক্রমিক	বিবরণ
১।	Authenticator
২।	Analyzer
৩।	Endpoint Management Server (EMS)

২। সিভিল বিক্রির তারিখ: ২৯ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫ হতে ০৭ অক্টোবর ২০২৫ তারিখ পর্যন্ত (ছোট দিন ব্যতীত), দরপত্র জমা শেষ তারিখ ও সময়: ১৪ অক্টোবর ২০২৫ তারিখ ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা এবং ঘোষণার তারিখ ও সময়: ১৪ অক্টোবর ২০২৫ তারিখ ১৩:০০ ঘটিকা।

৩। উল্লিখিত সরঞ্জামাদি ক্রয়ের জন্য অগ্রাহী অফিস/অফিসসম্পন্ন এবং নির্ভরযোগ্য কোম্পানী/সিভিল বিক্রির নিকট হতে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাবে। উপরোক্ত বিক্রির তারিখসমূহে প্রতি কার্যদিবসে ০৯:০০ ঘটিকা হতে ১৩:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত সেনাসদর, জিএস শাখা (আইটি পরিদপ্তর), ঢাকা সেনানিবাসের অনুকূলে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/সে-অর্ডার/নগদ ২,০০০.০০ (দুই হাজার মাত্র) টাকার বিনিময়ে সিভিল সত্রাহ করা যাবে। যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা: সেনাসদর, জিএস শাখা (আইটি পরিদপ্তর), টেলিফোন নম্বর ৮-৭১১১১১ বর্নিত ২২২৮।

৪। দরপত্র নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে সেনাসদর, অথবা প্রাপ্তি পেইটে রক্ষিত আইটি পরিদপ্তরের টেন্ডার বক্সে দাখিল করতে হবে। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ/বাতিলা করার ক্ষমতা রাখে।

আইএসপিআর/সেনা/৬০১

পরিচালক  
আইটি পরিদপ্তর  
সেনাসদর, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস

GD-2107

**গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার**  
জনপ্রশাসন মন্ত্রণালয়  
জাতীয় পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন একাডেমি (এনএপিডি)  
৩/এ, মিলফেড, ঢাকা-১২০৫।  
[www.napd.gov.bd](http://www.napd.gov.bd)

তারিখ: ০৯ অক্টোবর ২০২৫  
২৪ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫

সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে (LTM) মাগামাল সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/টিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তির বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাঠ্যক্রমিক প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহে ২০০৬-০৬ থেকে ২০০৭-০৬ পর্যন্ত প্রকল্পের আওতাধীন ২০০৭-০৬ থেকে ২০০৮-০৬ পর্যন্ত পর্যন্ত জাতীয় পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন একাডেমি (এনএপিডি) কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত কাটাওয়ারি শর্ত সসম্মতি ক্রমে সার্বস্বত্বকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/টিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য সরবরাহকারী/টিকাদার প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিম্নলিখিত তথ্য নিম্নবর্ণিত ক্রমে আবেদনের আধান করা যাবে।

ক্রমিক	বিবরণ
১.	মালিকানা/বিস্তার
২.	সংস্থা
৩.	সংস্থাকারীর স্থায়ী নাম
৪.	সংস্থাকারীর স্থায়ী ঠিকানা
৫.	কিছিরি বিবরণ
৬.	বেসেলের নাম
৭.	আবেদনকারী ব্যক্তি পূরণ তারিখ ও সময়
৮.	আবেদনকারী ব্যক্তি শেষ তারিখ ও সময়
৯.	আবেদনকারী কর্মসূচির তারিখ ও সময়
১০.	আবেদনকারী পোকার তারিখ ও সময়
১১.	আবেদনকারীর প্রোগ্রাম
১২.	আবেদনকারীর জমার স্থান
১৩.	আবেদনকারীর সচিব
১৪.	আবেদনকারীর সচিব
১৫.	আবেদনকারীর সচিব
১৬.	আবেদনকারীর সচিব
১৭.	আবেদনকারীর সচিব
১৮.	আবেদনকারীর সচিব
১৯.	আবেদনকারীর সচিব
২০.	আবেদনকারীর সচিব

মাগামাল সরবরাহকারী তালিকাভুক্তির বিবরণ

ক্রমিক	কম্পিউটার, ইলেকট্রিক ও টেলিফোনিক সামগ্রী	সরকারি কম্পিউটার, সার্ভার কম্পিউটার, ল্যাপটপ, প্রিন্টার, ইন্টারনেট, ফোন, মোবাইল, ডিজিটাল প্রক্টর, ম্যাকারোন, হার্ডডিস্ক ড্রাইভ (HDD), সফটওয়্যার (SSD), রাম, মনিটর, পেনড্রাইভ, প্রিন্টার ট্রেনার, ডটম্যাটিক ট্রেনার, ইউপিএস ব্যাটারী, CMOS ব্যাটারী, ইউ-বেস, হার্ডস, মাইক, প্যাড, স্ক্রিন, হার্ডওয়্যার, ক্যামেরা, টেলিফোন সেট, মোবাইল সার্ভার, বিভিন্ন কাস্টমাইজড ও লাইসেন্স সহ সফটওয়্যার ইত্যাদি।	মাগামাল সরবরাহকারী তালিকাভুক্তির বিবরণ	মাগামাল সরবরাহকারী তালিকাভুক্তির বিবরণ
১.	পেশার নাম, কক্ষ নং ৪০৬, ৪র্থ ফ্লোর, জাতীয় পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন একাডেমি (এনএপিডি) অথবা সরকারি পরিচালকের কার্যালয়	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
২.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
৩.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
৪.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
৫.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
৬.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
৭.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
৮.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
৯.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১০.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১১.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১২.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১৩.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১৪.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১৫.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১৬.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১৭.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১৮.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১৯.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
২০.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল

আবেদনকারীর নাম:

ক্রমিক	নাম	পদবি	পরিচালক
১.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
২.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
৩.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
৪.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
৫.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
৬.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
৭.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
৮.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
৯.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১০.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১১.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১২.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১৩.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১৪.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১৫.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১৬.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১৭.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১৮.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
১৯.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল
২০.	আবেদনকারীর নাম	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল	১২/১০/২০২৫, অফিস ঢাকা/সিভিল

আবেদনকারীর নাম:

১. আবেদনকারীর নাম

২. আবেদনকারীর নাম

৩. আবেদনকারীর নাম

৪. আবেদনকারীর নাম

৫. আবেদনকারীর নাম

৬. আবেদনকারীর নাম

৭. আবেদনকারীর নাম

৮. আবেদনকারীর নাম

৯. আবেদনকারীর নাম

১০. আবেদনকারীর নাম

১১. আবেদনকারীর নাম

১২. আবেদনকারীর নাম

১৩. আবেদনকারীর নাম

১৪. আবেদনকারীর নাম

১৫. আবেদনকারীর নাম

১৬. আবেদনকারীর নাম

১৭. আবেদনকারীর নাম

১৮. আবেদনকারীর নাম

১৯. আবেদনকারীর নাম

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# Shanta Shwapnoneer- A Canvas of Dreams in Bashundhara

In the heart of Dhaka, where every corner carries stories of growth and aspiration, Shanta Holdings has been weaving its own tale of transformation since 2005. What began as a vision to reshape the city's skyline has, over time, turned into a legacy of trust, innovation and excellence. Over the years, the company has delivered more than 10 million square feet of space, developing 55 iconic projects that have set new benchmarks for innovative designs, trendsetting lifestyle amenities and superior build quality. With landmark projects across Dhaka's most prominent



with two parking spaces and the 14-storied building enjoys an open setting, bordered by roads on three



neighborhoods, Shanta has become a symbol of trust and continues to redefine luxury living in Bangladesh through its focus on innovation and excellence.

Shanta has now expanded its vision to serve a wider segment of customers with that same commitment. Bashundhara, one of the city's safest and organized neighborhoods has become the next canvas. At a corner plot in Block D of Bashundhara, Shanta has built 'Shwapnoneer'- its first project in the neighborhood. Within the walls of Shwapnoneer lie more than just apartments, where bonds of togetherness have flourished in a thoughtfully curated environment. True to its name, Shwapnoneer, meaning 'a home of dreams,' was never meant to be just a building, but a vibrant community where every detail reflects care and craftsmanship.

The Shwapnoneer project features a total of 48 apartments, each thoughtfully designed to maximize natural light and ventilation, ensuring a comfortable living experience. Every space within the project has been created to meet the needs of modern lifestyles, with careful planning for all age groups of a family, making it a community where life unfolds beautifully. Each apartment comes

sides including a 60-foot-wide front road. A beautifully landscaped garden adds lush greenery and tranquility, while the building's north-south orientation allows every apartment to enjoy unrestricted natural airflow. Stepping through the grand double-height entrance, residents are greeted by the sounds of a serene water feature, with walls thoughtfully adorned with artwork and sculptures, creating a calm and inviting atmosphere.

Shwapnoneer came to life with the expertise of renowned consultants in architecture, interiors, lighting and landscaping, each bringing a vision that transformed the project into a masterpiece of design. Every detail was carefully crafted by the construction team and top-quality materials sourced from across the globe added a touch of elegance, elevating the everyday living experience to something truly extraordinary. The project also features trendy lifestyle amenities, including a

fully equipped fitness centre, a beautiful swimming pool, steam rooms, outdoor leisure lounges and a well-appointed rooftop BBQ corner.

A charmingly decorated party lounge offers the perfect setting for



social gatherings, allowing residents the freedom to curate their private events to their desire. Safety and convenience are paramount, ensured by an advanced firefighting and detection system, 24-hour CCTV surveillance and uninterrupted full power backup. By day Shwapnoneer radiates serene elegance, but as night falls, its meticulously designed lighting transforms the building, revealing a truly magical ambience. A walk through Shwapnoneer leaves one with the sense of a home where every detail has been thoughtfully crafted to blend comfort with luxury. Shwapnoneer stands not just as Shanta's first project in Bashundhara, but as a timeless symbol of its promise where every home reflects care, quality and a vibrant sense of togetherness.



"Following the success of Shwapnoneer, in Bashundhara we have 10 more residential projects in the pipeline comprising over 500 apartment units, as well as a destination mall to cater to the evolving lifestyle needs of its residents and beyond. Properly planned retail developments are rarely seen in Dhaka, with this mall we intend to set a new standard in the retail segment. It's

being designed to cater to the needs of today's retailers, as well as the lifestyles of the new generation of mallgoers. We have a legacy of transforming lands into landmarks across the city and that legacy will now continue in Bashundhara."

- Saif Khondoker, Director, Shanta Holdings

# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

## President Trump's historic opportunity

### Israel's continued genocide in Gaza demands firmer response

Nobody in the world today—or since the end of the Second World War—perhaps resembles Adolf Hitler as well as Benjamin Netanyahu. The genocide carried out by Hitler against the Jews is now being replicated by Netanyahu in killing the Palestinians, with the death toll from the ongoing war nearing 66,000, many among their children. The label given to him by many—“child killer of the century”—is richly deserved. He is now systematically targeting the surviving people of Gaza through mass starvation and blockade.

Amid this heartbreaking reality, a slight ray of hope is the unprecedented coming together of the international community behind the Palestinian cause. The recent walk-out of most UN delegates when Netanyahu rose to speak marked the global disgust at Israeli actions personified by its prime minister. Colombia's President Gustavo Petro called for the formation of an international army “as an integral part of humanity, to bring together weapons and armies to defend Palestine.” Chile's President Gabriel Boric demanded that Netanyahu and his team be brought before an international court of justice for genocide. Slovenia's president called for an immediate stop of the genocide. Earlier, with recognition by the UK and France, four out of the five UN veto power countries—UK, France, Russia, and China—recognised the Palestinian state, along with 157 out of 193 UN members.

In many ways, however, this massive UN and veto-power support for Palestine remains largely symbolic, as no one has been able to stop the daily genocide. Realism dictates that without the involvement of the United States, meaningful action is unlikely. Here, the partial good news is that President Trump has declared the US will “not allow” the Israeli plan to occupy the West Bank. We urge him to use the same authoritative language to immediately halt the killing of the people of Gaza.

Amid these developments, the BBC and *The Economist* have reported on the possibility of the formation of a “Gaza International Transitional Authority” headed by former UK premier Tony Blair, with “supreme political and legal authority” for five years, after which full authority would revert to the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, West Bank. This plan, rather than restoring the rights of the Palestinian people, seeks Western concentration of power for five years, but to do what, really? Given Mr. Blair's controversial role during the Iraq invasion—where he supported the justification of war based on false claims of WMDs—and his unsuccessful tenure as the Quartet's special envoy for the Middle East between 2007 and 2015, he is hardly a person to be entrusted with the future of Gaza. Besides, the Tony Blair Institute's alleged links with the controversial “Riviera” project in Gaza, floated by President Trump, raises serious conflict-of-interest concerns.

The most urgent actions needed now are stopping the genocide immediately; forcing Israel to cease killing Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank; ending the supply of lethal and offensive weapons to Israel; and recognising the Palestinian state by truly re-enforcing Palestinian rights. Only after delivering on those can the world consider a political setup for a transitional authority. Here, President Trump has an opportunity to earn a place in history by bringing about a fair and just deal for the Palestinians. Will he do that?

## Rising HIV infections call for urgent action

### Govt must make sure preventive services are not disrupted

We are concerned about rising HIV infections and deaths in the country. While the global community has made notable progress in reducing HIV/AIDS cases over the past two decades, Bangladesh seems to be heading in the opposite direction. According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), the country recorded 1,438 HIV cases and 326 deaths in 2024, up from 1,276 cases and 266 deaths in 2023. Continuing this upward trajectory, 882 new HIV positive cases were recorded in just the first half of 2025. Despite the growing caseload, however, preventive services remain severely disrupted, raising concerns among health experts.

Globally, HIV infections have dropped by 40 percent and AIDS-related deaths by 56 percent since 2010. Bangladesh has not been able to replicate this success. Its first case was detected in 1989, and as of 2024, the total number of recorded cases stood at 12,422 with 2,412 deaths, according to the DGHS. True, there has been an increase in testing in recent years, from just over 83,000 in 2016 to more than 16 lakh over the past decade, but the government's preventive measures have yet to match the urgency demonstrated by the increasing death toll.

For instance, the expiration of a government programme in June 2024 has severely disrupted essential services such as the distribution of condoms, needles, and syringes among key populations, including people who inject drugs, female sex workers, and transgender individuals. These groups, comprising over 3.22 lakh people, accounted for half of the HIV cases reported last year. The DGHS now relies on foreign donors to continue testing and provide medication for HIV patients at dedicated centres. However, due to funding shortages, 25 districts reportedly remain outside the coverage of these services. There are fears that inadequate funding for preventive services could lead to a further rise in the positivity rate and make it more difficult for the country to meet its target of eliminating AIDS by 2030.

Therefore, instead of relying on foreign donors, the government must invest in HIV programmes to ensure the continuation of preventive care services across all districts. The fact that 23 percent of people potentially living with HIV remain unaware of their status is a stark reminder of the gaps in our HIV prevention and awareness raising efforts. This gap must be addressed. The government must formulate a national HIV/AIDS strategy with clear goals, sustainable funding, and active community engagement. Bangladesh cannot afford to fall behind while the rest of the world moves forward in HIV prevention.

## INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION

# A year of silence from the Information Commission

Dr Shamsul Bari and Ruhi Naz are chairman and deputy director (RTI), respectively, at Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB). They can be reached at rib@citech-bd.com.

SHAMSUL BARI and RUHI NAZ

This year's International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI) arrives at a grim moment for Bangladesh. The Information Commission—the very body entrusted with upholding citizens' access to public information—has been essentially inactive for over a year. One may recall that all three commissioners resigned in the aftermath of the 2024 July uprising and the assumption of power by the interim government. Since then, despite petitions, protests, and even a recent High Court rule, the vacuum has persisted. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has also failed to act on its own pledge in late July to reconstitute the commission by issuing a gazette notification “within a few days.”

Undoubtedly, the interim authorities face a daunting list of priorities. But the Right to Information Act, 2009 is not just another law. Unlike most legislation, which expands the authority of the state, this act empowers the citizens. It flips the balance of power by compelling public offices to disclose information long hidden from view. In doing so, it offers transparency where opacity has been the norm.

The act is, therefore, at the core of the very ideals that inspired the July uprising. That movement demanded transparency, justice, and citizen participation in the governance process. A functioning RTI regime could serve those aims directly, providing people with a legal mechanism to ask questions, pursue accountability, and expose malpractice. It is only fitting on this year's IDUAI then to reiterate the call to restore and strengthen the system that connects citizens to the state.

When the RTI Act was adopted 16 years ago, it was hailed as a landmark in Bangladesh's democratic journey. Rooted in the principle that power belongs to the people, it granted citizens the right to know how they are governed and to demand answers from those in office. With the Information Commission dismantled, that promise lies in ruins today: requests for information go unanswered, appeals

vanish into a void, and the law itself has been rendered hollow. This is not an accident of bureaucracy; it is deliberate neglect.

It goes without saying that the costs of such neglect are borne by ordinary people. Consider the situation of a widow in Rangpur, who has been denied her safety-net allowance for months. She has no way now of knowing whether her name was dropped from the list, whether funds were misdirected, or whether she had simply been forgotten. With a working RTI system, she could have sought an explanation. Instead, she was left adrift while middlemen whispered that a bribe might “solve the problem.” Her

fall heaviest on the poor, women, minorities, and rural communities who can least afford exclusion.

The July uprising was, at heart, a demand for a new Bangladesh: democratic, transparent, and accountable. But democracy does not live by elections alone. It requires daily accountability. RTI is the bridge that allows citizens to cross into the state's inner workings, and scrutinise decisions, budgets, and policies. With the commission paralysed, that bridge lies broken.

And yet, there was a time when it worked. Farmers once used RTI to fight land grabbing. Students invoked it to secure scholarships.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

plight is echoed across the country: the farmer blocked from his land records, the student excluded from a scholarship list, the worker whose grievance disappears into a file cabinet.

When people cannot access information, they cannot defend their rights. Services become uncertain, corruption persists, and injustice proliferates. The damage is not only individual but collective. How can citizens monitor relief funds, track health spending, or question land allocation if records are kept secret? In the absence of facts, rumour replaces knowledge, mistrust deepens, and accountability evaporates. The burdens

Communities demanded clarity in the delivery of services. The victories may have been modest, but they proved the law's potential. Today, citizens have lost even that fragile leverage. State officials often dismiss RTI as disruptive, claiming it slows down governance or that citizens lack interest. Such arguments are cynical and dangerous. People do care if they are given the means to act. What they cannot do is exercise a right that exists only on paper. Each day the commission remains inactive, corruption is protected, malpractice goes unchallenged, and democracy is weakened.

should not be robbed of opportunity by favouritism without recourse. These are not isolated misfortunes. They are evidence of a systemic failure that can, and must, be corrected.

Bangladesh cannot afford to let RTI remain crippled. If we want a transparent, democratic country, RTI must be restored to life and placed back in citizens' hands. The right to information is more than the right to know. It is the right to justice, the shield against corruption, the lifeblood of democracy. To continue to deny it would be a betrayal of the nation's aspirations of a new Bangladesh.

## Takeaways from China's dollar-alternative system



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ZAKIR KIBRIA

Imagine a world where the US dollar is no longer the undisputed king of global trade—a world where transactions between nations, whether for oil, technology, or infrastructure, are settled not in greenbacks but in currencies that bypass American financial systems. This is not a distant fantasy; it is a reality being built today, largely by China. According to *The Economist*, China is “ditching the dollar, fast,” with over 30 percent of its trade in goods and services now conducted in its own currency, the renminbi (RMB), up from less than 1 percent in 2010. Therefore, it has become imperative for countries like Bangladesh that are seeking economic resilience to understand China's construction of a dollar-alternative system, and form their plans accordingly.

China's strategy is not born of mere economic convenience but of a calculated response to geopolitical risks. The increasing weaponisation of the dollar—through sanctions and tariffs—has exposed the vulnerabilities of relying on a currency controlled by a single nation. As People's Bank of China Governor Pan Gongsheng recently argued, this reliance allows financial risks from one country to “overflow to the world,” potentially triggering international crises. China's answer is a multi-pronged campaign to create an alternative financial ecosystem that reduces its exposure to dollar-dominated systems while offering other nations a hedge against

American unilateralism. This could represent both an opportunity and a call to action.

At the heart of China's strategy is the Cross Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS), a growing network designed to facilitate RMB-denominated transactions without relying on the dollar-centric SWIFT system. Recently, six foreign banks, including Standard Bank and First Abu Dhabi Bank, agreed to integrate with the CIPS, expanding its reach into Africa and the Middle East. This system, coupled with bilateral currency swap agreements with over 32 countries, provides the plumbing for a new financial architecture. For a trading nation like Bangladesh, which relies heavily on cross-border transactions, the rise of CIPS could eventually offer cheaper and more efficient alternatives to dollar-based settlements, particularly in dealings with China and other Asian economies.

China's ambitions extend beyond traditional banking systems. The digital yuan (e-CNY) is poised to revolutionise cross-border payments. With an international operations centre recently established in Shanghai, China aims to use its central bank digital currency to enable direct, real-time settlements bypassing Western financial intermediaries. This push is not just about efficiency; it is about sovereignty. As Pan Gongsheng noted, traditional payment systems are “vulnerable to geopolitical risks” and

can be “weaponised” for unilateral sanctions. For Bangladesh, which is steadily embracing digital finance, the e-CNY could become a tool for reducing transaction costs and minimising exposure to dollar-driven financial volatility.

Trade is another critical battleground. China is aggressively pushing for RMB-denominated contracts, especially in commodities. From oil deals with Saudi Arabia to mineral agreements with Brazil, Beijing is persuading its partners to settle transactions in yuan. This shift is particularly evident within the BRICS bloc, where the RMB now facilitates 50 percent of intra-group trade, a stark increase from just 2 percent of global payments. For Bangladesh, which imports billions worth of energy, raw materials, and machinery from China, denominating even a fraction of these transactions in RMB could reduce exchange rate risks and dependency on dollar reserves.

The most compelling aspect of China's strategy is its pragmatic incrementalism. Unlike previous attempts to challenge dollar hegemony, China is not trying to replace the dollar outright. Instead, it is building a parallel system that operates alongside it, focusing on regional dominance rather than global supremacy. This approach acknowledges the dollar's entrenched role—it still accounts for 88 percent of global foreign exchange transactions—while creating alternatives for those seeking to avoid its reach. For Bangladesh, this means that the RMB is not an all-or-nothing choice but an additional tool in its monetary toolkit, one that could be deployed selectively to enhance economic resilience.

However, China's system is not without challenges. The RMB remains constrained by capital controls and a lack of full convertibility, issues Beijing seems unwilling to address in the near term. Moreover, the dollar's deep and

liquid markets, backed by the rule of law and institutional stability, make it a trusted store of value, something that the RMB cannot yet match. Therefore, any shift towards RMB-based transactions must be cautious and calibrated, ensuring that short-term gains do not expose the economy to long-term risks.

As China expands its influence through institutions like the Belt and Road Initiative and BRICS, it is creating a network of nations tied together by shared financial interests. Bangladesh, with its strategic location and growing economic prowess, is already part of this network. The question is no longer whether to engage with China's dollar-alternative system but how to do so in a way that maximises benefits while minimising the risks of the geopolitical reordering of global finance.

First, Bangladesh should investigate RMB-based trade settlements with China, particularly for major imports and exports. Pilot programmes could test the waters, leveraging mechanisms like currency swaps to reduce exchange rate costs. Second, policymakers should study the digital yuan's potential, both as a means of cross-border settlement and as a model for Bangladesh's own digital currency ambitions. Third, Bangladesh must strengthen its financial governance to ensure that any engagement with alternative systems is backed by robust regulatory frameworks. Finally, Bangladesh should diversify its reserve holdings cautiously, considering the RMB as one component of a broader basket of currencies.

The world is moving towards a multi-polar currency system, and China is leading that charge. By understanding China's dollar-alternative system, Bangladesh can make informed choices that enhance its economic sovereignty, protect its interests, and secure its place in the new global financial order.

WORLD RIVERS DAY

# Lessons from the Baral River movement



**Dr Nazrul Islam** is professor at Asian Growth Research Institute and former chief of Development Research of the United Nations. His recent books on river policies include Rivers and Sustainable Development (Oxford 2020) and Water Development in Bangladesh Past Present and Future (Eastern Academic 2022).

NAZRUL ISLAM

There is a paradox in the situation of rivers in Bangladesh. On the one hand, thousands of so-called “water development” projects have been implemented across the country. Yet, these projects have generally led to the gradual decay and demise of rivers. About one-third of rivers have simply disappeared. Many that remain are in their death throes, being severely encroached, polluted, and turned miserably shallow.

Why is this a paradox? Why have thousands of water development projects rather killed our rivers instead of making them healthier? The answer lies in the fact that, from the very beginning, the water development effort in Bangladesh headed in the wrong direction. In fact, the direction was just the opposite of what was needed.

We all know that Bangladesh’s rivers are characterised by extreme seasonality. This follows from the seasonality of rainfall, about 80 percent of which is concentrated in just four months of the year. The rivers, therefore, swell during the rainy season and overflow to the floodplains. Bangladesh’s rivers are also the most sediment-laden in the world. Much of this sediment is carried as suspended load and gets deposited on the floodplains through these overflows. The overflows, therefore, have dual positive effects. On the one hand, they revitalise the floodplains, raise their elevation, keep the flood level low, recharge the water bodies, which then serve as a storage of water for the dry season. On the other hand, the overflows reduce the sediment that gets deposited on the riverbed, and thus help the rivers to remain deep and healthy. Bangladesh, therefore, needs the “Open Approach” to rivers, under which floodplains are kept open to river overflows.

However, water development in Bangladesh, from the very beginning, was undertaken under the aegis of foreign agencies, who, not unsurprisingly, brought in foreign consultants to chart the course of water development in Bangladesh. These foreign experts were naturally guided by the experience of their own countries, where rivers hardly have seasonal fluctuations or sedimentation. To them, river overflows

appeared to be a nuisance, and they believed that the primary task of water development in Bangladesh was to confine the rivers to their designated channels. They therefore imposed on Bangladesh the “Cordon Approach”, under which floodplains are cordoned off from rivers by constructing embankments along their banks. The concomitant of embankments was the sluice gates. Thus, thousands of sluice gates were built with thousands of miles of embankments. The net result of this Cordon Approach is the demise and decay of the Bangladesh’s rivers. In addition, it created a new problem—waterlogging, which resulted inevitably from the obstruction of river flows by embankments and sluice gates.

A good example of the wrong-headed character of Bangladesh’s water development efforts is provided by the experience with the Baral River of North Bengal. It is a unique river, flowing mostly west to east and connecting two of the most important rivers of Bangladesh, namely the Ganges and the Jamuna Rivers. It takes off from the Ganges River at Charghat of Rajshahi district, flows through the Chalan Beel area and meets the Jamuna River near Baghabari after merging with the Hurasagar River. Baral serves as Chalan Beel’s backbone, into which most of North Bengal’s north-south flowing rivers used to converge.

However, in the 1980s, to prevent Baral from overflowing, the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) constructed a sluice gate at Charghat to reduce the flow from the Ganges into the Baral River. This three-vent sluice gate was only about twelve feet wide, when the natural width of the river at its mouth, according to the cadastral survey, was about 500 feet. It was therefore totally inadequate for the Ganges flow to enter the Baral River. Furthermore, being obstructed, sediment got deposited in front of the sluice gate, eventually blocking it completely. The Charghat sluice gate thereby triggered the process of the demise and decay of the Baral River. The process was aggravated further in the 1990s when BWDB constructed several more sluice gates on Baral. Two of these were at Atghoria, one being just a one-vent sluice

gate meant for the entire Baral River to flow through it! By that time, being disconnected from the Ganges, Baral had little, if any, flow left, making it an easy prey for encroachment and pollution. Thus, the river disappeared completely in the 18-kilometre stretch from Atghoria to Bonpara. In the rest of it, a good number of cross-dams were constructed, converting the river into a series of ponds, which were then leased out for fishing to

actual process of substitution of the cross-dams by bridges began much later. However, BWDB was unwilling to remove the sluice gates. Unable to oppose the task force’s decision openly, it urged a study to assess the possible impact of removing the sluice gates. It then engaged a consulting firm of its choice to conduct the study. Not surprisingly, this firm ended up supporting BWDB’s position and recommended constructing another

task force’s original decision about removing the sluice gates cannot be delayed. Under the circumstances, BWDB was forced to remove the plates of the sluice gates.

This simple step has now resulted in a miracle. Water has been gushing from the Ganges into the Baral, and thousands of people from far and wide are flocking each day to Charghat to witness this miracle. The Baral experience thus vindicates that the



Being disconnected from the Ganges, Baral had little, if any, flow left. But after the plates of the sluice gates were removed recently, water has been gushing into the river. FILE PHOTO: STAR

interested quarters. Thus, the Baral River was destroyed. No wonder people started calling Baral the “Mora (dead) Baral”.

The common people, however, could not accept this sad outcome. Soon, they started “Baral Raksha Andolan” for the restoration of the river. Supported by Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA) and Bangladesh Environment Network (BEN), this movement gradually gained strength, culminating in a 220-km human chain held in 2013 along the entire riverbank from Charghat to Baghabari. The authorities could not ignore the demand. The government’s river task force decided to free up Baral by removing the sluice gates and the cross-dams. The

three-vent sluice gate at Charghat beside the existing one!

BWDB’s position and actions contravened not only the spirit of the task force decision but also the directive issued by the High Court in 2019 to free up Baral. Needless to say, all those who have been struggling to free up Baral for several decades were enraged by BWDB’s machinations and resumed their movement.

Fortunately, the adviser for the Ministry of Water Resources of the interim government sided with the demand for freeing up Baral. Upon visiting the area and holding discussions with the stakeholders, she was convinced that the implementation of the

“Open Approach” is the right approach to rivers in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, there are fears that BWDB probably has not given up yet and is waiting for an opportune moment to replace the plates! However, the miracle of seeing Baral rejuvenating after the removal of plates has now generated so much conviction and enthusiasm that any attempt by BWDB to replace the plates and delay the replacement of the sluice gates by full-length bridges will be met by vigorous resistance from the people.

So, this year’s World Rivers Day’s message for Bangladesh should be “Learn from Baral! Remove sluice gates from Bangladesh’s rivers!” This is the only way rivers of Bangladesh can be protected.

# Remembering Salahuddin Ahmed, a mentor and friend



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ABDULLAH SHIBLI

Bangladesh’s former Attorney General, Salahuddin Ahmed, my teacher, colleague, and mentor, passed away in Dhaka in the early hours of September 21. While I have lived abroad for the last 48 years, Sal B, as we fondly called him, and I have been in touch through thick and thin, and the credit goes to him. His evergreen personality and likeability, which shone through his strong sense of discipline and forthrightness, were a big draw for my wife Rumi and me.

In my book—*A Fairy Tale: Autobiographical Stories*—written three years ago, I mentioned him as “one of my teachers, whom I have now known for almost half a century, and now proudly call my friend, is Salahuddin Ahmed”. Those who knew him only as a lawyer probably missed the charming versatility of this brilliant man.

Sal B became our teacher at the economics

department of Dhaka University (DU) after the independence. He taught us microeconomics (paper I) in honours in 1972-73. After I joined the same department as a lecturer, he and I bonded socially and intellectually. I went to his wedding in May 1977 as part of a bridal procession from Dhaka to Chattogram, and he was in my wedding a few months later.

I have many stories to share, but I will recount only two here.

Once during his lecture, I sneaked out of the classroom through the rear exit. I was my father’s chauffeur, and I would take him to the Supreme Court every morning after my class was over. One morning, the class went past the hour, and I left without permission. Sal B noticed but said nothing to me, but later told the classroom, “Please ask him to see me in my office”. I went to him after dropping off my father at his workplace and explained, he

was sympathetic and did not hold it against me. He even helped me during my BA exams in December 1973. He was a proctor for paper I, and while passing by my desk, he asked me how many questions I had already answered. When I informed him that I was still working on my first one and almost two hours had already passed, he advised me to keep an eye on my watch and finish all five questions on time!

After we became colleagues, he also became my friend, and I would frequently visit his house on Larmini Street, where he’d entertain us by playing the sitar, which he learned as a student of Ustad Abid Hussain Khan. Of course, we’d occasionally have sumptuous meals thanks to the hospitality of his gregarious family, including his two younger brothers (Sayed and Shahid) and four younger sisters (Nasreen, Saeda, Zakia and Shahin). We did not see much of his elder sister, Niloo, who was married to Kafiluddin Mahmud. Sal B was my companion when I went to the party in Mohammadpur, where I met Rumi, my would-be wife, for the first time. He was a source of guidance during my year-long romantic relationship and helped finance my wedding and subsequent trip to the US for higher studies.

Over the years, I followed his career in Bangladesh, as an attorney, in the

government, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and academia. He served first as additional attorney general, and then as the attorney general during the caretaker government of 2007-2009. Then he became the managing director of Karnaphuli Fertilizer Company Limited (Kafco). After that, he became the head of the Department of Law and director of the Law School at the University of Asia Pacific.

He had a career that only a few can imagine. However, his humility was his shining armour. When asked by the media, Sal B, while serving as attorney general, said: “At the moment, this is a job with great responsibility. Due to the present political situation, it would be more difficult than before to discharge the responsibility. Time will say whether I will be able to perform the duties.”

During a casual conversation, I once asked him about the experience in the caretaker government, and pressed him to share some tidbits. He confided, “Once we were before a High Court bench, and the attorney general’s office was tasked to engage the court until we had all the ducks in a row lined up. So, as the additional attorney general, I had to stand there and address the court for a non-stop twenty-four hours!” I congratulated him on his successful filibuster tactic.

He was the eldest son of Sultanuddin

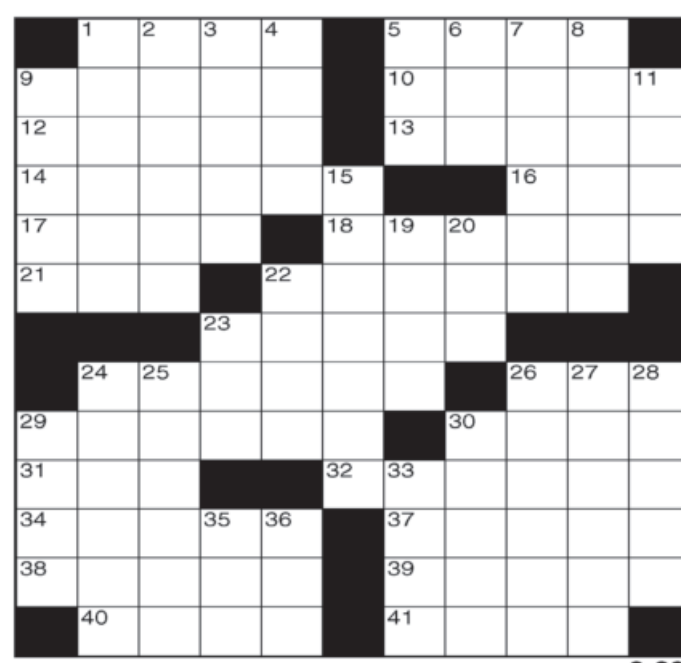
Ahmed, former governor of East Pakistan. He had his higher education in the UK, a BA from the London School of Economics and Political Science and an MA from the University of London, and passed the last civil service examination of Pakistan in 1970 with distinction. However, after independence, he chose to teach at DU. And then, regardless of his enormous popularity at DU, he went ahead to join the UNDP, Dhaka. After a two-year stint there, he became a lawyer at Kamal Hossain & Associates in 1980 and earned an LL.M from Columbia University. When he resigned as attorney general after the Awami League assumed power in 2009, Sal B was appointed as the chief executive officer (MD) of KAFCO, where he was on the board of directors. He finally came back to academia in 2017, and appeared to be very glad when Jamilur Reza Choudhury invited him to join UAP.

He was buried in Azimpur Graveyard in his father’s final resting place. He is survived by his widow, Selina, two sons and a daughter, and their spouses and children.

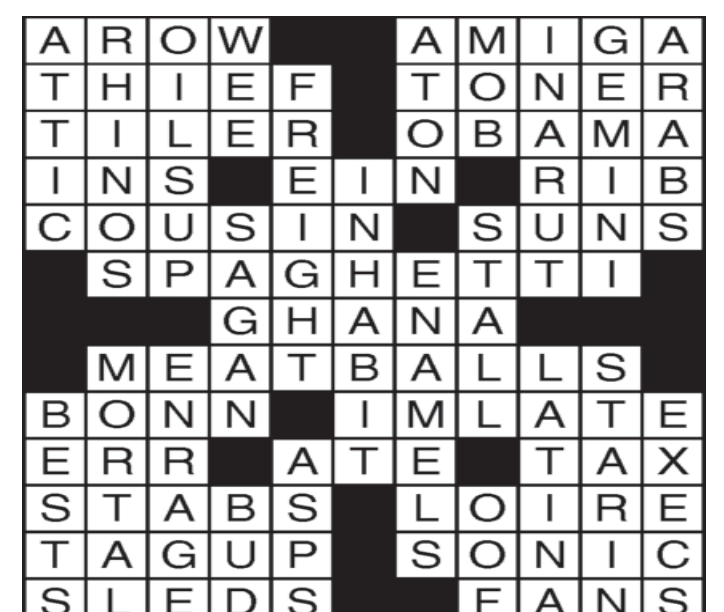
As Dr Shahdin Malik said in a tribute in *Prothom Alo*, “To my knowledge, Salahuddin Ahmed is the only person with degrees in two different disciplines (economy and law) from the world’s top two academic institutions”. I might add that he was a brilliant individual with diverse interests, and he was my hero.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**  
1 Parcel (out)  
5 TV viewing spot  
9 Last  
10 Wise saying  
12 Spoken exams  
13 Musing of “Will & Grace”  
14 They may run underground  
16 Give permission to  
17 Hideous  
18 Plains homes  
21 Call on  
22 Loving touch  
23 Hooded snake  
24 Bar perches  
26 Slump
- 29 Paper fastener  
30 Surrounding glow  
31 Ball  
32 Dark-furred martens  
34 Buffalo team  
37 Piglet’s creator  
38 Command to Fido  
39 Notions  
40 Catch sight of  
41 Bears’ lairs
- DOWN**  
1 Desert sight  
2 Make possible  
3 Add the score  
4 Different  
5 Feeling down  
6 Exalted poem  
7 Aesop’s stories
- 8 Concurs  
9 Concentrate  
11 Has dinner  
15 Horse homes  
19 Makes mistakes  
20 Stew sphere  
22 Chilled  
23 Member of the force  
24 Rank indicator  
25 Café fixtures  
26 Morose  
27 Sports sites  
28 Neon and helium  
29 Laments loudly  
30 Tolerate  
33 Surrounded by  
35 Track circuit  
36 Cloud setting



YESTERDAY’S ANSWERS



## Popy steps back into cinema as a producer

Sadika Parvin Popy, one of Dhallywood's most acclaimed actresses, is returning to cinema, this time as a producer and not an actress.

After disappearing from the industry following her 2020 film *Direct Action*, Popy cited personal reasons for her long absence. In an interview with Prothom Alo, she revealed that filmmaking has always been her true passion and that production offers her deeper fulfillment than acting.

Popy is no newcomer to production – she previously produced films such as *Kidnap*



and *Jibon Manei Juddho*, even facing a Tk 2 million loss on a *Monovar Khokon* project due to lack of team support. Undeterred, she plans to complete her unfinished acting projects but confirmed her career focus is now solely on producing compelling Bangladeshi stories.

## THIS MOMENT LIVES IN ME: Leesa Gazi's Oscar-bound feature

MAISHA TASNIM SRESHTHA

In Bangladesh, the hardest thing for many women to own is not a dream; it's placing her name on a deed. *Barir Naam Shahana* begins there, with the stubborn courage it takes to write a woman's name into a house, a life, a future. That stubbornness has carried writer-director Leesa Gazi from a 2011 novella to an Oscar journey she still calls "unexpected."

"I'm having goosebumps right now – every part of me is alive with this moment," Gazi said, her voice catching as she searched for words after learning that her debut feature had been chosen as Bangladesh's official submission for Best International Feature Film at the 98th Academy Awards.

"This is a film where ordinary people become extraordinary. I got the news last night and I'm still processing it. After watching it, audiences – especially women – will see themselves on screen; they'll recognise their own lives in this story."

The director of *Barir Naam Shahana* (A House Named Shahana) was speaking to The Daily Star hours after Bangladesh



named her film the country's official submission for the Oscars. Earlier in the morning, at a press conference at Pan Pacific Sonargaon in Dhaka, the Bangladesh Oscar Committee announced its decision after weeks of deliberation over five shortlisted films. "For the last month we have been on this so that we can make the right decision," said jury chair Dr Mohammad Zahirul Islam.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

For Gazi, the film is inseparable from her own history. "I am a woman of the 1990s who had to fight for her place," she said. "Our lead actress, Aanon Siddiqui, shares that experience too. To make space for ourselves, we had to push through a thicket of obstacles." Even the title, she explained, holds deliberate meaning. "*Barir Naam Shahana* speaks to a woman's journey to own property, to claim a home and a name in a world that frequently denies both.

Adapted from Gazi's 2011 novella, critics have praised the work for its layered storytelling and its unflinching look at forced marriage and gender inequality, but for Leesa Gazi the response has felt intimate rather than abstract. "All of these struggles are part of who I am," she said. "That the film now goes to the Oscars feels wholly and genuinely deserved."

She paused, then added softly, "This isn't only my story. It belongs to the women who fought before us and the girls who will carry the fight forward. If *Barir Naam Shahana* helps even one of them feel seen, then every struggle was worth it."

## SHAKIB KHAN receives Silver Jubilee Award at The Daily Star

Megastar Shakib Khan has completed 25 remarkable years on the silver screen, a milestone that cements his unparalleled impact on the Bangladeshi film industry. To celebrate this achievement, The Blender's Choice–The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards honoured him with the Silver Jubilee of Excellence in Bangla Cinema



Award for his outstanding contribution to Bangla cinema, also marking his silver jubilee in films.

Although he could not attend the award ceremony on September 7 due to being abroad, Shakib Khan, yesterday, visited The Daily Star Centre to receive the honour in person. The *Toofan* actor, radiating his signature charisma, accepted the award from Mahfuz Anam, Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star.

"It is truly an honour to receive such recognition from The Daily Star. I am humbled by the endless love and support of my fans over the years. This award belongs to them. It doesn't feel like 25 years have passed; I still feel like the boy who stepped into films, planning to stay for just three months," Shakib said.

Following the ceremony, the actor toured the newsroom, greeted colleagues warmly, and left an aura of celebration behind as the evening gently descended.

## NEWS

### Yunus calls on int'l community

FROM PAGE 14  
former presidents of Bulgaria; Ivo Josipović, former president of Croatia; Mladen Ivanić, former President of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, former president of Mauritius.

Also in attendance were a former secretary general of the Commonwealth, a former deputy PM of Georgia, four former presidents of the UN General Assembly, several former foreign ministers, Ismail Serageldin, former vice president of the World Bank, and Kerry Kennedy, president of Robert F Kennedy Human Rights.

Yunus expressed deep gratitude for the overwhelming support.

"To see you come together like this in support of us – it's unbelievable. I am truly touched."

He likened the challenges facing his administration to surviving a major natural disaster.

"This country has been through a 15-year long earthquake. Its magnitude

was 9 on the Richter scale," he said.

He also pointed to the challenge of managing public expectations.

"People expect miracles overnight despite our limited resources. But we must also fulfil the dreams of our youth – they are looking for a new Bangladesh," he said.

The leaders acknowledged Bangladesh's recent progress under Yunus's leadership while also noting the serious challenges the country faces after 16 years of misrule, corruption and exploitation, said the press release.

Meanwhile, Tshering Tobgay, the prime minister of Bhutan, has expressed a strong interest in signing a free trade agreement (FTA) with Bangladesh and linking the two countries' economic zones to boost trade and investment.

Tobgay made the proposal during a meeting with Yunus at the United Nations headquarters in New York on the sidelines of the 80th UN General Assembly on Friday.

Both countries could greatly benefit

if Bhutan's special economic zone (SEZ) and Gelephu Mindfulness City are connected with the SEZ in Kurigram that Bangladesh has officially allocated for Bhutanese investors, Tobgay said.

Yunus welcomed the proposals, stressing that both countries should explore all avenues to expand trade and investment.

Bhutan is eager to share its hydroelectric potential and is ready to welcome investment from Bangladesh's pharmaceutical companies, Tobgay said. He also sought Bangladesh's support to set up fibre optic connectivity in Bhutan.

Tobgay confirmed that Bhutan would join the upcoming UN-organised plenary session on the Rohingya issue in New York on September 30.

Yunus invited Tobgay to visit Bangladesh. Tobgay accepted, suggesting he might undertake the visit before Bangladesh's planned general elections in February next year.

### Tarique warns of 'covert autocracy'

FROM PAGE 14  
country also requires collective effort.

"But to destroy a house, it doesn't take many. This country is yours, mine and all of ours. It must be rebuilt. And as political workers, our first duty is to go to the people, because they are the true strength behind nation-building."

Tarique instructed the BNP leaders and activists to form small groups of two or three and go door to door, reaching people directly.

"We must tell them how the BNP will rebuild the country if supported by the people – how we will reform the education system for their children,

improve communications, empower women, stand beside farmers and build better education and healthcare systems."

Tarique emphasised that the BNP's message must reach every section of society – young and old, men and women, in every household.

Speaking at the programme, BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed said the people of Bangladesh are ready for the election though some parties are trying to derail it on various pretexts.

A vested quarter is carrying out negative campaigns against the BNP by spreading disinformation and

misinformation on social media to malign the party, he said.

Subsequently, he urged the BNP leaders and activists and its associate bodies across the country to be active on social media and counter the propaganda against the party.

He went on to criticise those talking about a single ballot box for Islam and urged all to remain alert about attempts to divide the people by playing the religion card.

He also called upon the BNP leaders and activists to remain cautious so that no one can obstruct the restoration of democracy by hatching different plots.

### Section 144 amid blockade over rape

FROM PAGE 14  
deterioration in law and order in Khagrachhari municipality and Sadar upazila.

However, despite Section 144 being in effect, violence erupted near the Youngdo Buddhist Temple in town around 7:00pm. Two individuals were rescued and taken to Khagrachhari Sadar Hospital; one was later transferred to a private facility for advanced care.

Khagrachhari Civil Surgeon Md Saber reported that 23 injured people sought treatment throughout the day. Of them, 21 were discharged after receiving primary care, while two were admitted.

Meanwhile, around 2,000 tourists were escorted from Sajek to Khagrachhari by security forces protection last night.

In a statement, Border Guard Bangladesh said, "Seven platoons of BGB have been deployed to maintain law and order in Khagrachhari."

During yesterday's blockade, which started at 5:00am under the banner of "Jumma Chhatra-Janata", traffic on the Chattogram-Khagrachhari, Khagrachhari-Rangamati and Khagrachhari-Sajek roads became suspended.

Tyres were set on fire, and tree trunks were placed on the roads at different parts of the district. Protesters alleged that during the blockade, they were attacked near the Sadar upazila office premises, leaving protesters injured.

Jumma Chhatra-Janata spokesperson Ukenyu Marma said, "From the

beginning, we have been observing the blockade peacefully. We urge everyone to end the blockade in a peaceful manner."

"However, some miscreants have tried in different ways to undermine the legitimacy of our student- and public-led blockade," he added.

Khagrachhari Superintendent of Police Arefin Jewel said police were trying to restore order in the area.

The rape incident reportedly occurred on September 23 when the class-eight girl was returning from private tuition around 9:00pm.

The victim's father filed a case on September 24 with Khagrachhari Sadar Police against three unidentified men.

So far, police have arrested one suspect, who was placed on a six-day remand.

### Feminism in Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 14  
a series and that work on the second part had already begun.

The book documents the struggles, experiences, and achievements of 12 women – Hameeda Hossain, Fauzia Moslem, Nazmunnessa Mahtab, Selina Hossain, Khushi Kabir, Sultana Begum, Sultana Kamal, Aroma Dutta, Shaheen Anam, Nirupa Dewan, Shameem Akhter, and Meghna Guhathakurta – all considered feminist pioneers of the country.

Speaking at the event, veteran rights activist Hameeda Hossain expressed her gratitude to the organisers. "I am very grateful to be here."

Prominent human rights defender Sultana Kamal reflected on the contradictions in society. "In the current culture, we can lift someone up today and trample them down tomorrow without hesitation. [The line between] Truths and lies, black and white, good and bad are all blurred.

"Whether we speak of activism or of work, historical consciousness is necessary. Where we came from, where

we want to go, what we want to do – these are questions we must constantly reflect on."

She added, "Ideals must be built, shaped, understood, internalised, and carried forward."

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Fauzia Moslem described her lifelong struggle as "the fight to become human."

"I want those around me to become human as well. This is the fight we have carried on."

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, said the term feminist is often ridiculed. "But I believe that a person who has humanity, who believes in equality, and who is respectful to everyone – that person is a feminist."

Calling the Liberation War the defining event of her life, she said, "We wanted to build a country where there would be no discrimination..."

"Sadly, even after so many years, we haven't been able to achieve that. But we're still hopeful. The women of this country have achieved a lot and they stand strong.

I place my trust in the next generation to carry this movement forward."

Khushi Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori, said, "If this work had been done earlier, the stories of those who inspired us would also have been included."

Meanwhile, former lawmaker Aroma Dutta said, "I became a feminist from my mother. I am proud that I was part of the Liberation War. That was the first step of my becoming a feminist."

In her speech, filmmaker Shameem Akhter observed that cinema remains "male dominated" but expressed hope that more women would come forward.

Khodeja Sultana Lopa, country director of Diakonia, said recording these stories was essential for the next generation.

Publisher Hasan Tareq, editor-in-chief of Dyu Publications, said the book was being released "at the right time, with the right title."

The event also featured poetry recitation, music, and a short film screening, while guests were presented with scarves, saplings, and a copy of the book.

### Make 'political investment' for Rohingyas

FROM PAGE 14

Addressing a panel discussion on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York yesterday, he said many Rohingyas were brought to their villages from the internal displacement camps and that new mosques were built for them.

Speakers, including the US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau, officials from Kosovo, Liberia, Panama, and Hungary, took part in the event titled "Global Refugee Asylum System: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It".

"I'll give you some good news. The place where they [Rohingyas] came from is called Rakhine State of Myanmar, and 85% to 90% of the territory has been taken over by the Arakan Army (AA)," said Khalilur, also chief adviser's high representative on the Rohingya crisis and matters of priority.

Stating that he is in frequent touch with the AA, he said last week the AA sent him pictures where their army head was talking to Rohingyas who had been brought in from the internal displacement camps back to their villages.

"The village headman is being chosen from among them. They build some new mosques; they opened a grand mosque in one of the major

towns. So, things are getting better. This is the time when you actually make the political move," Khalilur said.

"So, I would urge everybody to make sure that in the next few months we come together and pledge – to ourselves and to the refugees – that we will make this political investment."

About 7.5 lakh Rohingyas fled a military crackdown in Rakhine, joining the others who had fled in the previous years. Every year some 30,000 children are born in Bangladesh Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, with the total number of them being more than 1.2 million.

Rohingyas want to return to Myanmar but say they had no guarantee of citizenship, safety and fundamental rights as their citizenship was denied by a law in 1982.

Meanwhile, Myanmar has been in crisis since a military coup in 2021, and the AA has taken control of about 90 percent of Rakhine.

Bangladesh experienced a fresh exodus of Rohingyas from Myanmar in recent months amid escalating conflicts and reports of atrocities against the Rohingyas by the Arakan Army.

Khalilur said the world has spent more than \$5 billion on the Rohingyas, with the US being the largest donor

and Bangladesh spent probably way more, and in many more ways beyond just money.

"But how much did we all spend on the Rohingyas before they came to Bangladesh? Nothing. Their lands are bountiful, their waters are plentiful. We used to buy food from them. They don't need us – we need them," he said.

However, he added, "As long as they are here, they have to be fed, they have to be taken care of. But I see far fewer attempts to resolve the issue. It's ridiculous that we keep spending our taxpayers' money, but we are not mobilising enough political resources to resolve this issue."

Referring to the September 30 high level conference to be organised by the UN in New York, Khalilur said Rohingyas from different parts of the world have expressed their desire to go home.

"We are talking about refugees who have been given asylum in Western countries, the United States included. These people want to go home. Please help them go home.

"I don't want any money to be spent on the Rohingyas in three to four years from now. Rather, spend a little money – a fraction of it – in Myanmar so that they can restart their lives and get their future back," he said.

## NEWS

Parties certain  
election to be  
held in Feb

Says Fakhru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday said political parties have no doubt anymore that the next national election will be held in February 2026.

"The Chief Adviser's speech at the United Nations on the election was quite strong, and from what he has said in recent days about it, we, the political parties, have no doubt anymore, and we are convinced that the election will be held in February 2026," he said.

Fakhru made the remarks while talking to reporters at a hotel in New York on Friday afternoon.

Earlier in the day, he was seen standing beside Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus while he delivered his speech at the 80th United Nations General Assembly.

Replying to a question about Jamaat-e-Islami's campaign for proportional representation (PR), he said BNP's stance is clear. "We are not in favour of PR in the lower house, and we have also not spoken about PR in the upper house. These are issues we can discuss and resolve later."

Jamalpur journo's  
body recovered  
from home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Police recovered the body of a journalist in Islampur upazila of Jamalpur early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Osman Haruni, 43, who worked as Islampur correspondent of Mohona TV and the daily Amar Desh. His body was found at his residence in Polbandhar village of the upazila around 2:00pm.

Quoting family members, Islampur Police Station Officer-in-Charge ASM Atiqur Rahman said Osman went to his room after having breakfast. Around 2:00pm, his lifeless body was found hanging in the room.

On information, police recovered the body around 3:30pm.

The OC said Osman might have taken his own life due to financial hardship and prolonged illness. The victim's body has been handed over to his family, the OC added.

## Shahidul Alam It's very difficult

FROM PAGE 3

United States are killing people in Palestine and Gaza. But people all over the world are protesting against it. I am going to join the Media Flotilla tomorrow in connection with this protest."

Shahidul said, "I am the first to go from Bangladesh, but I believe I am taking the love of all the people of Bangladesh with me. In this struggle, it is not enough for only us to be involved... If we are defeated, then humanity will be defeated."

He said it was not possible to confirm right away who are part of the media flotilla.

The flotilla, which set out on August 30 with around 500 activists from 44 countries, is carrying relief supplies for besieged Gaza. It has already come under attack twice by Israeli forces and is now in a high-risk zone.

The Media Flotilla, a large boat accompanied by 10 smaller vessels, will join the main fleet. The Freedom Flotilla Coalition is a global civil society initiative challenging the blockade of Gaza, imposed by Israel since 2007.

Calling the upcoming election "historic," he said, "No matter what has happened in the past, we must prove that we can do this. There is no room for exception, and with your cooperation, I am confident that we will succeed."

Meanwhile, the EC will begin its dialogues today ahead of the national polls, starting with civil society, academicians, and intellectuals, according to EC Assistant Public Relations Director Md Ashadul Haque.

He said the stakeholders' dialogue with the EC will be broadcast live on the EC's official Facebook page and YouTube channel (@BangladeshECS).

"This election is going to be held under a unique situation. Therefore, we must face it specially. Special arrangements must be made to move forward," the CEC also said.

## Unite to build a just

Noting that Bangladesh is a country of communal harmony, he said, "This country belongs to all of us. This country is a safe abode for all people irrespective of caste and religion."

"Regardless of race, religion, and caste, we are all identified as Bangladeshis. I hope that this year's Durga Puja will be celebrated smoothly across the country, upholding this trend of communal harmony," he added.

"In addition to practising our own religions, we must create an environment of peace in society by maintaining mutual respect, honour and compassion among people," said Prof Yunus.

Meanwhile, last-minute preparations were afoot yesterday for the annual



Farmers tend to their Aman paddy, keeping a close watch for pests and weed overgrowth. It will take another two months for the paddy to ripen before harvest. The photo was taken recently in the Sormongla area of Godagari upazila, Rajshahi.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Ashuganj fertiliser plant  
struggling for survival

MASUK HRIDOY, Brahmanbaria

Once a major producer of fertiliser, Ashuganj Fertiliser and Chemical Company Limited is now struggling to survive amid a web of complications.

In the 2023-24 fiscal year, the plant managed to operate for only 41 out of 365 days due to an acute shortage of gas, producing just 48,453 tonnes of urea against the annual target of 100,000 tonnes.

"Since March this year, the factory has remained completely shut," said an employee requesting anonymity.

The prolonged shutdown has left modern machinery worth hundreds of crores of taka at risk of permanent damage, while hundreds of workers and employees face deep uncertainty over their jobs and salaries.

Established in 1983 on 536 acres on the eastern bank of the Meghna in Brahmanbaria, AFCCCL was once a flagship unit of Bangladesh Chemical

Industries Corporation.

With a daily capacity of 1,100 tonnes of prilled urea valued at Tk 4.5 crore, the factory played a vital role in supplying fertiliser to farmers across seven districts through more than 750 dealers. Over the past



decade, however, production has plunged, particularly after gas rationing began in 2017 to prioritise power plants.

Data shows the plant repeatedly missed production targets in recent years. In 2020-21, it produced 142,557

tonnes against a target of 240,000 tonnes; in 2021-22, 96,046 tonnes against 180,000 tonnes; in 2022-23, 157,420 tonnes against 300,000 tonnes. By 2023-24, output had dropped to less than half the target.

Each month of shutdown means urea worth Tk 135 crore remains unproduced, forcing the government to turn to imports at the expense of foreign currency reserves.

"Building a new fertiliser plant today would require Tk 20,000 crore. If we refurbish and restart the existing ones, they can still serve the economy and reduce dependence on imports," said Abu Kawsar, general secretary of the workers' union.

Contacted, Tajul Islam Bhuiyan, deputy general manager of the factory, said, "To keep the factory running smoothly, we need around 48 million cubic feet of gas daily at a pressure of 600 PSI." "A committee has already been formed to ensure gas connections to all fertiliser factories. The finance ministry has asked us about the issue, and we have informed them that if gas is supplied within 15 to 20 days, we will be able to resume production," he said.

Mohammad Didarul Alam, deputy commissioner of Brahmanbaria, said they are in constant touch with the ministry concerned. "The factory is incurring huge financial losses. Once gas supply normalises, production can resume quickly."

## KUSHTIA HIGHWAY

Key road riddled  
with potholes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

The Kushtia-Jhenaidah national highway, a vital link between the country's northern and southern regions, has been plagued by potholes, slowing traffic and causing frequent accidents.

Out of the 25 kilometres of the highway within Kushtia, around 10 kilometres are severely damaged, with some sections almost unfit for use.

A visit from Mojampur Gate in Kushtia town to Islamic University revealed potholes and uneven mounds along the road from Vadaliya to the university. The most damaged part is between Laxmipur Bazar and Islamic University.

Md Rashid, a driver of Gorai Paribahan bus, said the road deteriorated the most over the past year. A one-hour journey now takes two hours,



while vehicles are being badly damaged because of the broken road, he said.

Mahmud Al Hafiz, a regular commuter, echoed him.

Prof Dr Md Nozibul Haque of Islamic University said the crucial highway connecting the north and south cannot remain in such neglect. The authorities must take immediate steps to repair it properly.

Contacted, Kushtia Roads and Highways Department Executive Engineer Muhammad Monzurul Karim said, "We are using leftover bricks from repairing other roads to fix the potholes. The highway was last rebuilt 7-8 years ago. A new project proposal has been sent to the ministry, but there has been no significant progress yet."

Idols vandalised  
at Manikg temple

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Miscreants vandalised two idols of the Hindu goddess at a Kali temple in Shibalay upazila of Manikganj yesterday.

Locals discovered the broken heads and hands of the idols at the temple in Bhavanipur-Biswashpara village in the morning and informed the temple management committee, said Ranjan Biswas, president of the committee.

Ranjan said the temple, located in a secluded area, was unprotected, and the miscreants likely took advantage of this to carry out the attack.

Mosammam Yasmin Khatun, superintendent of Manikganj police, said efforts are underway to identify those responsible for the vandalism.

## Form

FROM PAGE 3

"Training for information officers and other RTI-related activities is moving at a sluggish pace. As a result, the free flow of information in state institutions is not ensured, while secrecy and reluctance to proactively disclose information continue across government offices," he said.

"Although the RTI Act was passed and the Information Commission established as a statutory independent body, the law was never effectively implemented due to a lack of political will and the authoritarian government's visible reluctance," he said.

"On one hand, there was no coordinated initiative between government and non-government actors; on the other, some commissioners appointed over the years acted as carriers of partisan ideology."

"Consequently, the commission failed to play an effective role. As a result, the Act has not set any notable precedent for promoting transparency and accountability in public service institutions or beyond," he also said.

TIB proposed a number of reforms in this regard, which include bringing political parties and privately owned institutions under the RTI Act; requiring parties to disclose detailed accounts of their income and expenditures, with the Election Commission publishing this information proactively and on time; and abolishing surveillance mechanisms imposed on citizens through the misuse of repressive laws, among others.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH				
BANGLADESH TELEVISION				
CHATTOGRAM CENTER				
CHATTOGRAM				
www.btv.gov.bd				
Invitation for National Tender				
01. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Information and Broadcasting			
02. Agency	Bangladesh Television			
03. Procuring Entity Name	General Manager, Bangladesh Television, Chattogram Center, 669/A, Zakir Hossain Road, Khulshi, Chattogram.			
04. Procuring Entity District	Chattogram			
05. Invitation for	"Supply of Camera, Tripod & other Related Accessories for BTVC Chattogram Center on Turnkey Basis"			
06. Invitation ref no.	15.54.1543.027.07.001.25.08			
07. Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM) (NCT)			
FUNDING INFORMATION				
08. Budget and Source of Funds	GOB, Annual revenue budget of BTVC Chattogram			
09. Tender Package No.	Single			
10. Tender Publication Date	28/09/2025			
11. Tender Last selling Date	15/10/2025 (During office hours)			
12. Tender Closing Date and Time	16/10/2025 12:00 hrs BST			
13. Tender Opening Date and Time	16/10/2025 12:10 hrs BST			
14. Name & Address of the Selling of Tender Document	Office of the Assistant Director (Finance) Room No-101, Bangladesh Television, Chattogram Center, 669/A, Zakir Hossain Road, Khulshi, Chattogram. (During office hours)			
15. Receiving Tender Document & Opening Tender Document	Conference Room (3rd floor), Bangladesh Television, Chattogram Center, 669/A, Zakir Hossain Road, Khulshi, Chattogram.			
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
16. Eligibility of Tenderer	As per TDS			
17. Brief Description of Goods & Related service	"Supply of Camera, Tripod & other Related Accessories for BTVC Chattogram Center on Turnkey Basis"			
18. Price of Tender Document (Tk.)	Tk. 1000.00 (One thousand) Only			
19. Lot No	Identification of Lot	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk) in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft	Completion Time in Days/Weeks/Months
01	"Supply of Camera, Tripod & other Related Accessories for BTVC Chattogram Center on Turnkey Basis"	Bangladesh Television, Chattogram Center.	40,000/- (Forty Thousand) Taka Only in favor of Drawing & Disbursing Officer, Bangladesh Television, Chattogram.	60 days
PURCHASER DETAILS				
20. Name of official inviting Tender	Ashish Kumar Shil			
21. Designation of official Inviting Tender	Senior Cameraman			
22. Address of official Inviting Tender	Bangladesh Television, Chattogram Center, 669/A, Zakir Hossain Road, Khulshi, Chattogram.			
23. Contact details of official Inviting Tender	Tel: +8802333379304 Email: ashishshilbtv@gmail.com			
24. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders.				

**PRAYER TIMING**  
SEPTEMBER 28

Fajr	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



Migrants arrive to board smugglers' boats in an attempt to cross the English Channel off the beach of Gravelines, northern France, yesterday. Two women died overnight while trying to cross the Channel to Britain, French authorities said yesterday, adding that some 60 others had been rescued.

PHOTO: AFP

## Storm Bualoi kills 11 in Philippines

AFP, Manila

The death toll from Severe Tropical Storm Bualoi rose to 11 in the Philippines yesterday as the cyclone bore down on Vietnam, authorities said.

Bualoi battered small islands in the centre of the Philippines on Friday, toppling trees and power pylons, ripping roofs off homes, unleashing floods and forcing 400,000 people to evacuate.

Among the worst hit was the tiny island of Biliran, where eight people died and two are missing, provincial disaster official Noel Lungay told AFP by telephone.

The office of civil defence in Manila earlier reported three other deaths on the nearby islands of Masbate and Ticao.

Fourteen people remain missing across the central Philippines, it said without providing details, while more than 200,000 remained inside evacuation centres across the storm's path.

Bualoi came on the heels of Super Typhoon Ragasa which killed 14 people across the northern Philippines.

## New Zealand says it won't recognise Palestine now

REUTERS, Wellington

New Zealand will not recognise a Palestinian state at this time but remains committed to a two-state solution, Foreign Minister Winston Peters said.

"With a war raging, Hamas remaining the de facto government of Gaza, and no clarity on next steps, too many questions remain about the future state of Palestine for it to be prudent for New Zealand to announce recognition at this time," Peters said in a speech at the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Friday.

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said in Auckland yesterday that "recognition of Palestinian statehood is a question of when, not if".

New Zealand's position is out of step with traditional partners Australia, Canada and Britain who all recognised a Palestinian state on Sunday.

## 36 killed at Indian actor-politician Vijay's rally

REUTERS, Chennai

At least 36 people were killed and more than 50 injured yesterday at a rally held by Tamil actor Vijay, who is campaigning for election, state officials said.

"Thirty-one people died with more than 50 people now hospitalised," said V Selvaraj, a senior police official in the district of Karur in Tamil Nadu, where the incident occurred. Later the death toll was revised up to 36.

Large crowds had gathered for the meeting, part of Vijay's ongoing state tour for his political party Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam.

Vijay, who is a well-known actor and goes by only one name, launched a political party last year and began campaigning this month ahead of state elections that are to be held early next year.

Visuals shared online showed a huge crowd as thousands of people were seen on both sides of the road to catch a glimpse of the actor-turned-politician, while his campaign vehicle crawled through the middle of the street.

The crowd kept swelling and became uncontrollable, which led to chaos.

According to sources, Vijay ended his speech ahead of the scheduled time. As the crowd grew increasingly dense, several people and children reportedly fainted after which Vijay halted his address and called for maintaining calm.



State lawmaker Senthil Balaji told reporters that 58 people were hospitalised after what he said was a stampede. He added that Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin will visit the area today.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the loss of lives, calling the incident "deeply saddening." He expressed his condolences to the families of the victims, wished them strength in this difficult time, and prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured.

"The news coming from Karur is worrying," Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin said in an X post, adding that he had directed ministers and officials to provide urgent medical aid to those who collapsed at the Karur rally and ordered additional assistance from nearby Tiruchirappalli.

At least 44 doctors from the nearby districts of Tiruchirappalli and Salem were sent to Karur, media reports said.

## Floods kills 7 in Thailand

AFP, Bangkok

The death toll from floods triggered by heavy monsoon rains in Thailand rose to seven, authorities said yesterday, as relief efforts continued.

More than 260,000 people across several provinces along the Chao Phraya river were impacted by flooding this week, the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation said in a statement.

The nation's disaster agency initially reported on Tuesday four deaths across central Thailand but has now revised the figure up to seven.

Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul visited Ayutthaya province on Saturday, the hardest hit, in one of his first trips since taking office.

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government of Engineer Department  
Office of the Upazila Engineer  
Mathbaria, Porojpur  
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.7958.902.001.99.25.1086

Date: 25.09.2025

### Invitation for Tender (Works) e-Tender Notice No. 02/2025-2026

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)) for the Procurement of following work. Details are given below.

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Name of scheme	Tender publication (date & time)	Tender last selling (date & time)	Tender opening (time & date)
1	1157286 (OTM)	e-Tender/NBIDGSP/PER/MOT/2025-2026/W1.08415 Construction of Additional Classroom of Mathbaria Model (Vertical Extension Type-3V, EMIS Code: 915020509071) Government Primary School under NBIDGSP at Mathbaria, District: Porojpur.	28-Sep-2025 12:00	19-Oct-2025 17:00	20-Oct-2025 14:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted on 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 ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks, branches up mentioned above. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

*Md Ziarul Islam*

Md Ziarul Islam  
Upazila Engineer  
LGED  
Mathbaria, Porojpur  
E-mail: [ue.mothbaria@lged.gov.bd](mailto:ue.mothbaria@lged.gov.bd)

GD-2106

### NGO Affairs Bureau

Chief Adviser's Office

Plot # E/13B, Agargaon

Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

### Invitation for Tenders (Framework Agreement for 02Years)

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH	
SL No	Ministry : Chief Adviser's Office
01.	Division /Agency : NGO Affairs Bureau
02.	Procurement Entity Name : NGO Affairs Bureau Chief Adviser's Office
03.	Invitation for : Tender
04.	Invitation Ref No : 03.07.2666.657.65.169.15. (part-6)-2890
05.	Date : 24-09-2025
06.	Procurement Method : OTM
07.	Budget and Source of Funds : GOB
08.	Tender Name (Items based) : Office Stationery
09.	Tender Publication Date : 28/09/2025
10.	Tender Last Selling Date and Time : 22/10/2025
11.	Tender Closing Date and Time : 23/10/2025 & 13.00 pm
12.	Tender Opening Date and Time : 23/10/2025 & 14.00 pm
13.	Name & Address of the officer (Selling & Submission Tender Document) : Deputy Director (General) NGO Affairs Bureau Chief Adviser's Office Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207 3th floor, Room no-406 (Admin Section)
14.	Tender opening place : Director (Reg. & Audit) NGO Affairs Bureau Chief Adviser's Office Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207 3th floor, Room no-412
15.	Tender Submission for Documents [ : 1. Up to date Trade license 2. Attested VAT registration certificate 3. Up to date tax return certificate 4. Attested 03 years' experience certificate (Related work) 5. Singed and seal of all tender document (pages). 6. Forwarding in letter head pad of the firm. 7. Bank solvency certificate 8. Tender Schedule Purchased Chalan Copy. 9. ISO Certificate (if applicable) 10. As per tender schedule including conditions and according to PPR-2008 rules.
16.	Tender Schedule price (BDT) : 2000tk (Non-refundable) Payment Method : Online Chalan Code (A-chalan) Office code : 1030301100118 Economical Code : 1422328
17.	Tender Information (Description of Goods) : Office Stationery (02 years Framework agreement)
18.	Tender Security Amount (BDT) : 02% of Quoted Price ( Pay Order in favor of Deputy Director (General), NGO Affairs Bureau, Chief Adviser's Office, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207) [refundable]
19.	Procurement Entity Details : Deputy Director (General) NGO Affairs Bureau Chief Adviser's Office Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207 Email: <a href="mailto:ddg@ngoab.gov.bd">ddg@ngoab.gov.bd</a> Phone: 55007399 Fax: 55007410-11

\*\*\* The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders. All activities of this tender will be conducted in accordance with PPA 2006 and PPR 2008.

*Md Ziarul Islam*  
24/09/25

Deputy Director (General)  
NGO Affairs Bureau  
Chief Adviser's Office  
Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207  
Email: [ddg@ngoab.gov.bd](mailto:ddg@ngoab.gov.bd)  
Phone: 55007399

GD-2105

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Director

Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet

Ref. SOMCH/MSR(Chemical/Surgical/e-GpTender/2025/6263

Date: 27/09/2025

### e-GP Tender Notice (No. 08/2025-26)

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). For more details, please contract support desk contract numbers.

e-Tender are invited in e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Director Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet for the Procurement of:

Tender/Proposal Id	Name of goods	Tender/proposal last selling date & time	Tender/proposal closing date & time	Tender/proposal opening date & time
1154299	Procurement of MSR Chemicals (Auto Biochemistry Analyzer with ISE COBAS C311), Package-04, Lot 02 F.Y 2025-26 at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical college Hospital, Sylhet.	14 Oct 2025 16.00	15 Oct 2025 14.00	15 Oct 2025 14.00
1154297	Procurement of MSR Chemicals (Easy Lyte Electrolyte Analyzer), Package-03, Lot-05 F.Y 2025-26 at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet.	14 Oct 2025 16.00	15 Oct 2025 14.00	15 Oct 2025 14.00
1154295	Procurement of MSR Chemicals group(X-ray film, Agfa/Hitache), Package-03, Lot-04 FY 2025-26 at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet.	14 Oct 2025 16.00	15 Oct 2025 14.00	15 Oct 2025 14.00
1154216	Procurement of MSR Chemicals(X-ray film, Fuji), Package-03, Lot-03 F.Y 2025-26 at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet.	14 Oct 2025 16.00	15 Oct 2025 14.00	15 Oct 2025 14.00
1154195	Procurement of MSR Chemicals (ERBA lyte plus Electrolyte auto analyzer), Package-03, Lot-02 FY 2025-26 at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet.	14 Oct 2025 16.00	15 Oct 2025 14.00	15 Oct 2025 14.00
1154168	Procurement of MSR Surgical(Cath lab & others), Package-02, Lot-04 F.Y 2025-26 at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet.	14 Oct 2025 16.00	15 Oct 2025 14.00	15 Oct 2025 14.00
1154118	Procurement of MSR Surgical(Laparoscopy Instrument & others), Package-02, Lot 02 FY 2025-26 at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet.	14 Oct 2025 16.00	15 Oct 2025 14.00	15 Oct 2025 14.00
1154082	Procurement of MSR Surgical (Nebulizer & others), Package-02, Lot-03 F.Y 2025-26 at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet.	14 Oct 2025 16.00	15 Oct 2025 14.00	15 Oct 2025 14.00

e-Tender details can be downloaded on e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for pursuer.

e-Tender will be accepted only as stated in above list accept.

e-Tenders will be opened online immediate as stated in above list.

*Md Ziarul Islam*

Director

Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College  
Hospital, Sylhet.

E-mail: [magomch@hospi.dghs.gov.bd](mailto:magomch@hospi.dghs.gov.bd)

GD-2108

## Ukraine to get Patriot system from Israel

AFP, Kyiv

Ukraine received a US-made Patriot air defence system from Israel a month ago, with two more expected in coming months, President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday.

"The Israeli (Patriot) system is operating in Ukraine. It has been operating for a month. We will receive two Patriot systems in the fall," Zelensky told journalists during a briefing.

Zelensky said that Kyiv provided Washington with a list of the weapons Ukraine wanted as part of a plan to purchase \$90 billion worth of arms from Washington, which he first mentioned in August.

When asked to comment on media reports on Ukraine's alleged request of US long-range Tomahawk missiles, Zelensky said Kyiv was "ready for separate agreements on specific types of weapons, including long-range weapons."



A Palestinian child looks through the hole in the ceiling of her home as it was hit by Israeli bombing in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. Over nearly two years, Israeli military operations in Gaza have killed at least 65,549 Palestinians, mostly civilians, according to the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza, figures the UN considers reliable.

PHOTO: AFP

## UN sanctions reimposed on Iran

Tehran recalls envoys to UK, France, Germany as diplomacy fails to delay measures

AGENCIES

Iran has recalled its envoys to the United Kingdom, France and Germany for consultations, according to state media, after the three European countries triggered a mechanism reinstating the United Nations' sanctions on the Islamic Republic for the first time in a decade.

"Following the irresponsible action of the three European countries to reinstate repealed UN Security Council resolutions, Iran's ambassadors to Germany, France and the United Kingdom have been summoned to Tehran for consultations," state news agency Tasnim and others reported yesterday.

The move came a day after Russia and China failed to delay the revival of the international sanctions on Iran at the 15-member UN Security Council, as only four countries supported their draft resolution, opening the door for sanctions to be reimposed.

The E3 countries set the clock ticking a month ago for the "snapback" of the UN sanctions, accusing Iran of failing to come clean on its nuclear programme, including through countermeasures it took in response to bombing by Israel and the United States during a 12-day June conflict that Iranian authorities say killed more than 1,000 people.

The sanctions, set to go into effect at

00:00 GMT on Sunday, will set up a global ban on cooperation with Iran on nuclear, military, banking and shipping industries. Iran's national currency, the rial, fell to new all-time lows yesterday, trading for more than 1.1 million per US dollar in Tehran's open market.

The International Atomic Energy Agency on Friday said some inspections had resumed at Iranian sites this week, but did not say whether this included sites bombed by the US and Israel, where nuclear material could be buried. In Moscow for the World Atomic Week forum, Iran's nuclear chief Mohammad Eslami once again blasted the UN nuclear watchdog for refusing to condemn the air strikes on the Iranian nuclear sites.

Western powers rejected at least two Iranian proposals to defer snapback over the past days, saying they did not see enough progress to agree to a delay after a week of top-level diplomacy at the UN General Assembly.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said there was no reason to reach a deal when, in his view, Israel and the US were seeking to use the pressure to topple the theocratic establishment.

"If the goal had been to resolve concerns on the nuclear programme, we could easily do that," Pezeshkian told reporters, as he insisted again that Iran will never pursue nuclear weapons.



## REMARKS AT PRO-PALESTINIAN GATHERING US to revoke Colombian president Petro's visa

REUTERS

The United States said it would revoke Colombian President Gustavo Petro's visa after he took to New York's streets on Friday in a pro-Palestinian demonstration and urged US soldiers to disobey President Donald Trump's orders.

"We will revoke Petro's visa due to his reckless and incendiary actions," the State Department posted on X.

Petro, addressing a crowd of pro-Palestinian protesters outside the UN headquarters in Manhattan, called for a global armed force with the priority to liberate Palestinians, adding, "This force has to be bigger than that of the United States."

"That's why from here, from New York, I ask all the soldiers of the army of the United States not to point their guns at people. Disobey the orders of Trump. Obey the orders of humanity," Petro said in Spanish.

Reuters could not immediately confirm whether Petro was still in New York. His

office and Colombia's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The Trump administration has been cracking down on pro-Palestinian voices while countries including France, Britain, Australia and Canada have recognized a Palestinian state - moves that have angered Israel and its ally the US.

Petro, Colombia's first leftist president and a vocal opponent of Israel's war in Gaza, hit out at Trump in his speech to the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, saying the US leader was "complicit in genocide" in Gaza and calling for "criminal proceedings" over US missile attacks on suspected drug-running boats in Caribbean waters.

The United States is Colombia's main trading partner and its greatest ally in the fight against drug trafficking, but US-Colombia relations got off to a bad start shortly after Trump returned to office in January, when Petro refused to accept military flights carrying deportees in Trump's immigration crackdown.



## Israel trying to 'blow up' Middle East Says Russian FM

AFP, United Nations

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov yesterday accused Israel of seeking to "blow up" the whole Middle East as he criticised Israel's attacks in Iran and Qatar and opposed calls to annex the West Bank.

"Israel's illegal use of force against the Palestinians and aggressive actions against Iran, Qatar, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq today threaten to blow up the entire Middle East," Lavrov said in a speech to the UN General Assembly.

Lavrov lashed out at calls by hard-right allies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to annex the West Bank as a way to kill prospects for an independent Palestinian state.

"There is no justification for plans to annex the West Bank. We are essentially dealing with an attempt at a kind of coup d'etat aimed at burying UN decisions on the creation of a Palestinian state," Lavrov said.

Lavrov also mocked the Western recognition of a Palestinian state, saying, "What took them so long?"

By waiting until the General Assembly, they may have expected there would be "nothing and no one left to recognise" as Israel pursues its offensive, Lavrov said.

## 'They have dragged us into politics'

Nepal protest leader says he will run in upcoming polls

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

The leader of Nepal's recent youth-led protests that toppled the government within days has announced he will run in the country's March general elections, saying his movement will "fight till the end" to build a people's government.

In an exclusive interview with Start Here's Sandra Gathmann, Sudan Gurung said his group is already mobilising supporters nationwide to form a "movement for change" rather than a traditional political party.

"They have dragged us into politics," he said about the former government of "selfish" and "corrupt" politicians. "If it's politics they want, that's what they'll get. We will be running for the next election because we are not going to back down now."

Gurung, 36, rose to prominence as the face of a grassroots uprising led largely by Nepal's Gen Z.

The demonstrations erupted after the government blocked social media platforms, including Facebook, X and YouTube, saying the companies had failed to register and submit to government oversight.

But the protests soon spiralled into broader discontent, fuelled by anger over alleged corruption, state violence and impunity. Dozens of young demonstrators were killed, and thousands more were injured.

Gurung believes his movement is ready to govern, with volunteers



forming legal and communications committees and gathering policy demands from across the country, through platforms such as Discord, which was used to mobilise during the protests, and Instagram.

He said his team is working to ensure "that every voice of the Nepalese people is heard".

Gurung is unlikely to register as an independent candidate, and instead plans to run "as a group".

"If I just run as an independent candidate, we won't have this force of youths," he said. "Together, we are stronger."

The movement has pledged to run on a broad agenda beyond anticorruption. It plans on working to boost Nepal's tourism sector, strengthening relations with neighbours India and China without "external interference".

"We need to respect them, they

need to respect us," Gurung said. He said he does not want to see the old political guard contesting the March vote and urged interim Prime Minister Sushila Karki to speed up investigations into graft and killings of protesters.

"We'll be sure that the investigation is done properly, on time, so that they won't participate [in the elections]," Gurung said.

When asked whether he wants to become PM himself, Gurung said, "I won't say I am the right person right now ... but if the people choose me, I am definitely going to run."

He also spoke of attempts to silence him.

Despite the intimidation, he struck a defiant tone.

"I'm not scared ... just killing me won't do anything," Gurung said. "I need to save my nation because it's now or never."



Protesters stage a 'die-in' performance during a rally for Climate Justice in Seoul yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## This year's UN NCD declaration: Wins on targets, losses on taxes

UMMAY FARIHIN SULTANA

The United Nations High-Level Meeting (UNHLM) is a multilateral platform convened by the UN General Assembly to engage 193 Member States at the highest political level. On health, it elevates technical issues into the political agenda, ensuring greater visibility and accountability. The UNHLM on non-communicable diseases (NCDs), adopted on 25 September at the UN Headquarters in New York, has ignited mixed reactions. With NCDs claiming 74% of lives worldwide and 70% in Bangladesh, urgent action is non-negotiable, yet the declaration keeps some targets while falling far short of its original draft.

### The politics of profit vs public health

Several technical documents were released, including the zero draft and successive revisions, to guide negotiations. Yet the final text is markedly weaker, dropping the previous goal that "at least 80% of countries" impose World Health Organisation (WHO)-recommended taxes on tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drinks by 2030. These measures are now optional "considerations", leaving wide room for industry influence and government hesitation.

In Bangladesh, the situation is stark. Tobacco kills over 160,000 people every year, yet the industry remains politically influential. According to the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2022, 49% ate junk food high in sugar and salt the day before the survey.

### Some gains still matter

The final UN NCD declaration retains key targets. Yet, funding remains critically low. In Bangladesh, this means NCD services are still largely underfunded. Without decisive action, the global fight against NCDs risks losing momentum.

The writer is a Senior Officer, Planning and Development Unit, Eminence Associates for Social Development at Secretariat Coordinator, Bangladesh NCD Forum. Email: farihin@eminence-bd.org



## Bangladesh's outstanding fight against heart disease



DR JAGAT NARULA

Up to 80% of premature CVD deaths are preventable through affordable access to care, early screening, and more opportunities to make healthy choices in nutrition and stay active. That is why on World Heart Day, which is on September 29, we unite to raise awareness, inspire action, and celebrate heart health. The theme for World Heart Day 2025 is Don't Miss a Beat. Loved ones around the world are missing out on time they should still have to spend together due to early deaths from CVD.

In June, Bangladesh announced a new wave of measures to tackle its fight against cardiovascular disease (CVD), including lowering stent prices, increasing the number of functional catheterisation labs in district hospitals, expanding coronary care units and creating new cardiologist roles to bring quality cardiac care closer to every citizen. These steps build meaningfully the country's national CVD action plan, one of only 16 globally. With nearly 358,000 annual deaths from CVD and 80% of those preventable through early intervention and affordable care, this renewed commitment offers hope for saving millions of lives.

Yet, even as progress is welcome, we need to work aggressively toward fortifying measures to prevent disease. At the centre of this are Bangladesh's severe air pollution levels, which are more than double the global mean. Dhaka's ranking as the world's fourth lowest city in the 2024 City Heartbeat Index, which measures air pollution among numerous other heart health indicators, underscores the urgency of tackling this issue. Prolonged exposure to toxic air, driven by coal-burning brick kilns, industrial processes and vehicles running on low-quality fuels, increases the risk of heart attacks and strokes. This is not a problem confined to the capital; cities such as Gazipur,

Noakhali, Cumilla and Tangail also face some of the country's heaviest pollution burdens, meaning that all 164.8 million citizens are exposed year-round to air pollution levels deemed unsafe by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Long term exposure to air pollutants directly contributes to hypertension, a major risk factor for CVD, and was linked to over 140,000 CVD-related deaths in Bangladesh in 2021 alone. Hypertension, often dubbed a 'silent killer', affects nearly



one in three adults nationally, yet half of those with the condition are unaware, and most do not receive the treatment they need, even though national support is uniquely admirable. With air pollution exacerbating this, the need for action is more urgent than ever, especially in Dhaka and other heavily polluted areas. At the same time, only 40 percent of health facilities outside cities currently provide CVD specialist treatment, and some areas may lack essential medicines or diagnostic equipment.

Despite the challenges, Bangladesh has decidedly proven it can make progress. Tobacco use, the leading risk factor for CVD, has almost halved since 2000, thanks to strong public health action, including the Tobacco Control Act 2005 and mass awareness campaigns that highlighted the dangers of smoking. Additionally, public awareness of the importance of

physical activity is growing, especially in urban areas, thanks to initiatives such as the 2024 "Healthier in Motion" campaign in Dhaka, which promoted fitness among women and youth.

Institutions such as the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases and the National Heart Foundation are playing key roles in training doctors, supporting hypertension detection, and educating communities on salt reduction and healthier lifestyles.

Most significantly, Bangladesh is one of only 16 countries worldwide to establish a dedicated National Action Plan for cardiovascular disease, putting it ahead of many peers in recognising the urgency of this challenge. These steps show foresight, leadership and a clear commitment to safeguarding the health of its citizens.

Moving forward, a focus on strengthening PREVENTION and improving access to healthcare for all is key.

This includes raising awareness and investing in improving air quality, hypertension detection and treatment in primary care, and ensuring that medicines are available beyond Dhaka, which would go a long way. This would mean continued support to health centres, training for healthcare professionals in rural areas and ensuring the supply of essential drugs.

The responsibility remains on individuals, too, to maintain healthier lifestyles by engaging in more physical activity, adopting balanced diets and quitting unhealthy habits like tobacco use.

Bangladesh has admirably succeeded in lowering its CVD death rate from 392 per 100,000 in 2000 to 319 per 100,000 in 2019. With its national CVD action plan, a growing culture of awareness, and proven capacity to drive change, Bangladesh is laying the foundation for a healthier tomorrow. The progress so far shows that with sustained commitment, millions more lives can be protected.

The writer is the president of the World Heart Federation. Email: president@worldheart.org

## Uncontrolled high blood pressure puts over a billion people at risk

The World Health Organisation (WHO) released its second *Global Hypertension Report*, showing that 1.4 billion people lived with hypertension in 2024, yet just over one in five have it under control either through medication or addressing modifiable health risks.

The new report – released at an event co-hosted by WHO, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and Resolve to Save Lives during the 80th United Nations General Assembly – also reveals that only 28% of low-income countries report that all WHO-recommended hypertension medicines are generally available in pharmacies or primary care facilities.

Hypertension is a leading cause of heart attack, stroke, chronic kidney disease, and dementia. It is both preventable and treatable – but without urgent action, millions of people will continue to die prematurely, and countries will face mounting economic losses. From 2011 to 2025, cardiovascular diseases – including hypertension – are projected to cost low- and middle-income countries approximately US\$ 3.7 trillion, equivalent to around 2% of their combined GDP.

Analysis of data from 195 countries shows that 99 have national hypertension control rates below 20%. The majority live in low- and middle-income countries, where health systems face resource constraints.

Blood pressure medication is one of the most cost-effective public health tools. Yet only 28% of low income countries report general availability of all WHO-recommended medicines, compared to 93% of high-income countries.

Bangladesh increased hypertension control from 15% to 56% in some regions between 2019 and 2025 by embedding treatment in its essential health service package.

WHO calls on all countries to embed hypertension control in universal health coverage reforms. Implementing the recommended measures could prevent millions of premature deaths.

SOURCE: WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

## Stop wasting food—Bangladesh acts now!

ABEDA SULTANA

Every year on September 29, the world observes the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste. The goal is to raise awareness, emphasise solutions, and promote global collective action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal. Middle- and higher-income regions experience greater food loss and waste at the consumption stage, while developing countries lose more food from poor harvesting and weak infrastructure – a challenge that continues to persist.

Food loss is the food that is lost between harvest and retail, while the part wasted at the consumer or retail level is referred to as food waste. In 2021, about 13% of food was lost worldwide after harvest (FAO, 2023). About 19% of food was wasted across households, food service, and retail in 2022 (UNEP, 2024). Households cause about 60 per cent of global food waste (UNEP, 2024). On the other hand, in 2023, approximately 28.9% of the global population faced moderate or severe food insecurity (FAO, 2024).

According to the "Food Waste Index Report 2024", a Bangladeshi wastes an average of 82 kg of food at home each year, significantly higher than in many developed countries. In 2021, the figure was 65 kg. This rising trend is alarming. Over 211

million tonnes of food are wasted at different stages from production to post-harvest. In Bangladesh, where millions struggle with hunger and malnutrition, the need to tackle food loss and waste has been more urgent.

Food waste also harms the environment. Food waste contributes 8-10% of global greenhouse gas



emissions. The water used to grow food we waste each year is three times more than the volume of Lake Geneva in Switzerland. Wasting just 1 kg of beef means wasting 25,000 litres of water, while pouring away 1 litre of milk wastes over 1,000 litres. Globally, about one-third of all farmlands—some 3.4 million acres—

produces food that never gets eaten.

Stopping food waste requires action at every stage—from farmers to food processors and supermarkets to consumers. The first step should be aligning food production with demand. Second, we need improved methods to harvest, store, process, and distribute food. Restaurants, stores, and consumers can reduce food waste by identifying its sources. For example, misshapen fruits are still edible and can be used in dishes like soups. Consumers should buy only what they need. Buying in bulk may seem cheaper, but it isn't saving money if it ends up in the bin over the weekend. If food becomes unfit for people, it can feed livestock, be composted, or at least be recycled.

Now is the time for all—producers, businesses, consumers, and policymakers in Bangladesh—to act urgently, individually and together, to reduce food loss and waste and ensure a food-secure future.

- Think before you waste
- Take smaller portions at home or share dishes at restaurants.
- Turn leftovers into ingredients for another meal.
- Store food wisely.
- Reuse your food waste, such as for compost or bio-enzyme cleaner.
- Sharing is caring.

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## From seeds to sustainable food systems

**The Daily Star (TDS):** How do Lal Teer's seed innovations contribute to better nutrition outcomes, and what evidence links these seeds to dietary improvements or food diversity at the household level?

**Mahbub Anam (MA):** Lal Teer's seed innovations help farmers grow diverse vegetables and cereals year-round, even in challenging climates. This ensures households have access to iron-rich greens, protein-packed pulses, and vitamin-rich vegetables. With high yield, disease resistant seeds, "hungry seasons" are reduced and diets improve. Evidence shows farmers using Lal Teer seeds harvest more crop varieties, boosting food diversity. Home gardening programs further increase vegetable consumption. By training and supporting women farmers, Lal Teer strengthens nutrition security for rural families across Bangladesh.

**TDS:** What regenerative agricultural practices are you promoting, and how are these being incentivised through market channels or partnerships?

**MA:** At Lal Teer, we prioritise climate-resilient seed varieties that need fewer chemical inputs, while promoting Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) through farmer training in soil-friendly techniques. Our Contract Growers' Mechanism guarantees harvest purchase, rewarding sustainable methods. We also build digital market linkages to connect farmers with buyers. Partnering with research institutions and NGOs helps scale adoption, reduce risks, and ensure both farmer income and the nation's long-term food security.

**TDS:** How do you engage farmers and consumers to create demand for more nutritious, sustainably grown crops?

**MA:** Lal Teer Seed Limited drives demand for nutritious,

sustainable crops through farmer engagement and consumer awareness. The company offers technical guidance, training, and climate-smart practices, while establishing demo plots and Farmer Field Days to showcase resilient, high-yielding varieties. Our Geodata-Based Information Services (GEOBIS) app offers real-time guidance on crop management, weather, and market conditions. Lal Teer also builds

water-efficient varieties, while GEOBIS-backed traceability verifies origins and offers cultivation advice.

**TDS:** What role does iDE play in facilitating farmer education and expanding access to improved agri inputs in underserved regions?

**MA:** In the remote and impoverished regions of Bangladesh, where quality agricultural inputs are scarce, iDE can bridge the gap between Lal Teer's high-quality seeds and smallholder farmers through its grassroots networks. By



**Mahbub Anam**  
Managing Director of Lal Teer

offering hands-on training, iDE can promote climate-resilient practices and showcase the benefits of improved varieties. Integrating Lal Teer's certified seeds into local agri-dealers and demo plots ensures reliable access. With digital platforms providing timely advice and market updates, this collaboration would not only boost productivity and income but also strengthen the entire agricultural ecosystem, making sustainable farming a reality for those who need it most.

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

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

## Pharmacists: An untapped pillar of Bangladesh's healthcare system

SHOTABDI SIKDER

Every year, World Pharmacists' Day on 26 September reminds us of the vital role pharmacists play in global healthcare. While Bangladesh has achieved remarkable success in pharmaceutical manufacturing—the broader role of pharmacists in direct patient care remains underutilised.

In developed countries, pharmacists are recognised as frontline healthcare providers. They go beyond dispensing medicines, contributing to clinical decision-making, patient counselling, vaccination, chronic disease management, and monitoring of drug safety.

Increasingly, pharmacists are central to preventive care and digital health services. Bangladesh, however, continues to view pharmacists mainly through the lens of industry.

This limited perspective prevents their integration into hospitals and communities where their expertise could significantly improve patient outcomes. The country's growing burden of non-communicable diseases, rising antimicrobial resistance, and gaps in rural healthcare requires stronger pharmacist involvement. To bridge this gap, the government must act. First, policy reform should recognise pharmacists as essential healthcare professionals.

Second, pharmacy education must align with global standards, emphasising clinical and patient-centred practice. Third, hospital and community healthcare systems should formally integrate pharmacists into their services. Finally, investment in research,

biotechnology, biosimilars, and digital health innovation will allow pharmacists to contribute more effectively to the nation's healthcare goals. The benefits to patients would be direct and profound: safer and more effective treatments, reduced misuse of medicines, lower healthcare costs, and stronger public trust in the healthcare system.

Bangladesh's pharmaceutical industry has earned international recognition. The next step is empowering pharmacists to extend their expertise beyond production lines—into the heart of patient care.

The writer is an Executive Officer, Quality Control Department at Incepta Pharmaceuticals Limited. Email: shotabdisikder@gmail.com



## Chaos in the air, rivalry on the line

EKUSH TAPADER FROM DUBAI

There's a widely accepted notion in cricket that Pakistan thrive only when chaos surrounds them. Stability rarely serves them well; turbulence seems to be their fuel. This Asia Cup in UAE has been no different.

After being thrashed by India in both the group stage and Super Four, with their qualification for the final hanging by a thread, Pakistan found themselves cornered by criticism and controversy – and, as so often, they have found a way to turn that storm into momentum.

The Asian Cricket Council's (ACC) long-cherished dream has finally been realised: an India Pakistan final. In 16 previous editions of the Asia Cup, this matchup had never happened – until now, with commercial and sporting stakes sky-high.

On paper, skill and form suggests India call the tune; Pakistan wait for fortune's turn of the wheel.

The battle within the battle is tantalising. Abhishek Sharma, India's in-form opener, has plundered 309 runs in six matches at a blistering strike rate of over 200. Almost certain to walk away with the Player of the Tournament award, the rising star now faces star pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi, who has shaken off his early struggles and is starting to look dangerous again.

"Abhishek Sharma out first ball, then the match is ours," a group of Pakistan fans said while celebrating after securing a place in the final. So far, though, Abhishek has dispatched Shaheen's and the innings' first ball for a boundary and a six.

"Shaheen will try to knock you over; Abhishek won't hold back," said India bowling coach Morne Morkel. "That duel alone keeps fans on the edge of their seats."

India's main concern is Hardik Pandya, who walked off with a muscle strain while bowling against Sri Lanka. The management has kept his fitness status quiet. Otherwise, the Gautam Gambhir coached side look settled;



India will be eyeing their longest winning streak in T20Is against Pakistan. They have won their last four T20Is against the archrivals, matching their winning streak between December 2012 and March 2016.

India lead both the top run-getters' and top wicket-takers' lists in this Asia Cup, with Abhishek Sharma scoring 309 runs at an average of 51.50 and Kuldeep Yadav taking 13 wickets, both having played all six matches.

India come into the final having won all six of their matches. However, the last time India qualified unbeaten for a major tournament final, they lost the title clash against Australia in the 2023 ODI World Cup in Ahmedabad, after winning all 10 of their previous matches in that tournament.

Bumrah has rediscovered rhythm, spinners are dictating the middle overs, and contributions have trickled in from batters Shubman Gill and Tilak Varma, even if Sanju Samson's role remains unclear.

Pakistan, meanwhile, see opportunity for that one slip between cup and lip. Head coach Mike Hesson admitted the two defeats to India hurt, but insisted: "The only match that counts is the one at the end."

Yet the lead-up to the final has been

strangely flat. India skipped training altogether after Friday's win over Sri Lanka, leaving Morkel to double up for both post-match and pre-match duties. Pakistan trained yesterday after a day's rest. Even the customary trophy photoshoot with both captains was quietly shelved; relations are too brittle for such gestures.

Still, the match needs no ceremony. The rivalry has already been stoked by Suryakumar Yadav, who dismissed it as "no longer a rivalry" after India's Super

Four win. His words triggered Pakistan and unsettled even Indian journalists, who accused him of talking for effect while his bat has gone quiet – just 71 runs at a modest strike rate of 107 in the eight-team tournament.

And that's the beauty of it. Cricket has a way of punishing arrogance and rewarding chaos. If Pakistan can turn Suryakumar's words against him at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, the sport could yet write another improbable story.

## Japan tour cancelled as 'Mission Australia' hits roadblock

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's football team's proposed tour of Japan in November, intended as preparation for next year's Asian Cup in Australia, has been cancelled due to the hosts' inability to accommodate the team during the specific window.

In late August, Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) women's wing chairman Mahfuza Akter Kiron unveiled a comprehensive plan for the team's preparation under the banner 'Mission Australia', with a three-week intensive training camp in Japan from October 30 as a key highlight. The team's local camp was also scheduled to begin mid-September, postponed by two weeks from the original plan.

However, at a press briefing at the BFF House on Saturday, Kiron, who is also an AFC member, announced the cancellation of the Japan tour. The dates conflicted with a proposed tri-nation tournament in Dhaka during the November FIFA window (Nov 24 - Dec 2).

"We are unable to tour Japan, which was initially planned from October 30 to November 20, as it clashes with the FIFA window. Japan offered a window from November 20 to 30, but we



will be hosting a tri-nation tournament in Dhaka at that time," Kiron explained.

The tri-nation tournament is yet to be finalised, with Azerbaijan confirmed as one of the participating teams alongside hosts Bangladesh. The BFF is still searching for a third team to complete the lineup. While Kiron confirmed that a Plan B is being developed to make use of the newly freed window, she noted that most senior players will be occupied with the SAFF Club Women's Championship from December 5 to 20, where Nasrin Sports Academy will represent Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, a 29-member squad comprising senior and under-20 players, along with a seven-member coaching staff led by Peter Butler, departed for Chattogram on Saturday evening for a 20-day residential camp.

"The players will stay at the Korean EPZ under Youngone's management, with gym, field, accommodation, and food of good quality. We have kept the Air Force ground as a backup," Kiron said. She added that a long list of 43 players has been prepared, including 10 currently in Bhutan and four with the under-17 team.

"The 10 players in Bhutan will return on October 18 and join the 29 for 3-4 days of training in Dhaka. The team will then leave for Thailand on October 21 to play two friendly matches on October 24 and 27," Kiron concluded.



SAFF U-17 C'SHIP

## Heartbreak at final hurdle

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh came from behind twice, including a stoppage-time equaliser, but fell to India in a penalty shootout in the final of the SAFF Under-17 Championship at Colombo's Race Course Ground on Saturday.

Golam Rabbani Choton's side had reached the final without conceding a goal and dominated possession and attacking play, yet lacked composure in front of goal, a gap that proved decisive in the shootout.

India struck first in the fourth minute through Dallalmuon Gangte, while Mohammad Manik replied with a 25th-minute header to level the score. Bangladesh came close to taking the lead, hitting the crossbar twice, but India went ahead through Azlan Shah before Habib Riduan pounced on a loose ball in stoppage time to make it 2-2 and force penalties.

In the shootout, India converted all four of their spot-kicks, while Bangladesh managed just one through Manik. For the third consecutive edition, Bangladesh – who previously won the SAFF youth titles in 2015 (U-16) and 2018 (U-15) – had to settle for second place, as India claimed their seventh youth-level crown.



## Razzak resigns, among 60 nominees for BCB polls

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) election commission released nomination forms yesterday, with 60 forms collected across the categories.

Current BCB president Aminul Islam and director Nazmul Abedeen Fahim picked up forms from Category A under Dhaka Division and District respectively. Former captain Tamim Iqbal did the same from Category B, while former president Faruque Ahmed, ousted after his councillorship was scrapped, also filed in Category B via another councillor.

Meanwhile, former national cricketer Abdur Razzak surprised many by resigning from the BCB selection panel and collecting a nomination form as a councillor for Khulna Division. Two other forms were also picked up from Khulna Division and District in Category A.

Razzak cited a conflict of interest as the reason for leaving the selection panel. "If I have to run in the election, I must resign. That decision came automatically," he said. On his plans, he added: "I played for a long time, contributed as a selector, and now if there's an opportunity to take another step forward, I will... Mainly, it's about doing something good for cricket."

Nomination papers are due on Sunday, with the final list of nominees to be announced on Monday.

In Category A, 25 forms were submitted (Dhaka-3, Chattogram-5, Khulna-3, Rajshahi-4, Sylhet-3, Rangpur-6, Barisal-1), with Shakawath Hossain, BCB's Cricket Tourism Advisor, the lone candidate from Barisal. Ten board directors will be elected from this category.

Category B saw 32 forms collected for 12 board director positions. Notable names included Tamim Iqbal, Ishtiaque Sadeque, Shahnian Tanim, Mohammedan's Masuduzzaman, and current directors Iftekhar Rahman Mithu and Fahim Sinha.

In Category C, Khaled Masud Pilot filed as a former player, while former director Sirajuddin Mohammad Alamgir and former first-class cricketer Debabrata Paul submitted through Chattogram University and Jahangirnagar University, respectively.

## Fortis shock Mohammedan

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club endured a disappointing start to their Bangladesh Football League campaign, suffering a 2-0 defeat against Fortis at the Bashundhara Kings Arena on Saturday.

Gambian striker Pa Omar Babou emerged as the hero for Fortis, scoring both goals in the second half.

The first half remained goalless and the deadlock was broken in the 61st minute when substitute Sajed Hasan Jummon intercepted the ball and threaded a precise pass to Babou, who unleashed a powerful left-footed strike from outside the box beyond goalkeeper Sujon Hossain.

Babou doubled his tally in the 79th minute, finishing a counter-attack he had started, exchanging passes with Riaz Sagor before volleying home.

Elsewhere, Bashundhara Kings were held 2-2 by debutants PWD after surrendering a 2-0 halftime lead, while Bangladesh Police edged Brothers Union 1-0 thanks to a 43rd-minute strike from Brazilian forward Paulo Henrique.

The first round concluded with several surprising results, and the competition now pauses due to national team commitments for the Asian Cup qualifiers and Kings' participation in the AFC Challenge League.



## LEADERS STUMBLE

Atletico Madrid's Argentine striker Julian Alvarez celebrates one of his two goals in their thumping 5-2 win over LaLiga leaders Real Madrid in a thrilling derby at the Metropolitano yesterday. It was Los Blancos' first defeat in eight matches across competitions. [Inset] Liverpool's Virgil van Dijk looks dejected after second-spot holders Crystal Palace end the Reds' perfect Premier League start with a 2-1 win following a stoppage-time winner at Selhurst Park in London yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS





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## Tarique warns of 'covert autocracy', calls for unity

UNB, Cumilla

A covert autocracy could emerge in Bangladesh if democratic and nationalist forces fail to remain united ahead of the national election, said BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday.

"In the past 15 years, the nation has seen another form of autocracy, and people have eventually removed it. If we cannot make the people understand the ground reality, if we fail to remain united, then in the coming days a hidden autocracy could emerge in the country."



Tarique's comments came at the biennial council of BNP's Cumilla South District unit at the Town Hall field in Cumilla.

"If we do not all unite now, if the democratic forces fail to unite, if we cannot unite the people of this country, then just as autocracy gripped the nation after independence, and just as after the 1/11 events and the so-called 2008 election, a fascist autocracy mounted the shoulders of the country, the same could happen again."

Tarique called upon the BNP leaders and activists across the country to put aside all divisions and work shoulder to shoulder.

"We have no alternative but to unite. This must be our pledge and our oath."

The party's task ahead is to rebuild and reconstruct the nation with united efforts.

He compared the nation to a house, saying that just as many workers together can build a beautiful home, rebuilding the

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and his daughter Deena Yunus pose for a photo with US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump at a reception hosted by the US President in New York on September 23. The photo was shared on the chief adviser's verified Facebook page yesterday.

PHOTO: CA PRESS WING

## Yunus calls on int'l community for poll support

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus called on the international community to support the country's upcoming general elections scheduled for February next year.

"We need your guidance – your advice, support and moral strength will be invaluable," Yunus said while meeting with dozens of global leaders on Friday on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly.

Leaders offered their full support to Yunus and the interim government, according to a press release from the Chief Adviser's Press Wing. They also expressed readiness to provide their expertise and assistance to Bangladesh during this pivotal time.

The delegation was led by former president of Latvia Vaira Vike-Freiberga and included Borut Pahor, former president of Slovenia; Boris Tadić, former president of Serbia; Egils Levits, former president of Latvia; Charles Michel, president emeritus of the European Council and former prime minister of Belgium; George Papandreou, former PM of Greece; Rosen Plevneliev and Petar Stoyanov,

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## Feminism in Bangladesh is a fight to be human

Speakers say at book launch

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Feminism in Bangladesh is not confined to women's rights but rooted in the struggle to be human, to uphold ideals, and to carry forward the unfulfilled promises of the Liberation War, speakers said at a programme yesterday.

They made the remarks at the launch of a book titled "Naribadi Hoye Othar Golpo" (Stories of Becoming Feminist), organised by anti-discrimination non-profit organisation Pragrosor, at Chhayanaut Institute in the capital's Shankar area.

In her welcome speech, Pragrosor Executive Director Fouzia Khandaker Eva said many had questioned the title of the book, but it was chosen to reflect a larger truth. After reading out the opening lines, she added this book was the first part of

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

## Make 'political investment' for Rohingyas

Khalilur urges global community

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman has called on the international community to make "political investment" in Myanmar for Rohingya repatriation, saying the situation in Rakhine State is getting better.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

## Section 144 amid blockade over rape of Khagrachhari girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The local administration yesterday imposed Section 144 in Khagrachhari as tensions flared during a dawn-to-dusk road blockade in the district, demanding justice for the rape of a schoolgirl.

According to an order signed by District Magistrate ABM Iftekharul Islam Khondokar, the restriction on public gatherings will remain in effect for an indefinite period.

The order states that Section 144 has been imposed to prevent potential untoward situations due to a significant

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