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Dengue fight faltering

11 cities do not have entomologists; only 12 districts have such officials

HELEMUL ALAM and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Eleven of the 12 city corporations across the country don't have any entomologists to help the authorities check mosquito-borne diseases, exposing their weakness in combatting dengue that has now become a year-round concern.

Moreover, civil surgeon offices in only 26 districts have approved posts of entomologists, with at least 12 of those remaining vacant as of September 27 this year.

The systemic flaws are further exposed by delays in conducting three periodic surveys -- pre-monsoon, monsoon, and post-monsoon -- which are essential to determine mosquito density and guide control measures.

The findings of this year's pre-monsoon survey were published in mid-June after the monsoon had already begun, leaving little time for the authorities concerned to take action. Last year, the health authorities could not conduct the monsoon survey due to a fund crunch and a shortage of manpower.

Experts said that even if the authorities manage to complete surveys, most of the recommendations remain unimplemented because of mismanagement, corruption, or a lack of manpower.

All these shortcomings highlight gaps in the authorities' preparation to control dengue that has claimed around 200 lives so far this year with more than 40,000 people hospitalised.

"Weaknesses and mismanagement in mosquito control come to the fore only when outbreaks turn severe and claim dozens of lives. Once the crisis eases, everything returns to its previous state -- until the next crisis emerges," said entomologist Prof GM Saifur Rahman.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

BCB set for controversial elections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is heading towards a controversial election for the board of directors after 16 councillors, including former national captain Tamim Iqbal, withdrew their nominations on Wednesday, alleging government interference.

The election environment, which has been fraught with war of words and writ petitions for the last one month, came to a head when former BCB president Faruque Ahmed filed a writ petition on Tuesday, challenging the inclusion of 15 clubs which were under observation by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). The High Court issued a stay order on their councilorship on Tuesday, six days before the polls, scheduled for October 6.

The EC yesterday announced the final list of 33 candidates for 25 directors' posts -- 12 from Dhaka clubs, 10 from districts and divisional sports bodies, one from universities, sports institutions and players' association. The National Sports Council (NSC) will nominate two more directors from the councillors of all three categories.

While withdrawing his candidature, Tamim claimed that many councillors did not want to be part of such an environment anymore.

"It's a way of our protest since we don't want to be any part in this filth," Tamim told reporters at BCB's Election

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Heavy rains to continue countrywide BMD says, FFWC warns of flashfloods in 7 dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely to occur across the country for 72 hours starting from 9:00am yesterday, warned the Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

According to the department, under the influence of a well-marked low over the west-central Bay and adjoining areas along with an active monsoon, heavy to very heavy rainfall may occur in Rangpur, Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal, Chattogram and Sylhet divisions.

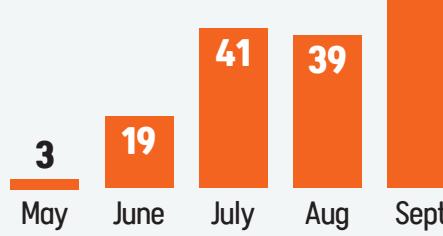
Dhaka recorded the highest rainfall in the country -- 143 millimetres in 24 hours until 6:00pm yesterday -- leaving many parts of the capital waterlogged.

The BMD further cautioned that landslides



Heavy rain inundates a street in the New Market area. Dhaka recorded the country's highest rainfall yesterday, according to the Met office. Several thoroughfares went under water, putting city dwellers in trouble. The photo was taken around 9:30am.

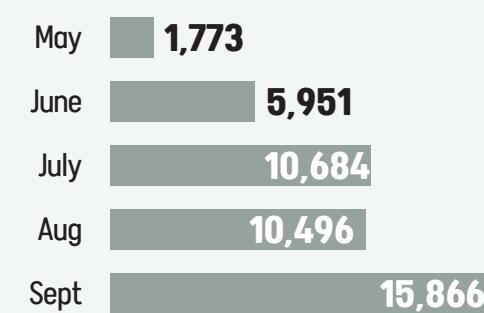
DENGUE DEATHS SPIKE



DIVISION-WISE DEATH



INFECTION KEEPS RISING



If the authorities truly want to save lives, they must take steps to control mosquitoes systematically, and address the existing shortcomings."

Entomologist Prof GM Saifur Rahman

Total death this year
200
Total infected
47,832

DENGUE INFECTION
60.6% ♂ 39.4% ♀

Experts warned that the outbreak may worsen in October, when cases are expected to peak.



Gaza bloodbath goes on amid peace push

At least 61 more killed as Israel steps up offensive; Hamas mulls response

AGENCIES

Intensified Israeli offensive yesterday killed at least 61 people across Gaza, as Hamas weighed US President Donald Trump's plan to end nearly two years of war in the Palestinian territory.

Witnesses reported heavy bombardment in Gaza City, as Israel's defence minister, Israel Katz, said the army was tightening its encirclement of the city.

"This is the last opportunity for Gaza residents who wish to do so to move south and leave Hamas-operated Gaza City," Katz posted on X, warning that those who remained would be considered terrorists and terrorist supporters.

Katz said the military had seized the Netzarim corridor, linking central Gaza to the western coast, effectively cutting the north of Gaza off from the south.

Anyone leaving Gaza City for the south would have to pass through Israeli military checkpoints, he added.

The announcement came hours after the military said it was closing the last remaining route for people to travel from southern Gaza to the north.

In Gaza City, 60-year-old Rabah al-Halabi, sheltering in a tent on the grounds of Al-Shifa

Hospital, described relentless explosions.

"I will not leave because the situation in Gaza City is no different from the situation in the southern Gaza Strip," he told AFP by telephone.

"All areas are dangerous, the bombing is everywhere, and displacement is terrifying and humiliating," he said.

"We are waiting for death, or perhaps relief from God and for the truce to come."

Hamas said Katz's comments were "a prelude to the escalation of war crimes being committed by his army".

RELATED STORIES ON PAGE 5, 12 SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

September deadliest, Oct peak looms

HELEMUL ALAM

Dengue infections and fatalities continue to rise at an alarming rate, with the death toll reaching 200 and total reported cases climbing to 47,832 as of yesterday.

Experts warned that the outbreak may worsen in October, when cases are expected to peak, before beginning to decline gradually from November. However, they cautioned that infections and deaths are likely to persist well into December and January.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), in September alone, 76 people died from the disease and 15,866 patients were hospitalised -- the highest monthly toll this year.

The number of deaths stood at 39 in August, 41 in July, and 19 in June.

Reported hospitalisations were

10,684 in August, 10,684 in July,

and 5,951 in June.

Health experts blame intermittent rainfall, favourable weather conditions, and poor mosquito control measures for creating ideal breeding grounds for Aedes mosquitoes, which transmit dengue, chikungunya, and Zika viruses.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

ROHINGYA CRISIS

UN meet renews focus, but yields no breakthrough
\$96m aid only tangible gain

PORIMOL PALMA

The high-level conference on the Rohingya at the UN in New York has been able to draw global attention anew on the crisis that was losing focus amid other global crises, but the level of political commitment required for a lasting solution still remains a big question.

Russia and China, the two big backers of the Myanmar junta, are continuing their support as before. Even the UN Security Council has taken no concrete measure against the country because of opposition from these two veto members.

NEWS ANALYSIS

"When all the states present at the Rohingya conference condemned the Myanmar junta and the Arakan Army, China and Russia spoke for sovereignty and integrity of Myanmar -- they spoke for engaging the Myanmar junta," said Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, chairman of COAST Foundation, who attended the event.

The two countries have major stakes in Myanmar, and it is unthinkable that the Myanmar junta will change unless there is real pressure against it, he said.

The only tangible outcome from the event is the announcement of \$96 million in new funding from the US and the UK -- \$60 million and

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KHAGRACHHARI GIRL Doctors find 'no signs of rape' Protesters call the report 'fabricated'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

A report prepared by a government medical board in Khagrachhari says that doctors found "no evidence of rape" in tests on a 12-year-old schoolgirl, whose alleged assault triggered fierce protests in the hilly district.

The board, led by obstetrics and gynaecology specialist Joya Chakma of Khagrachhari Modern Sadar Hospital, submitted the report to the district's Civil Surgeon Shaber Ahmed on Tuesday night.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 2

NOTICE

23rd BANGLADESH BUSINESS AWARDS
Business Excellence in Business

We have published a four-page supplement on Bangladesh Business Awards today along with our regular BUSINESS

Please collect your copy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



DURGA'S FEAST

From luchi to payesh, tradition reborn

RBR

The elaborate and painstakingly selected menu for the divine daughter is the best of South Asian vegetarian recipes; puffed up soft luchi (flatbread) that has a pearly sheen from being deep fried, potato curry, or alu daam as we call it locally, a mixed lentil curry and vegetable labra, and a hog plum or amra's chutney.

I die for Durga's food fest -- I call it Durga bhoj payesh, a sort of rice pudding made with binni chal or sticky rice.

Mandatory in the menu are the coconut balls, our good old naru made with jaggery. This is what Sharat's dreams are made of.

The community puja have their own menu, made for the mass feeding; khichuri, which is basically turmeric rice with vegetables. It is called bhog or devi offering. But bemedi or elite Hindu households in Dhaka go for their best menu plan.

"Ma khay shontaner jonno," the batavim translation of this quote by Srimati Shaha, Director of Kumudini Welfare Trust, relays that generally a mother feeds herself only to feed and replenish her children.

The deep religious meaning behind her thought is that Ma Durga's arrival



PHOTO: STAR

calls for a festive and special menu. Though she does not partake in the food offering bestowed on her by humans.

It is a symbolic gesture," explains Shaha, the matriarch of renowned pujas held at Kumudini.

Boudi or Mashi ma, as she is fondly called by her fans like me, goes on to describe the well-thought-out and meticulously prepared menu for Ma Durga. There is no chance of mistaking the Amish (non-vegetarian) and Niramish (vegetarian) food items. Rice

anise, and clarified butter, called Ghee Bhaat, are served with vegetable fritters, niramish, and an assortment of sweets made from ricotta cheese, which is chhana.

"The cherished puja sweet is Malpua, the mention of which is deeply rooted in our ancient texts. Big in size with a soft core and crunchy edges, Malpua is made with a thin batter of flour, and soaked in a simple sugar and aromatic syrup. Shahab Barir Malpua was what people called them in our home," the graceful Srimati Shaha recalls.

Akhter Jahan, writer and educator, is best known for writing her personal stories and memories of Old Dhaka

in Sobbas or Khosbas, a Bengalinized dialect of Urdu and Hindi, that is native to Old Dhaka. She recalls in one of her memoirs about how she celebrated puja during her childhood.

"On the auspicious day of Ashtami, I was fortunate enough to be invited to a Banedi family's Durga Puja, where my father and I sat on the ground, feasting on luchi and payesh, spread on banana leaves. Amid the exchange of colourful platters of sweets, candies, and giant rosogollas, I would sneak a prasad, my tiny hands clutching sweet Naru, my Hindu aunts and friends would share. There would be a puja mela or fair near the mandaps. The fairs were like my magic portals, fun rides, and delicious snacks like spicy mirchini, fried lentil balls, jaggery, and sesame treats. Each bite was a tiny universe of flavour, and each purchase a prayer for happiness," Akhter Jahan writes.

The shared puja rituals and food silently made a bond with us, the non-Hindu neighbours. The sweet aroma and flavours mingling with the spices of their bhog remain our favourite vegetarian meal.

The colours of puja, the intoxicating smell of dhoop, and the maddening sound of Dhaks, and the ancient rhythm of Durga's worship, are my reasons to go Mandap hopping in and around Dhaka.

The Hindu community's soul beats the strongest during Durga Puja, and for us enthusiasts, the vibrant and pulsating festival is a testimony to a harmonious city's soul.

Normalcy returning to Khagrachhari amid tight security

Section 144 still in force as residents return to work and travel

STAR REPORT

Traffic is returning to normal in Khagrachhari after the road blockade enforced under the banner of Jumma Chhatra Janata was suspended late Tuesday, bringing relief to residents.

Despite the suspension, Section 144, which prohibits public gatherings, remains in effect in Khagrachhari Sadar and Guimara upazilas.

During a visit to Shapla Chhatra in Khagrachhari town yesterday, The Daily Star found vehicles moving freely and most shops reopening. Long-distance bus services also resumed around 9:00am. Law enforcers were deployed at key intersections, stopping and questioning "suspicious" individuals.

"I can finally return home today as the blockade has been lifted," said Anil Bikash Chakma at the Panchhari auto rickshaw stand. He had been stranded in the town after a doctor's visit.

Truck driver Md Zainal Abedin said his family had suffered during the days he was unable to earn due to the blockade. At bus counter, Anil Dev, travelling with his family to Rangunia, Chattogram for Durga Puja, said, "We had been unable to go home for days. Today [yesterday] we can finally leave."

At 9:00pm Tuesday, Jumma Chhatra Janata announced on Facebook that the blockade had been suspended following assurances from the district administration and out of respect for Durga Puja. The organisation said the suspension will remain in effect until October 5 but warned of tougher programmes if its eight-point demands are not met.

Khagrachhari Deputy Commissioner ABM Iftekharul Islam Khandker told The Daily Star that Section 144 would be withdrawn only if law enforcers deem the situation fully stable.

Protests erupted after a teenager was allegedly raped while returning home from private tutoring on September 23. Her relatives found her unconscious in a field around 11:00pm. Police later arrested one suspect, Shayan Sheel, while the victim's father filed a complaint against three unidentified men.

Anger over the incident sparked widespread protests under the banner of Jumma Chhatra Janata. The next day, the group called a blockade across the three hill districts.

Violence escalated on Sunday at Ramesu Bazar in Guimara upazila, where clashes between protesters, law enforcers, and locals siding with security forces turned deadly.

Gaza bloodbath

FROM PAGE 1

The International Committee of the Red Cross said intensified military operations had forced it to temporarily suspend activities in Gaza City.

Days earlier, the Doctors Without Borders charity halted its work in the city, where some UN agencies and aid organisations still operate.

Meanwhile, Hamas was examining a peace plan proposed by Trump and backed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The plan calls for a ceasefire, the release of hostages within 72 hours, Hamas's disarmament and a gradual Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

A Palestinian source close to Hamas's leaders told AFP that "no final decision" had been made and that "the movement will likely need two to three days".

"Hamas wants to amend some of the items, such as the disarmament clause and the expulsion of Hamas," the source said.

They added that Hamas wanted "international guarantees" for a full Israeli withdrawal and guarantees Israel would not violate a ceasefire.

Gaza's civil defence agency – a rescue force operating under Hamas authority – said Israeli strikes killed at least 61 people across the territory yesterday.

Asked about a strike on a school-turned shelter that the agency said killed eight people, the Israeli military said it had "struck a Hamas terrorist" and that "steps were taken in order to mitigate harm to civilians as much as possible".

Heavy rains

FROM PAGE 1

may occur in the hilly regions of Chattogram, while temporary waterlogging is also likely in parts of Dhaka and Chattogram metropolitan cities.

Meanwhile, the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) of the Water Development Board warned that flashfloods are likely in seven districts as major rivers continue to swell from heavy rainfall in Dhaka, Chattogram and Rajshahi divisions, as well as in India's Tripura and Assam.

The seven districts are Feni, Chattogram, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Sherpur, Netrakona and Mymensingh.

FFWC said water levels in the Gomti, Muthuri, Selonia and Feni rivers in Chattogram division rose in the 24 hours till 6:00am yesterday and are expected to keep rising over the next three days.

In Rangpur division, water levels in the Dhara, Dudhkumar and Teesta may rise during this period, with the Teesta possibly reaching the danger level and temporarily flooding low-lying areas of Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari.

In Mymensingh region, the Kangsha, Someshwari and Bhugai rivers are also likely to swell, potentially reaching the danger level in Sherpur, Mymensingh and Netrakona, causing temporary inundation of low-lying areas.

The FFWC added that coastal rivers in Barishal, Khulna and Chattogram divisions are experiencing higher than-normal tides, a situation expected to persist for the next three days.

Dengue fight faltering

FROM PAGE 1

WEAKNESSES

"If the authorities truly want to save lives, they must take steps to control mosquitoes systematically, and address the existing shortcomings," he told The Daily Star.

FEW ENTOMOLOGISTS

Entomologists, who study the characteristics of insects and the diseases they transmit, can track when mosquito populations rise, how far they have spread, and by what means. They also apply specialised survey methods to identify hotspots.

"An entomologist knows how to devise plans to control mosquitoes, just like a doctor knows which tests are required for a patient," Rahman said.

Entomologists play a vital role in guiding insecticide use – determining which insects are present, where they are breeding, which chemicals to apply and at what quantities, and by which methods, he said.

Out of the 12 city corporations in the country, only Dhaka North City Corporation has an entomologist, said officials, adding that the corporations sometimes bring in entomologists on deputation from other government departments or district administrations.

Mofizul Hoque Shah, divisional entomologist at the DGHS, said that only 26 civil surgeon offices across the country have approved posts of entomologist. Apart from that, there are four posts at divisional directors' offices of DGHS and three at its headquarters.

But at least 18 of the 33 posts remained vacant, he told The Daily Star on September 25.

Mohammad Rahmant Ullah, health

nationwide action.

He also called for community mobilisation through awareness campaigns.

WHY DEATHS ARE RISING

DGHS data show that 81 percent of dengue patients who died this year were admitted to hospitals only after suffering fever for three or more days, highlighting delayed hospitalisation as the leading cause of fatalities.

While disclosing the data at a press conference on September 22, DGHS Director General Prof Md Abu Jafar said early testing and timely hospitalisation are therefore crucial.

Of the deaths, 74 percent occurred within 48 hours of admission; 50 percent of patients died from Dengue Shock Syndrome (DSS); and 43 percent of the deceased had comorbidities.

Without active community participation in eliminating breeding grounds, controlling this outbreak will be extremely difficult," he said.

GM Saifur Rahman, an entomologist at National University,

urged intensified mosquito-control drives in hotspots, including targeted breeding zone eradication, adult mosquito elimination, and sustained

officer at Gazipur City Corporation, said that the corporation's proposed organogram, which includes posts of entomologist and technicians for mosquito control, remains pending with the LGRD ministry.

In the absence of dedicated manpower, the corporation has deployed staffers from waste management, engineering, and other departments to do the job.

Prof Mohammad Mushtaq Husain, a public health expert, said policymakers must recognise the importance of entomologists and other scientific experts and act accordingly if they want to build a healthcare system capable of responding to emergencies.

If it's not possible to create permanent posts and career structures immediately, entomologists should at least be engaged as consultants, he said.

When contacted on September 25, Abul Khair Mohammad Hafizullah Khan, joint secretary (Urban Development) of the Local Government Division, said the government has already taken up a World Bank-funded public health project, and one of its main components is vector management.

"In order to curb the spread of dengue, posts of specialists, including entomologists, have been created under the Improvement of Urban Public Health Preventive Services Project."

However, the recruitment of manpower under the project will take a considerable amount of time, he added.

leading to negligence in seeking medical care and late testing.

"Many patients fail to recognise warning signs such as severe abdominal pain, breathing difficulties, bleeding, extreme fatigue, or a sharp fall in urination. By the time they arrive at hospitals, their condition is often critical," he said.

He added that many critically ill patients are referred to Dhaka hospitals from districts, but delays in referral are also driving up fatalities. He urged district-level hospitals to strictly follow national treatment guidelines and treat patients locally.

Public health expert Mohammad Mushtaq Husain echoed the call for early treatment and stronger healthcare capacity outside Dhaka.

He stressed the need to strengthen secondary care hospitals to better manage vulnerable groups, including infants, the elderly, and patients with comorbidities, so that they can be stabilised before referral to tertiary centres.

Four individuals, who were denied councilorship, had filed a writ petition on September 22, challenging Aminul's letter and the HC bench ordered a stay for 15 days on the operation of the letter.

However, following a petition filed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports

Doctors find 'no signs of rape'

FROM PAGE 1

Yesterday, Joya told The Daily Star that the team included the hospital's medical officers Mosharraf Hossain and Nahida Akhter.

She refused to provide any details of the report, saying, "We have submitted the report to higher authorities, and they will handle further disclosure."

Contacted, Civil Surgeon Shaber said that the medical board had found "no evidence of assault".

"However, this is a matter for the court, which will determine the truth," he said.

The girl was admitted on the night of September 23, and samples were collected the next day, he said.

He added that they handed the report over to the investigation officer of the case and the superintendent of police immediately after receiving it on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Kripa Tripura,

spokesperson for the Jumma Chhatra Janata, alleged that it was a "fabricated report by the government".

"We don't know of any rape case report being released this quickly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. We demand a fair and proper investigation," he said.

The Daily Star's attempts to speak to the girl's family have not yet been successful.

The alleged incident took place on September 23 when the eighth grader was returning home from private tuition around 9:00pm. Her father filed a case the next morning with Khagrachhari Sadar Police Station against three unidentified men.

Protests and violence erupted over the incident under the banner of Jumma Chhatra Janata. Amid the violence, three people were shot dead and at least four others were injured on September 28.

BCB set for controversial

FROM PAGE 1

Commissioner's office in Mirpur.

"Today cricket has 100 percent lost; there is no doubt about it. You talk loudly about needing to stop fixing in Bangladesh cricket; first stop the election fixing, then we can think about stopping cricket fixing.... This election has become a black spot for the BCB," he added.

BCB had previously decided to allow the 15 clubs to participate given the fact that there was no conviction against those clubs, leaving the issue to the jurisdiction of the EC, which initially dropped the councilors from the 15 clubs from the draft voter list pending an appeal. Following the appeal, the EC allowed them to participate before Faruque's writ petition left the clubs' fate hanging.

The last-minute suspension of 15 councilors had apparently left Tamim disappointed as he was banking on those votes in the battle for 12 directors' positions from the Dhaka club category.

Tamim had been critical of the way the councilors were being nominated from districts and divisional categories.

The former Bangladesh skipper had previously blamed the incumbent BCB president Aminul Islam Bulbul of influencing nomination from the district and divisional sports associations after Aminul sent a letter on September 18 to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, asking to send councilors' names from the ad hoc committee.

Four individuals, who were denied councilorship, had filed a writ petition on September 22, challenging Aminul's letter and the HC bench ordered a stay for 15 days on the operation of the letter.

Meanwhile, Lutfor Rahman Badal, another BCB councilor from a Dhaka-based club, felt that Tamim and others stepped away fearing defeat in the elections.

"As a candidate I feel that they made their calculations and came to the conclusion that

DHAKA

Chaotic crowding at Dhaka airport

Relatives swarm arrival, departure zones despite entry restrictions, disrupting passenger movement

RASHIDUL HASAN

The arrival canopy and departure driveway areas at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) have turned chaotic as large numbers of people crowd the spaces to see off or welcome relatives, disrupting passenger movement and creating traffic congestion.

In August, the airport authorities instructed that a maximum of two people would be allowed to accompany passengers at the departure driveway and arrival canopy. But during recent visits to Terminal 1 and Terminal 2, it was seen that no one followed the rule.

The situation worsens when several flights land within a short time, as many visitors flock to the canopy area, often crossing the security fence. Despite signboards at both entrances prohibiting the entry of co-passengers and visitors, few pay attention.

Security personnel were seen making repeated announcements, urging visitors to give way to passengers and vehicles, but people rarely moved



until they had received or seen off relatives.

Visitors swarmed the areas like bees after flights landed, with some even waiting at the departure driveway until planes took off. Many arriving passengers boarded waiting vehicles directly from the canopy, but the overflow of visitors often turned the space into a marketplace, disrupting smooth exit and adding to congestion.

Syed Ali, who came from Pabna with five relatives to receive his uncle, said he felt it was necessary to be there.

Another visitor, Rabeya Shimu from Rajshahi, who also came with four relatives, said relatives from abroad feel displeased if no one comes to receive them, though she admitted the environment would improve if visitor numbers were controlled.

On average, 160 to 165 international flights operate daily from HSIA, which has a capacity of eight million passengers a year but handled 12.5 million last year.

Around 30,000 passengers travel through the

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



Visitors continue to swarm the departure driveway and arrival canopy areas at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, hindering smooth passenger movement. Although the airport authorities have instructed that only two persons may accompany a passenger, most people ignore the rule. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Playground lost to seized vehicles

Section of Mirpur's Golartek field remains occupied by police for over a decade

DIPAN NANDY

Years go by, vehicles come and go, and assurances are made one after another. Yet the Golartek playground in Mirpur 1 has not been freed from occupation.

For more than a decade, Darus Salam Police Station has occupied part of the field with seized vehicles.

Covering four acres, this is the largest playground under Dhaka North City Corporation and is locally known as "Golartek Math".

On August 23, 2008, seven new police stations, including Darus Salam Police Station, were formed by breaking up Mirpur Police Station.

Residents complain that two years after the Darus Salam station was established, seized vehicles began filling the Golartek field, a process that has continued for over a decade.

Although DNCC administration and locals have repeatedly demanded that the field be freed of vehicles, the police have only given assurances without implementation.

Police officials say the vehicles are stored there as case exhibits. Since the station has no space of its own, the vehicles will be removed once



alternative land is found. They said they have written to the city corporation requesting land, but no space has been allocated.

A recent visit showed the southwest section of the field occupied by more than 10 trucks, about a dozen buses, along with CNG run autorickshaws, minibuses, private cars, pickup vans, human haulers, motorcycles, and rickshaws -- totalling over 50 vehicles.

On the other side are the GBHB Club and the office of Suchana Cooperative Society. Next to them, a large portion

has been taken up by a permanent badminton court fenced with nets. Amrita Roy, a local, said, "No one comes to play on that side because of the vehicles. I've been seeing these cars for six to seven years. Who should we complain to? What's the use?"

An

Ansar

member,

responsible

for

the

field's

security

for

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year,

said,

"These

cars

belong

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Darus

Salam

Police

Station."

Rasel

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allocated.

"There are no playgrounds left in Mirpur. Police are supposed to be friends of the people,

but if they occupy our spaces, where will people go? We want a field to play on."

Altaf Hossain, a student at St Joseph Higher Secondary School, said, "After the police station was set up, cars started entering this field one after another. This is a playground, not police property. There's space at the Darus Salam Zone Assistant Commissioner's office nearby -- they should keep the cars there. Why in our field?"

Contacted, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Mirpur division) Maksudur Rahman said, "These vehicles are not police property; they are case exhibits. Exhibits are a matter for the court."

"We're forced to put these cars here because our police station building is also in a rented house. If our land is allocated, if the police station goes to the new building, there will be no problem," he said.

DNCC Administrator Mohammad Azar said, "We have notified the police station about removing their dumping station from the field. Discussions are ongoing. We hope to take strict decisions on this matter soon."

"Once the police remove the vehicles from the field, we will renovate the entire playground," he said.

ASIA DIALOGUE 2025 HIT FORUM

Asia's top editors in Seoul for ANN meet, HIT Forum

THE KOREA HERALD

Top editors and publishers from 20 media outlets across 19 Asian countries are convening in Seoul this week for the annual board meeting of the Asia News Network, which will be held in conjunction with Today's 2025 Korea Herald HIT Forum.

Founded in 1999, ANN has worked to amplify Asia's voice in global discourse through joint reporting and closer cooperation among member newsrooms.

Its annual board meeting rotates among member countries, and this year's session takes place in Seoul against the backdrop of President Lee Jae Myung's new administration and the upcoming Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Gyeongju, North Gyeongsang Province.

Ahead of the meeting, visiting editors toured the headquarters of Hybe, the K-pop agency behind global sensation BTS, and the Samsung Innovation Museum yesterday to gain firsthand insight into Korean companies' innovation strategies and the global appeal of K-culture.

Today, ANN delegates will also join the 2025 Korea Herald HIT Forum as speakers. Under the theme "Asia Dialogue: Shifting Trade Order and Regional Solidarity," they will discuss pressing trade and security challenges, as well as the significance of Korea hosting this year's APEC summit.

"At a time when many nations are grappling with trade frictions, it is highly meaningful that Asia's leading editors are coming together in Seoul to seek solidarity," said Choi Jin young, CEO of Herald Media Group.

"We hope this forum will help elevate regional attention on the APEC summit."

Prioritise road safety in election manifestos

Nirapad Sarak Chai urges political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nirapad Sarak Chai (Nischa) yesterday urged all political parties to prioritise road safety in their upcoming election manifestos to ensure long-term national commitment.

At a press conference at Jatiya Press Club, the organisation also called for forming a separate Road Safety Unit in every educational institution, similar to Girl Guides or Scouts, so students can be educated on safe road use and take part in awareness activities.

Founded in 1993, Nischa is a non-political, voluntary social movement advocating safer roads across the country.

In the absence of Ilias Kanchan, veteran actor and founder of Nischa, who is now in the UK for treatment, the demands were read out by founding member Liton Ershad.

Liton said road safety challenges are too complex for the government alone to solve and require the involvement of national and international organisations, institutions and experts.

While the Road Transport Act 2018 introduced some positive measures, he noted that it still has many shortcomings.

Hes stressed that tackling five key risk factors -- speeding, not wearing standard helmets, not using seatbelts, driving under the influence, and lack of child restraints -- along with adopting the Safe System Approach, could make roads truly safe.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3



Metal rods protrude hazardously from a road divider as a car drives by. Dhaka South City Corporation has demolished the divider to build a U-turn under the Swamibag section of the Mayor Hanif Flyover, without taking any precautionary measures to shield the area from vehicles or pedestrians. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



Out of around 35,000 Durga Puja mandaps, sabotage attempts were reported in 49. These were carried out by a few cowards with a sick mindset. Legal action has been taken in every case.

AKM SHAHIDUR RAHMAN
Rab Director General



Some countries want Hasina in power so they can keep Bangladesh under their control forever. Why is there unrest in the hills during puja? Why has the unrest suddenly been created there? This is a planned move.

RUHUL KABIR RIZVI
BNP Senior Joint Secretary General



Two held over rape of girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Mymensingh

Police have arrested two persons on charges of raping a schoolgirl in Mymensingh's Haluaghata upazila on Monday.

The arrestees are Abul Bashir, 22, and Milon Mia, 21, said Hafizul Islam Harun, officer in charge of Haluaghata Police Station.

He said the victim's mother filed a case against them with the police station on Tuesday.

Bashir, the prime accused, was arrested in Haluaghata yesterday, while Milon the night before, the OC said.

Quoting the case statement, the OC said the 15-year-old Garo girl, a ninth grader, was on her way home on Monday afternoon after meeting her friends.

Milon, who was with her, put her in an autorickshaw. The driver, Bashir, then took her to a secluded place and raped her, the OC said.

Locals rescued the girl and took her home, he added.

Milon was placed before a court yesterday, which sent him to jail. Bashir will be produced before it today, the OC said.

KAPTAI LAKE

Three dead,
2 missing in
separate boat
mishaps

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Rangamati

At least three people died and two others went missing in separate incidents of boat capsizing in Kapta Lake in Langadu and Naniarchar upazilas of Rangamati on Tuesday.

In Gulshakhal area of Langadu upazila, a small boat with five people on board capsized in the evening, leaving a woman and two children dead.

Locals recovered the body of Rana, 7, at night while Shirina Begum, 40, and her son Masum, 5, remained missing.

Firefighters recovered their bodies from the lake yesterday, said Jahangir Hossain, upazila nirbahi officer of Langadu.

In Naniarchar upazila, two people went missing when their boat capsized amid inclement weather around 9:00pm while they were returning home, said Supon Chakma, chairman of the local union parishad.

Of the six people on board, four managed to swim ashore but Delishan Chakma and Jitesh Chakma drowned as they could not swim, he said.

Divers from the fire service in Rangamati town have been informed, while locals were conducting searches till filing of the report around 8:00pm.



In Manirampur upazila of Jashore, local women spend their days breaking snails brought in by traders. The flesh goes to fish enclosures, the shells to poultry feed, and the women earn Tk 130 for every sack of snails -- a small but vital boost to their seasonal income. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Illegal township sprouts on railway land

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU,
Pabna

An illegal township has sprouted on around 150 acres of railway land previously leased out for agriculture and fish farming in Bhangura upazila of Pabna.

According to the Railway Estate Department, 150 acres of agricultural land and 29 acres of wetlands in the Boral Bridge Rail Station area were leased out to 144 persons and organisations for cultivation and fish farming.

Over the past three decades, at least 500 unauthorised structures and establishments -- including slums, business centres, residential houses, markets, mosques, bus and autorickshaw stands, children's parks, and roads -- have been constructed on the land in the absence of strict monitoring.

Md Al Mamun, booking assistant (acting station master) of Boral Bridge Rail Station, said over a hundred permanent establishments, including multi-storyed buildings, have been illegally constructed on railway land.

"There are also several hundred shops and dozens of markets around the station -- all being used for commercial purposes, violating the lease conditions for the railway land," he said.

The station has 154.10 acres of land, including 34.11 acres of operational space, according to the Railway Estate Department.

Md Baki Billah, former chairman of Bhangura Upazila Parishad, told The Daily Star before his recent arrest that "the railway land has been used to develop the township over the last three decades due to people's necessities."

Baki and his family members are among the leading possessors of railway land in Bhangura, he said he was not aware of what

Municipality, according to lease documents.

Besides local encroachers, the Bhangura Municipality authority has illegally constructed a number of establishments on railway land in recent years, violating rules, including a market, children's park, and a concrete road on an abandoned rail track, known as Ghat Line.

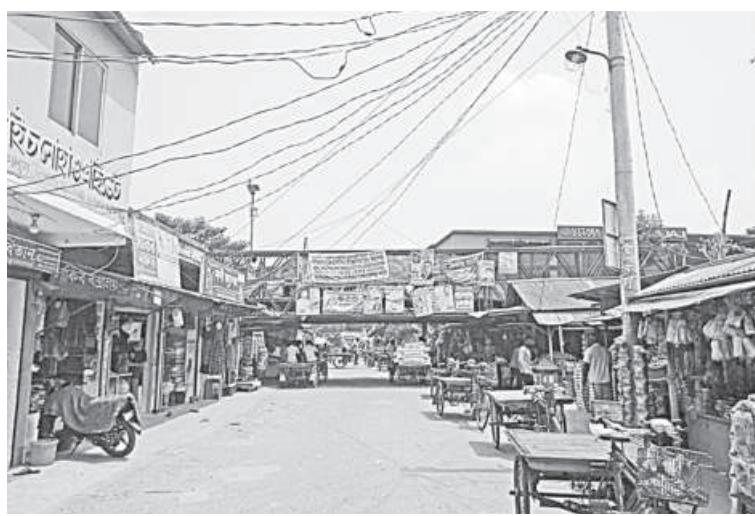
Md Eunus Ali, administrative officer of Bhangura Municipality, however, claimed that the market and other establishments were

constructed on leased railway land

happened in the past, as he has recently joined the railway's Ullapara Estate Office.

Nazmun Nahar, UNO of Bhangura and administrator of Bhangura, said she was not aware of anything that happened before. "The railway authority did not claim their land to the municipality authority. We will not proceed with further construction on railway land. If the railway wants to free their land, then we will take steps," she said.

Pakshey Divisional Estate Officer Md Ariful Islam said the



following the rules.

Contacted, Md Abu Bakar, a surveyor of the Railway Estate Department, said nobody can build permanent establishments on railway land.

"If anybody makes any structure filling up wetland and agricultural land, that is obviously illegal," he said.

Asked about the illegally developed township on leased railway land in Bhangura before. We will conduct another drive soon," the official added.

railway does not have enough manpower to take care of its vast land assets.

"When somebody takes lease of any land from the railway, we are unable to monitor them. We conduct eviction drives only when we get information about illegal encroachment," he said.

"We had evicted numerous illegal structures on railway land in Bhangura before. We will conduct another drive soon," the official added.

Two children tortured over alleged hilsa theft

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Patuakhali

Two children were allegedly tied up and tortured on charges of stealing hilsa in Patuakhali's Galachipa upazila on Monday.

The incident took place at Notun Sluice Bazar in Char Mohiuddin. Union parishad member Hasan Sardar has been accused of beating the boys.

The victims are Abdulla, 10, from Mahishkota village, and another boy from Char Agost. Abdulla lives with his grandfather Shahjahan.

Locals said the boys went fishing on Sunday night and stayed on a boat at the sluice ghat. On Monday, a fish trader accused them of stealing 10 hilsa from his depot. Hasan allegedly beat them, tied them up under the sun, and forced them to pose with hilsa in their hands for photos later shared online.

Shahjahan said, "When I protested, Hasan abused me and demanded Tk 10,500. I couldn't pay, so he forced me to sign a blank paper before releasing my grandson. Abdulla's legs were swollen and scarred due to the torture."

Hasan denied allegations of torturing the boys but admitted imposing the fine. "They were accused of stealing 10 hilsa. I fined them Tk 10,500. Since their guardians couldn't pay, I took their signatures on a blank paper."

OC Ashadur Rahman of Galachipa Police Station said, "Legal steps will be taken after a written complaint is filed."

Youth shot dead in Khulna

UNB, Khulna

A youth was shot dead yesterday while he was asleep at his home in Maheshwar Pasha area of Khulna city.

The deceased, Tanvir Hasan Shuvo, 29, was general manager of an international marketing company. He was preparing to go abroad.

Quoting family, Rafiqul Islam, officer in charge of Daulatpur Police Station, said Tanvir was asleep when he was shot around 4:30am. Family members rushed to his room after hearing the gunshot and found three bullet shells, the OC said.

He died at Khulna Medical College Hospital before he could be shifted to a Dhaka hospital, the OC said.

Two held for shaving fakir's hair in M'singh



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police on Tuesday arrested two men in Mymensingh city for their involvement in forcibly shaving the hair and beard of 70-year-old Halim Uddin Akand just before Eid ul-Azha this year.

The arrestees, Muzlu Mia, 50, and Sujon Mia, 32, of Kashiganj area in Tarakanda upazila, were named in the FIR. They were produced before a Mymensingh court yesterday noon, said OC Tipu Sultan of Tarakanda Police Station.

They confessed to their involvement in the incident, the OC said, adding that drives are underway to arrest the remaining accused.

On September 27, Halim's son filed a case with the police station accusing 12 people, including seven named suspects.

Halim Uddin, locally known as Halim Fakir, was humiliated by a group of so-called social workers at Kashiganj Bazar in Tarakanda.

A video of the incident triggered nationwide outrage and condemnation. It 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 Dehisi" (O Allah, You are witness!), they shave off his hair and beard.

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

Sylhet police launch app to boost public safety

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet Metropolitan Police yesterday launched a new mobile application, "GenieA," aimed at enhancing public safety and providing citizens with easier access to police services.

The app was inaugurated by Police Commissioner Abdul Quddus Chowdhury. It will be piloted at Moglazar Police Station from October 16.

According to SMP, two core features have been introduced initially. An SOS button allows citizens in distress to press for an automated alert to the police. The other feature is incident reporting, enabling users to report criminal activities through the app.

SMP plans to introduce around 16 features in phases, including CCTV monitoring, drone surveillance, enhanced security for school students, blockchain-enabled evidence preservation, AI-driven legal assistance, online filing of GDs and FIRs, integration with fire service and other emergency responders, traffic fine payment and emergency ambulance service.

200 birds burnt in Kapasia bazar fire



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A fire at Kapasia Bazar in Gazipur has gutted at least five businesses and killed more than 200 birds, around 10:00am yesterday.

Firefighters from Kapasia Fire Service and Civil Defence brought it under control after about an hour and a half of effort.

"Initially, it is suspected that the fire started from an electrical short circuit," said Mahfuzur Rahman, in-charge of Kapasia Fire Service.

Bird trader Barendra Mandal said about 200 birds -- budgerigars, cockatiels, pheasants, pigeons, and doves -- perished in the fire. Bird food worth Tk 20 lakh was also destroyed, he said.

Sub-inspector Shafiq Mia of Kapasia Police Station said, "We will provide accurate details after the investigation is completed."

Eight rescued from traffickers in Teknaf

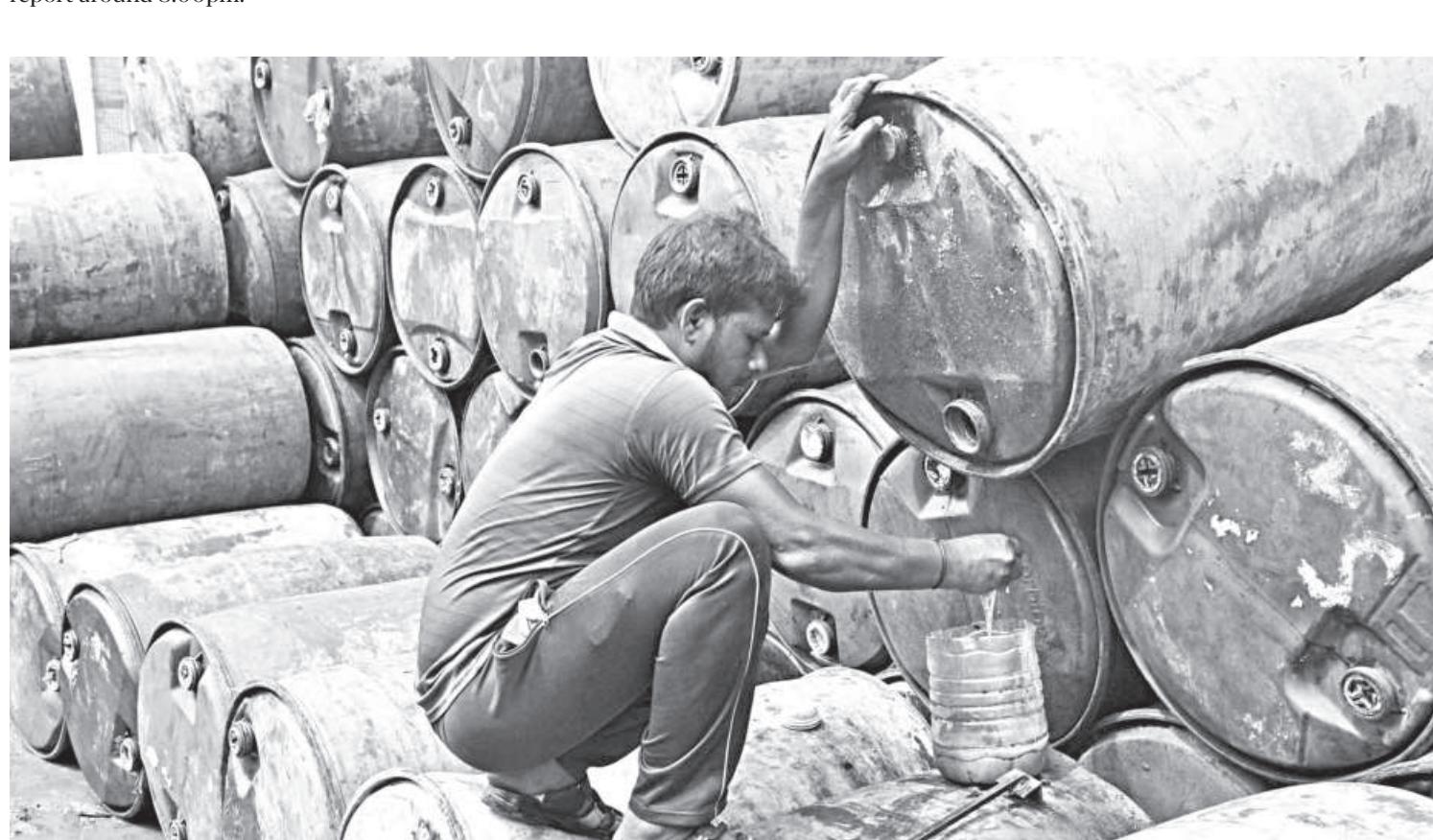
STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Members of the coast guard and navy rescued eight people -- seven women and one child -- during a joint operation in the Baharchhara hills of Teknaf, Cox's Bazar, said Lieutenant Commander Syamul Hoque, media officer of Coast Guard, yesterday.

He said intelligence reports suggested that several people had been held captive in Baharchhara hills to be trafficked to Malaysia by sea.

He said they launched the operation on Tuesday between 5:00pm and 7:00pm.

The traffickers managed to flee after sensing the presence of the joint forces, he added.



Haider Ali stuffs sponges into empty drums to extract leftover soybean and palm oil. Collecting 2.5 to 3 litres a day from drums discarded by large traders, he sells the oil in local markets and manages to support his family. The photo was taken at Shaheb Bazar in Rajshahi yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

INTERNATIONAL

DHAKA THURSDAY OCTOBER 2, 2025

ASHWIN 17, 1432 BS

The Daily Star

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We are talking about plans for the illegal seizure of Russian property. In Russian, we call that simply theft.

DMITRY PESKOV
Kremlin spokesman on European plan to seize Russian assets frozen in Europe to help Ukraine, vows retaliation



Rescuers search for three people who were reported missing under the rubble of a collapsed building in Bogo City yesterday, after a powerful 6.9 magnitude earthquake jolted the central Philippines.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Quake kills 69 in Philippines

Rescuers hunt for survivors

REUTERS, Bogo

Rescue teams in the Philippines searched for survivors in mud and rubble yesterday and authorities urged help for hospitals inundated with the injured after the deadliest earthquake in more than a decade killed at least 69 people.

Authorities said they feared the eventual toll would be even higher from the shallow 6.9-magnitude earthquake, which struck in waters off the central holiday island of Cebu late on Tuesday.

Buildings came crashing down, including a church that was more than 100 years old. Shops, homes and bridges were damaged across the island's northern coast and power was cut.

Aftershocks continued throughout yesterday, as authorities set up mobile kitchens for hundreds of evacuees and raced to provide temporary power as night approached. Bodies covered in black sheets were carried on stretchers and placed side-by-side on the ground outside a hospital in Bogo, the worst-affected city, along the coast about 18 km from the epicentre. A man wept as he pulled back a plastic sheet and clutched the face of a dead relative.

Civil defence teams were searching for signs of life beneath a landslide that had killed at least 14 people in the city. "As much as I would want to say there's no more fatalities, the toll could still go up," Cebu provincial information officer Ainjeliz Orong said of the landslide.

The quake was the country's deadliest since at least 2013, when a 7.2-magnitude quake struck the neighbouring island of Bohol, killing 222 people.

GAZA PEACE PLAN

Trump turns tables for Israel

AFP, Washington

In presenting a Gaza plan as an ultimatum to Hamas, US President Donald Trump has turned the tables to give Israel the advantage diplomatically -- and an even freer rein on the ground if a deal fails.

The White House on Monday released a 20-point plan that would end Israel's relentless nearly two-year offensive in Gaza, win the freedom of hostages and declare a special economic zone under Trump's tutelage.

Both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Trump warned Hamas, whose unprecedented October 7, 2023 attack ignited the war, with Trump saying Tuesday that the group would "pay in hell" if it did not accept the plan within days.

Aaron David Miller, a veteran advisor to US secretaries of state on Middle East diplomacy, said the plan had elements for success but needed far more detail fleshed out, for which Trump may not show the commitment.

"Donald Trump has strategic instincts, but he doesn't have a strategy for how to get from point A to point B," said Miller, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"He's a situationalist, he's a transactionalist. He doesn't think these things through. Anchorage is a classic example," he said, referring to Trump's summit in Alaska a month earlier with President Vladimir Putin that ended in vague talk of progress on Ukraine and, like Monday, no questions from the press.

Israel has faced growing outrage over its military campaign. The United Nations has declared famine in part of the Gaza Strip and UN investigators say Israel is committing genocide, charges both rejected by Israel.



Netanyahu and Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff had worked out revisions to the plan, which no longer clearly rules out Israeli annexation of the West Bank, an idea advocated by Netanyahu's far-right allies.

The plan is vague on Palestinian statehood, long opposed by Netanyahu, and it speaks of an eventual "credible pathway."

Brian Katulis, a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute who worked on the Israeli-Palestinian issue under former president Bill Clinton, said Trump's plan was effectively a "fig leaf" to counter Hamas leaders available to make decisions," she said.

"So I think there are important reasons why we needed an updated framework."

Israel's attempt to secure unconditional surrender," he said.

"It shows that Trump is willing to sign an even blander check to Israel if Hamas doesn't agree to this deal.

He said the main success was that Trump was able to "clean the mess that Israel created" by having Netanyahu apologize to Qatar for a strike in the Gulf power on Hamas leaders who were due to discuss a ceasefire proposal.

Trump, rarely described as detail-oriented, is the unlikely latest world leader to present a comprehensive plan on the Middle East.

Former US president Bill Clinton laid out a far more granular deal to settle the conflict at the Camp David summit near the end of his presidency.

That summit failed, with Israel and Clinton blaming late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat for not compromising, but some Palestinians questioned whether an all-or-nothing approach was ever going to work on such complex problems.

"The historical record isn't promising on a grand bargain," said Dana Stroul, the former top Pentagon official who is a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

"Even going from 21 to 20 points, that's a lot to be implemented and a lot of opportunities for spoilers," she said.

But she said the difference this time was "buy-in from the region" -- and more dire circumstances.

"The humanitarian situation is worse, the choices for the Israeli military and government are worse, Israel's international isolation is worse, and there are fewer living Hamas leaders available to make decisions," she said.

"So I think there are important reasons why we needed an updated framework."

Joy as internet restored in Afghanistan

AFP, Kabul

Mobile networks and the internet were restored across Afghanistan yesterday, 48 hours after the Taliban authorities shut down telecommunications.

Confusion gripped the South Asian country on Monday night when mobile phone service and the internet went down without warning, freezing businesses and cutting Afghans off from the rest of the world.

The massive blackout came weeks after the government began cutting internet connections to some provinces to prevent "immorality".

AFP journalists yesterday reported that mobile phone signals and wifi had returned to provinces across the country.

The Taliban government has yet to comment on the telecommunications shutdown.

On Wednesday night, hundreds of Afghans poured onto the streets in the capital Kabul, spreading the word that the internet was back.

"It's like Eid," said 26-year-old Sohrab Ahmadi, a delivery driver.

After days of tension, Afghans celebrated by buying sweets and balloons, as drivers honked their horns, phones pressed to their ears.

Qatar receives US security guarantees

AFP, Washington

The United States will regard "any armed attack" on Qatari territory as a threat to Washington and will provide the Gulf Arab state with security guarantees, the White House said, after an Israeli strike on the country last month.

"In light of the continuing threats to the State of Qatar posed by foreign aggression, it is the policy of the United States to guarantee the security and territorial integrity of the State of Qatar against external attack," said an Executive Order signed by US President Donald Trump on Monday.

In the event of an attack on Qatar, the United States will "take all lawful and appropriate measures -- including diplomatic, economic, and, if necessary, military -- to defend the interests of the United States and of the State of Qatar and to restore peace and stability," the order said.

The agreement comes after an Israeli strike on the key US regional ally on September 9, targeting officials from the Palestinian group Hamas who were discussing a US peace proposal for the war in Gaza.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Qatar's prime minister from the White House on Monday, apologising for strikes and promising not to do so again, the United States said.

Netanyahu was in Washington to meet Trump, and had until then been defiant since ordering the September 9 strikes. Israel has repeatedly said it reserves the right to strike Hamas anywhere in the world, drawing strong reactions from Arab countries.

Qatar is a key US ally in the Gulf and hosts the largest US military base in the region at al-Udeid, which also includes a regional headquarters for elements of US Central Command.

INDONESIA SCHOOL COLLAPSE Rescue ops on to save 90 missing

AFP, Sidoarjo

Rescuers pulled two survivors from a collapsed school in Indonesia yesterday as frantic parents demanded rescuers speed up efforts to find dozens of children believed still trapped in the rubble two days on.

Part of the multi-storey boarding school in the town of Sidoarjo on the island of Java, gave way suddenly on Monday as students gathered for afternoon prayers.

Four bodies have been retrieved and about 90 people are still missing.

Rescuers retrieved two survivors yesterday, including a boy who was taken to hospital with a head injury but was "in good condition", said Emi Freezer of the National Search and Rescue Agency.

Tearful parents milled near the ruins throughout Wednesday awaiting news. Based on school records "91 people are suspected to be buried," National Disaster and Mitigation Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhamadi said in a statement late Tuesday.

"We believe our children might still be alive because they were crying for help," said father Abdul Hanan, whose 14-year-old son is missing. "The rescue operation must be accelerated."

"We are racing against time now," the 45-year-old added, bursting into tears.

Investigations into the cause of the collapse are ongoing but initial signs point to structural issues and construction that did not meet building standards, experts said. The building folded after its foundation pillars failed to support the weight of new construction on the fourth floor of the school, said officials.



A relative of a victim is being carried away from the scene yesterday after a school building collapsed on Monday in Indonesia's East Java province.

Nigeria boat tragedy takes 26 lives

AFP, Lagos

A boat accident on the Niger River in southern Nigeria has killed at least 26 people, authorities in Kogi State said yesterday.

The boat was taking traders to a market in Illushi in Edo State on the other side of the river bank, Kingsley Femi Fanwo, Kogi State commissioner for information, said in a statement on X.

"Reports indicate that the unfortunate incident has allegedly claimed the lives of not less than 26 passengers," he said.

The national rescue agency, NEMA, told AFP that it had sent teams to the scene.

Accidents are common on Nigeria's busy rivers, often caused by overloaded boats, poor maintenance or failure to comply with safety regulations.

Last month, a crowded ferry boat capsized in Niger State after reportedly hitting a tree stump, drowning at least 32 people.

Trump's Gaza plan is a weak foundation for peace

The proposal's unilateral terms show glaring weaknesses

A cessation of two years of bloodshed in Gaza is an urgent moral and humanitarian imperative. The ceasefire proposal advanced by US President Donald Trump would deliver a pause in the colossal human cost. The guarantee of full aid is a vital lifeline for a population grappling with famine. This would bring immediate, if immense, relief to the people of Gaza. Even so, it is a proposal that offers peace without a viable political horizon, and in doing so, risks becoming a recipe for the next conflict. It is a political document that, while halting the violence, seeks to impose a unilateral new order.

According to the document, after the reform of the Palestinian Authority, conditions "may finally be in place for a credible pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood." This is nothing but diplomatic ambiguity. This vague promise is then rendered almost meaningless by the political reality it enables. It becomes more fragile as Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu has reaffirmed his stance to resist Palestinian statehood.

As critics have rightly pointed out, it provides all guarantees to one side and almost none to the other. The mechanisms, such as the withdrawal of Israeli troops contingent on opaque conditions and the establishment of a "Board of Peace" under Trump's stewardship with a controversial figure, Tony Blair, are designed to ensure Israeli security concerns are met. But what about Palestinian political and human rights? What about the overarching issues of justice and accountability? It makes no mention of genocide against the Palestinian people, allegations detailed by human rights organisations. Instead, the plan offers a governance vacuum. An international board, no matter how well-intentioned, is a poor substitute for legitimate, representative Palestinian leadership. This approach not only disenfranchises the Palestinian people but also sows the seeds for future instability.

Furthermore, Trump's heavy-handed ultimatum is a form of coercive diplomacy that may not build a lasting peace. It reinforces a damaging power dynamic where the terms are dictated by the party that wields superior military force, funded and diplomatically shielded by its superpower patron. A durable peace must be built on mutual recognition of rights and needs.

This arrives at a curious diplomatic moment. Just as the US and Israel pursue this unilateral track, a significant shift is occurring among Western allies. The recent recognitions of Palestinian statehood by several European nations, however symbolic, are a clear signal that the international community is seeking to re-anchor the conflict to the principle of a two-state solution. Trump's plan, by contrast, seems to ignore this consensus. Nevertheless, despite its flaws and ambiguities, the framework's immediate goal is to halt the bloodshed in Gaza, which is significant. And we welcome any respite for the people of Gaza. But a lasting solution requires a credible political process that addresses the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians. Without that, today's ceasefire will only be an interlude before the next explosion.

A generation left waiting

Govt must address unemployment, particularly among educated youth

That one in three university graduates in the country remained unemployed for up to two years last year is deeply worrying. It highlights one of the most concerning aspects of how our economy is functioning. These findings come from the latest Labour Force Survey conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, which also reveals that one in seven university graduates has been without work for one to two years, while one in six has been unemployed for more than two years.

According to the survey, there were 26.24 lakh unemployed people in 2024, including 8.85 lakh university graduates. An earlier report by this daily shows that the unemployment rate among graduates, which was already high, rose further to 13.5 percent in 2024, up from 13.11 percent the previous year—the highest among all education levels. This points to another persistent problem. The most highly educated segment of our population has consistently struggled to find employment, even in comparison to those who are less educated. This indicates a serious mismatch between the jobs available in the market and the academic training our graduates receive. It also underscores the lack of investment in the economy, which is failing to generate quality jobs that require highly skilled individuals.

Bangladesh is currently experiencing a demographic dividend, with the working-age population growing larger than the dependent population. This shift offers the country a unique opportunity to accelerate growth. Yet, instead of harnessing the energy, creativity and talents of our young people, we are squandering it. Experts warn that long-term unemployment can have a scarring effect on young people's careers. Those who begin work after a delay of one or two years are likely to remain behind for the rest of their professional lives. This would not only cause immense financial difficulties but also take an immeasurable mental toll. The government must recognise that rising unemployment, particularly among the youth, is a matter of national emergency and treat it accordingly. It should engage experts, businesses and other stakeholders to devise ways of facilitating higher investment, improving education and creating jobs at the scale and quality our young people deserve.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

International Day of Non-Violence

Based on a 2007 resolution of the United Nations, today is observed as the International Day of Non-Violence to honour Mahatma Gandhi, who was born on October 2, 1869.



EDITORIAL

FROM CASE BACKLOG TO JUSTICE

A practical blueprint for our courts



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

KHAN KHALID ADNAN

The courts in Bangladesh are running on scarcity and delay. The docket contains above 45 lakh pending cases (as of December 31, 2024) and the judge-to-population ratio is among the weakest in South Asia. Women hold only 11 of 118 seats in the higher judiciary, which is neither fair nor smart management of national talent. These facts depict a structural failure that prices ordinary people out of timely justice and erodes public trust.

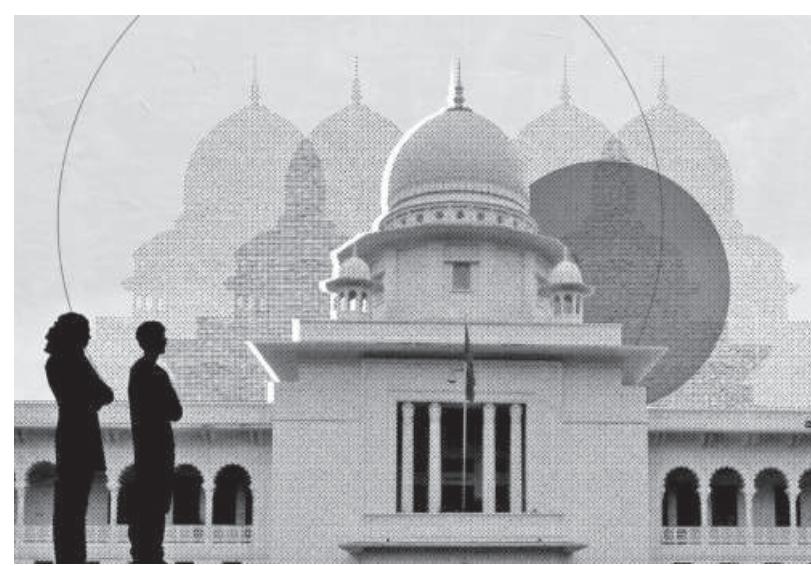
There have been some encouraging developments of late, however. The High Court recently restored the Supreme Court's authority over postings, promotions and discipline for the subordinate judiciary, and directed the government to create a separate judicial secretariat. This decision reconnects constitutional principle with operational control. But it will only work if the secretariat is staffed with planners, analysts and court managers who, among other long-overdue reforms, enforce a workforce plan that ties judge numbers to caseloads, retirements and expected filings by district. If it turns into another office that moves files rather than moving cases, the reform will die of bureaucracy.

Appointments must leave personal politics behind. The new Supreme Court Judges' Appointment Ordinance, 2025 establishes a council led by the chief justice. The council can raise quality and legitimacy if it publishes criteria, advertises vacancies, releases reasoned shortlists, and discloses how conflicts are managed. Without radical transparency, it risks becoming a new wrapper on an old practice. It should also set measurable goals for women's representation and state, in plain language, how caregiving breaks and family postings are treated so that merit is not gamed by gendered penalties.

Structure beats slogans. The government has now separated civil and criminal work at district level and created dedicated criminal courts. Specialisation helps only if it follows discipline. The Supreme Court should consider issuing binding practice directions that cap adjournments, fix

hearing windows, and require each court to publish and meet a daily hearing capacity. That is how you turn policy into throughput. The cause list must be a contract with the public, not a wish list for tomorrow.

And digital must become the default. The judiciary already runs an electronic cause list, a litigant portal, electronic certified copies, a judicial payment gateway, and a monitoring dashboard. A company bench has



FILE VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

begun paper-free proceedings. Make routine filings electronic by default, move service of process to verified digital channels with a physical fallback, and publish a monthly open-data release on filings, disposals, and age of cases by courts.

Civil procedure has finally been updated. The Code of Civil Procedure (CPC) was amended in May to cut dead time and quicken case flow. These textual changes must be translated into daily practice through directions that enforce time standards from summons to arguments, block serial adjournments without recorded exceptional reasons, and require early case conferences for complex matters.

Criminal delay needs its own toolkit. Create standing bail benches

timid. India has enacted a dedicated Mediation Act, 2023, and is pushing institutional mediation. Bangladesh should pass a modern mediation law and ratify the Singapore Convention on Mediation to make internationally mediated settlements enforceable. The case for action has been made for years; it is time to move from seminars to signatures and from pilot rooms to default routes. Chief Justice Syed Reafat Ahmed has also notably emphasised the importance of ADR in the country.

Also, the bench environment needs to be professionalised. Every High Court judge should have a law clerk or judicial researcher. Every district judge should have a trained case manager certified by the Judicial Administration

Training Institute (JATI). Expand JATI's mandate to cover modern scheduling, digital service, and dispute resolution training for case managers and list officers.

Moreover, it is crucial that access to courts is decentralised without fragmenting quality. The establishment of permanent High Court benches in divisional cities—which all political parties agreed on during talks with the National Consensus Commission in early July—would cut cost and travel time for citizens while aligning appellate oversight with regional needs. Design is key here: a single digital registry and a unified listing system should be maintained so that practice standards stay consistent nationwide.

Clean governance is not optional. The scandals surrounding former chief justices remain a standing warning. Wealth declarations for judges every three years, published online with a clear review mechanism, would make integrity checks routine rather than performative. The Judiciary Reform Commission pressed for this, yet recent reports show how implementation stalled for years due to lack of rules. Draft the rule, publish the data, and act on irregularities. Trust grows when the system chooses light over shadows.

The huge case backlog in courts will not shrink by wish alone. Pair the above reforms with a surge plan. Contract retired district judges with proven track records on fixed terms to clear aged tranches of routine appeals and revisions under appellate supervision with public metrics. The Judiciary Reform Commission also recommended this. Publish district-wise targets for filings, disposals, and age of cases, and track clearance rates monthly in a dashboard accessible to citizens. Use the existing digital rails to make performance visible.

The path forward is now clear enough. In short, appoint more judges, and appoint them better. Bring more women to the top through transparent criteria and family aware postings. Enforce time standards with real case management. Make digital the default. Turn ADR from theory into practice. Decentralise wisely. Open the books on assets and performance. Do all of this, and the case backlog will bend. But keep doing what we have been doing so far, and nothing will change except the number on the pending board. The choices we make today will determine whether justice will remain delayed, and denied in turn, or be delivered on time in the future.

The eternal curfew: When paying rent doesn't buy freedom



Parthib Mahmud
is business analyst at Ontik Advisory.

PARTHIB MAHMUD

Here's the absurdity: you pay rent for a flat in Bangladesh, but come midnight, you may or may not be allowed inside it. Most buildings shut their gates at midnight. After that, unless you claim an emergency, the guard has orders to bar you from entering or leaving. Arrive home at 12:30am, and you're no longer a tenant but an unwelcome guest, loitering outside your own building. It is a Bangladeshi irony: you pay rent but live like a boarder in a hostel. Most rental buildings in the city, even in relatively posh neighbourhoods, close their gates at midnight.

What's striking is how normally this is treated. In middle-class neighbourhoods, tenancy is seen less as possession of a home and more as admission to a dormitory. Rent is supposed to buy the use of the premises for the tenancy period. Furthermore, the irony is cruel: in a city where commuting can take longer than the workday, your reward is sometimes a locked gate.

The midnight gate is just the most visible rule. Others are softer but no less intrusive: no rooftop access after dark, or guest restrictions based on gender. They are rarely written into

leases. They are enforced through frowns, questions, and the quiet threat of being labelled "difficult."

The Constitution of Bangladesh has a straightforward position. Article 36 guarantees that "subject to any reasonable restriction imposed by law in the public interest, every citizen shall have the right to move freely throughout Bangladesh..." The important part is the phrase "by law." A building committee's circular or a landlord's whim is not law. Reasonable restrictions must be grounded in legislation, not in the preferences of whoever holds the keys.

The Transfer of Property Act, 1882, still the basis of tenancy law, goes further. Tenancy is not charity. Section 108 says tenants paying rent are entitled to enjoy the property "without interruption." Locking the gate after hours is plainly an interruption. You cannot sell uninterrupted possession and then interrupt it nightly.

Moreover, if the aforementioned laws do not suffice, the Penal Code offers language that should make landlords nervous. Section 339 defines wrongful restraint as preventing someone from going in a direction to which they have the right. Section

340 defines wrongful confinement as wrongfully restraining someone so that they are unable to leave a location from which they have the right to leave. Refusing entry or exit, absent a genuine security emergency, begins to seem just that.

To see why it matters, you must understand how Dhaka eats time. The city's road network covers just seven to eight percent of land, far below the 20 to 25 percent in planned megacities. Dhaka ranks among the most congested cities; a 20-minute trip can stretch to two hours.

For the middle class, the workday doesn't end at 5pm. Private sector professionals routinely work 9-10 hours without overtime pay. Adding the commute makes it 12 hours away from home. By the time you have eaten or seen a friend, it is late.

There is also a safety angle often ignored. A tenant forced to linger outside in the dark, waiting for a guard to wake up or a landlord to grant permission, is exposed to greater danger than if simply let inside. For women, night-shift doctors, nurses, delivery riders or transport workers, this is not indulgence—it is about safety and dignity. The "security" argument collapses: you do not protect tenants by leaving them stranded on the street.

I have seen relatives sprint out after dinner to catch the gate by 11:59pm, breathless as if catching the last train. I have heard of tenants skipping hospital visits to avoid arguing with the guard. I have also seen friendships fade because meeting after work risked a lockdown. These small inconveniences add up. They corrode your autonomy—your home is not truly yours. They turn adults into boarders, citizens into subjects of control. It also reflects Bangladesh's discomfort with private life extending into late hours. To step outside after midnight without excuse is to invite suspicion.

None of this is to say that security concerns are irrelevant. Burglary is real, and residents want assurance. However, the solution is not a blanket curfew. Alternatives exist, and they are neither costly nor complex. Buildings can ensure 24/7 access with electronic locks or multiple keys issued to tenants. Guards can maintain entry logs without denying access. Noise can be addressed through quiet-hours rules, targeting real concerns without controlling movement. Above all, lease agreements should explicitly guarantee uninterrupted access.

Where negotiation fails, there are legal remedies. Tenants can invoke their rights under the Transfer of Property Act. Documented wrongful restraint—such as being locked out despite paying rent—may justify a general diary (GD) with the local police station. Legal aid groups, such as BLAST or Ain o Salish Kendra, can provide support. The essential point is that tenants need not accept midnight curfews as part of city life.

A rented flat is a home, not a dormitory with a curfew. Living in Dhaka already means sacrificing hours to traffic, patience to bureaucracy, and serenity to noise. To then be told your freedom to walk through your own gate expires at midnight is one indignity too many.

Law must recognise rape threats as audible intent



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ABDULLAH A DEWAN

On September 5, *The Daily Star* published an opinion piece titled "Threatening to gang-rape is not just vile, it's a crime." It recounted the case of a male student of Dhaka University who posted on social media that a female candidate in the student union elections should be "gang-raped." His grotesque threat led to nothing more than a six-month suspension. Such leniency is staggering in a country where, between January and August this year alone, 140 gang rapes were reported, according to Ain o Salish Kendra. The contradiction is glaring: rapists can be sent to the gallows, yet those who publicly fantasise about gang rape walk away with symbolic punishments.

This commentary is, in essence, a spinoff of *The Daily Star* opinion piece, carrying the argument further. A threat of rape or sexual assault is not just vile, it is itself violence, a weapon of intimidation that silences women and excludes them from public life. A man who utters such words exposes his predatory instinct. He should be behind bars, or at the very least forced to wear an ankle monitor, for he has already declared his capacity for violence. Wearing a tracking device may well be one of the most effective deterrents for all future rape and sexual assault threateners. It will also signal to others that there will be no escape from scrutiny once such threats are made.

Threat of sexual assault—from harassment to molestation to even rape—must be treated as a crime too. They are assaults on dignity and security. To dismiss such threats as casual banter is like saying a gun pointed at someone's head is not violence until the trigger is pulled.

Other countries recognise this clearly. In India, after the 2012 Delhi gang rape, the

Act of 1861 and the Sexual Offences Act of 2003. In Saudi Arabia's Sharia-based system, threats of sexual violence can lead to long prison terms. Civilised societies treat threats of sexual violence as crimes in themselves. Although certain provisions of Bangladesh's Penal Code, 1860 and the Cyber Security Ordinance, 2025 can be interpreted to classify online rape threats as criminal offence, there is no specific provision that deals with hate

or sexual assault—which can drive victims to suicide, force families to withdraw daughters from schools, and destroy futures—is often treated as a minor mischief.

In a country where political thuggery, campus violence, and systemic impunity dominate, extraordinary deterrence for sexual assault threats is required. Prison terms alone, often reduced or commuted through influence, do little to change behaviour. If

sex offenders. Countries like Poland, South Korea, and Indonesia have legalised chemical castration for convicted child rapists. In the US, several states allow it as a condition of parole. By surgically rendering perpetrators impotent, society sends an unambiguous message: the body of a woman is not a battlefield for political, religious, or personal dominance.

South Asia is plagued by what can only be called a culture of impunity. In Bangladesh, the word "eve-teasing" once masked a widespread epidemic of harassment, stalking, and threats of sexual violence. Girls as young as 12 have taken their own lives after repeated threats of rape or molestation. This is not just harassment; it is the systemic silencing of half the population. Perpetrators are emboldened to continue their criminal behaviour when they know the worst consequence is a brief arrest or, at most, a few years in prison, often followed by a political connection to secure release. The state must respond with punishments that are permanent, public, and proportionate to the terror inflicted.

Justice must mean more than symbolic outrage. Threats of rape and sexual assault should be criminalised as felonies, not treated as misdemeanour. Offenders should be listed in a national registry, their names permanently recorded as threats to society. Victims must receive not only legal protection but also psychological care and, where necessary, relocation to a safe environment.

Every society that tolerates threats of sexual violence is complicit in perpetuating gendered terror. Words can shatter lives, silence voices, and deny women their right to safety and dignity. The fight against rape culture must therefore move beyond condemning the act to eradicating the threats that normalise it. If men can threaten rape or sexual assault without irreversible consequences, these crimes will remain weapons of dominance. To treat such threats lightly is to ignore pathology at its earliest stage. Law must recognise rape threats not as speech, but as an audible intent—punishable and deterred. Only then will women trust that the law is on their side, and only then will men think twice before weaponising such threats to control women. Anything less is surrender.



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

country's criminal laws have been reformed. Threatening a woman with rape, even online, can be punishable now by up to seven years in prison under certain provisions of the Criminal (Amendment) Act of 2013. In the US, under certain circumstances, federal law treats a threat of sexual assault as a felony, an offence punishable by imprisonment. In the UK, threatening rape is prosecutable under both the Offences Against the Person

speech against women.

However, Bangladesh acknowledges rape as one of the gravest crimes. In 2020, the parliament amended the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act to introduce death penalty after waves of outrage over rape incidents. Since then, courts have sentenced perpetrators to death by hanging. But here lies the contradiction: while the act of rape may lead to the gallows, the threat of rape

men can terrorise women with impunity, they will continue to use sexual violence as an instrument of control. That is why threats must be met not with stricter punishments that permanently diminish the perpetrators' capacity to act on their words.

One of the strongest deterrents is to ensure that offenders cannot commit the act. Castration—chemical or surgical—has long been debated in Europe and the US for repeat

An Orwellian look at modern Asian upheavals



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SYED RAIYAN AMIR

On a night lit by the glow of telescreens, George Orwell imagined Winston Smith scribbling in his diary: Big Brother is watching you. That phrase, once dismissed as fiction, now rings uncomfortably close to our daily lives. Smartphones track us, CCTV cameras watch silently, and social media platforms record more than we willingly share. The unsettling part? These are not the tools of a future dictatorship—they are today's habits, normalised in the name of convenience and security. The question lingers: was Orwell simply writing a novel, or was he sketching the manual of a society we are now stumbling into?

Published in 1949, the novel *1984* was built from Orwell's bruises: his time in the Spanish Civil War, his observation of Stalin's Soviet Union, and the shadow of World War II. Surveillance, distortion of language, and the rewriting of history were not abstract ideas for him; they were lived experiences. What makes the book remarkable is not just its dystopian landscape but how it exposes the fragility of truth when power demands obedience. In Oceania, as in many corners of today's world, history is not remembered but edited. Language is not free but restricted, cut

into pieces until even imagination becomes unthinkable.

Orwell's warnings feel sharper in South and Southeast Asia, where democracy often lives on borrowed time. Bangladesh and Nepal's youth-led uprisings, Sri Lanka's collapse under economic mismanagement, and Indonesia's crackdowns on free speech all echo the patterns *1984* mapped out decades ago. If Oceania controlled minds through fear and language, these societies show how modern states still bend information, economics, and even history to tighten their grip.

Take Bangladesh and Nepal. In Bangladesh, what began as a simple protest to dismantle the quota system in public job recruitment turned into a nationwide movement in July-August 2024. In Nepal, the protests of 2025 were not merely angry gatherings; they were a reminder that a digitally charged generation refuses silence. In both countries, young demonstrators toppled a prime minister. Their strength didn't come from grand political parties but from collective frustration: lack of jobs, endless corruption, and governments trying to muzzle online speech. When authorities attempted to

shut down social platforms, it backfired spectacularly. Gen Z organised faster, angrier, and more determined. It is Orwell's logic in motion: the more you tighten control, the more truth slips through cracks.

Sri Lanka tells a different story. The 2022 economic meltdown stripped the island bare: fuel queues snaked across streets, food prices ballooned, and medicines vanished from shelves. Public patience collapsed with the currency. What followed was not a carefully plotted revolution but raw human desperation that ended with the president fleeing his palace. International lenders arrived with bailouts, yet the lesson is brutally simple. When governments hoard power but fail to secure the basic needs of their citizens, no amount of propaganda can protect them. Orwell wrote of regimes that manipulate hunger to tame populations; Sri Lanka's tragedy proves hunger can also topple the powerful.

Indonesia, often praised as one of Asia's strongest democracies, carries its own contradictions. Reports of human rights abuses in Papua, intimidation of journalists, and a creeping culture of self-censorship raise the question: how democratic is a democracy where criticism comes with risk? Here, Orwell's "thought police" may not appear in trench coats, but the effect is similar. Once media voices hesitate, once journalists start editing themselves out of fear, the state doesn't even need to censor directly—it has already won.

These examples may seem distant from the London of Orwell's imagination, yet the underlying thread is the same: control information, and you control people. In *1984*,

"Newspeak" reduced language so thoroughly that rebellion became linguistically impossible. In today's South Southeast Asian region, it is not new words but the flooding of misinformation, algorithm-driven outrage, and deliberate silencing of independent journalism that limit the public's ability to think freely. Orwell warned us that whoever defines words defines reality. Social media platforms, governments, and even corporations now compete for that power.

Still, it would be a mistake to treat *1984* as a prophecy fulfilled in one neat stroke. Every society is messier than fiction allows. Bangladesh and Nepal's youth use the same social media tools for both mobilisation and spreading rumours. Sri Lanka's crisis was rooted in economics as much as politics. Indonesia's democratic backsliding is complicated by regional conflicts and a history of military dominance. Orwell's novel doesn't predict these specifics; it equips us with a language to critique them. The challenge lies in not forcing lazy comparisons but recognising patterns of control that echo across time.

What makes the novel last is not just its politics but its humanity. Readers remember Winston not because he is heroic—he fails—but because he is recognisably ordinary. His brief affair, his scribbled thoughts, his fragile hope—these small details remind us that political oppression is never abstract. It crushes people's most private moments. In South and Southeast Asia today, behind the grand talk of "economic reform" or "digital regulation," it is always the ordinary people who pay the price: the student unable to find work, the family skipping meals, the

journalist too afraid to print what he knows. The human cost is what gives Orwell's warnings their weight.

What, then, is the way forward? The easy answer, "strengthen democracy," is too vague. The harder truth is that democracy demands specific, unglamorous safeguards: independent courts, free press, credible civil society organisations, and education systems that encourage critical thinking. Without any of them, societies slip into the cycles Orwell dissected so clearly.

The media deserves special mention. Once reduced to government mouthpieces or algorithm-driven echo chambers, the press loses its power to hold authority accountable. The new battleground is not only newsrooms but also classrooms. Teaching students how to read critically, to question sources, and to understand how digital platforms manipulate attention may be the only antidote to modern "Newspeak." If Orwell argued that words could be cut to cut thought, then expanding media literacy is our best chance to resist.

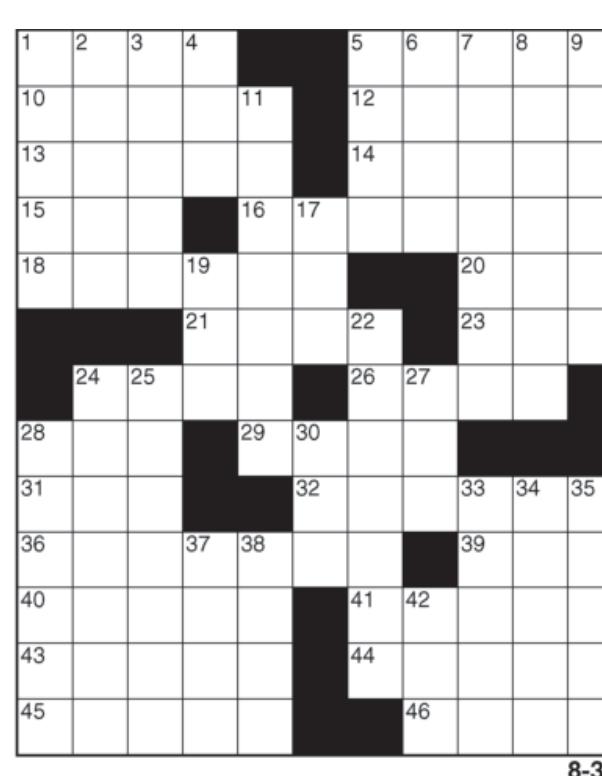
The lesson of *1984* is uncomfortable: repression does not begin with violence but with indifference. When citizens shrug at surveillance, when misinformation becomes entertainment, when hunger is tolerated as "temporary hardship," the groundwork is already laid. Asia's recent turmoil—whether in Dhaka, Kathmandu, Colombo or Jakarta—shows what happens when that groundwork hardens into reality. Fiction does not predict the future, but it can warn us. Orwell's warning has been sounding for more than 70 years. The real question is whether we are willing to listen.

ACROSS

- 1 Wilson of "Midnight in Paris"
- 5 44th president
- 10 Peeling gadget
- 12 Deserve
- 13 Ooze forth
- 14 Prelude
- 15 Workout unit
- 16 Sewing aid
- 18 Toward the wake
- 20 "The Simpsons" bartender
- 21 A bunch
- 23 Auditor's org.
- 24 String tie
- 26 Fail to fail
- 28 Scathing review
- 29 Ump's call
- 31 Imitating
- 32 Hospital worker
- 36 Old North Church sight
- 39 Spike of film
- 40 Supply with funding
- 41 Writer Jong
- 43 Point count
- 44 Barber's tool
- 45 Campout sights
- 46 Works leather
- 47 Verdi field
- 48 Becomes fuller
- 49 Blow one's top
- 50 Composer
- 51 Rorem
- 52 Leave off
- 53 Crooked
- 54 Greek goddess of
- 55 Hunting
- 56 Parallels
- 57 Makes amends
- 58 Criticism
- 59 Busy worker
- 60 Angled pipe
- 61 Alternative to dice
- 62 Tightrope walker's need
- 63 Continually
- 64 Gallery fill
- 65 Least bright
- 66 Vacuum's lack
- 67 "My Fair Lady" lady
- 68 Scout's work
- 69 Approaches
- 70 Civil wrong
- 71 Some sheep
- 72 Mob pariah

DOWN

- 1 Verdi field
- 2 Becomes fuller
- 3 Blow one's top
- 4 Composer
- 5 Leave off
- 6 Crooked
- 7 Greek goddess of
- 8 Parallels
- 9 Makes amends
- 10 Criticism
- 11 Busy worker
- 12 Alternative to dice
- 13 Tightrope walker's need
- 14 Continually
- 15 Gallery fill
- 16 Least bright
- 17 Vacuum's lack
- 18 "My Fair Lady" lady
- 19 Scout's work
- 20 Approaches
- 21 Civil wrong
- 22 Some sheep
- 23 Mob pariah



TUESDAY'S ANSWERS

M	E	D	A	L	S	I	D	E
A	V	E	N	U	E	G	I	L
D	E	N	I	A	L	U	G	L
B	A	S	E			U	N	I
E	L	I	T	I	N	A	F	E
E	G	G	A	C	E	I	N	N
T	A	N	G	L	E	E	S	C
S	E	I	N	E		U	S	E
F	A	S	T	E				
S	T	I	R					
H	E	E	L					
E	A	S	Y					

Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to dsopinion@gmail.com

Channels line up intriguing projects to cap Durga Puja celebrations



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Today is Bijoya Dashami, a day that marks the triumph of good over evil. It also symbolises personal growth, inspiring the believers of the religion to overcome their flaws,

cultivate virtues, and uphold righteousness. To celebrate this major festival, several television channels have lined up Durga Puja programmes for viewers of all. Among them, Duronto TV, the country's only children's entertainment channel, has once

again prepared special shows for the occasion.

Duronto TV will air the special Durga Puja drama *Hoi Hoi Holla* at 11:30 am and 8 pm. The channel also airs *Banai Mojor Khobar Maa-Baba Aar Ami*, a festive cooking show where children, accompanied by their parents, share Puja stories and prepare traditional dishes such as *labra* (mixed vegetable curry), *payesh* (rice pudding), *machher paturi* (fish wrapped in banana leaves), *khichuri*, and more. The show will be broadcast on October 2 at 1:00 pm and 9:00 pm.

As part of its Sharadiya Durga Puja programming, Duronto TV will also air a special episode of the popular show *Ronger Khelay Shurer Bhalay* titled *Ronger Khelay Shurer Bhalay Puja Melay* (Colours, music and the joy of Puja) at 6:30 pm on October 2. The programme features Puja songs accompanied by the rhythms of the dhak and the fragrance of incense.

On Bijoya Dashami, the light-hearted programme *Shubho*

Bijoya will air at 10:00 am, featuring elocutionist Bhashwar Bandyopadhyay and child artistes Barnamala, Kotha, and Samriddho.

Boishakhi Television has also arranged special programmes. Produced by Mamun Abdullah, *Desher Gaan: Jommo Bhumi* will air at 7:45 am with popular Puja-themed music videos. At 8:20 am, singer Badsha Bulbul will perform in *Baishakhi'r Sokaler Gaan*, produced by Litu Solaiman. At 9:10 am, *Music Album* will feature popular Puja songs from Bangladeshi films.

A special drama, *Mejai*, written and directed by Sajal Ahmed, will air at 10 pm, starring Mushfiq R Farhan, Saima, Rosey Siddique, Lutfur Rahman George, Sabnam Faria, Kochi Khondokar, and Al Mamun.

Maasranga Television will broadcast the Durga Puja special drama *Radhika* at 10:30 pm. Directed by Forhad Alam, it stars Fazlur Rahman Babu, Mihni Ahsan, Rana Chowdhury, Jayraj, and others.

Adnan Al Rajeev's 'Ali' earns Asian Academy award nomination

Bangladeshi director Adnan Al Rajeev's short film *Ali* has been nominated for Best Short Form (Scripted) at the Asian Academy Creative Awards 2025.

The 15-minute film follows a teenage boy in a coastal town where women are banned from singing; gifted with a voice that mimics a woman's, he secretly joins a competition, symbolising identity and resistance.

Ali premiered at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival, earning a Special Jury Mention—the first for a Bangladeshi film—and has since screened at Melbourne and Toronto festivals.

Competing entries include works from Australia, China, Japan, and the Philippines. The awards ceremony, organised by the Asian Academy of Creative Arts, will take place on December 4 at Singapore's Capitol Theatre.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Off Script- Crowd Work Show'

Off Script brings a unique twist to stand-up comedy, where performers Bipro, Emu, and Tashidil craft spontaneous humor directly from audience interactions. With jokes inspired by conversations, stories, and suggestions, the show promises unscripted, interactive entertainment that is fresh, unpredictable, and guaranteed to keep audiences laughing throughout.

Date: Thursday | October 2, 2025
Time: 8 pm onwards
Venue: 1/6, Noorjahan Road, Mohammadpur



Tilottoma revives father Bulbul Ahmed's timeless songs for Durga Puja

Singer Tahsin Farzana Tilottoma, daughter of legendary actor Bulbul Ahmed, has revived the classic *Janam Janam Dhore Prem Piyasi* from *Devdas* as part of *Mahanayak'er Gaan* Season 2, presented by Sylon Tea.

Released on September 30 for Durga Puja, the track marks the second of six songs Tilottoma will perform in the series. The season opened on September 4 with *Duti Mon Jokhon Kachhe Elo* from Sangini, coinciding with Bulbul

Ahmed's birth anniversary, and received wide acclaim.

Upcoming releases include *Hajar Moner Kachhe Proshno Rekhe, Jonno Theke Jolchhi Mago, Abar Dujone Dekha Holo, and Dukkho Bhalobese Premer Khela Khetre Hoy.*

Tilottoma first revisited her father's songs in 2013, and Sylon Tea formally launched the project in 2023.

NEWS

Launch blows past deadline

FROM PAGE 12

Mehboob added that CAAB already informed the International Civil Aviation Organization of upgrading the Cox's Bazar airport.

Asked when international flights will be operated to and from Cox's Bazar, Mehboob said it depends on Biman as it will operate international flights.

However, Boshra Islam, Biman's general manager (public relations), said CAAB is yet to inform the national flag carrier when the airfield will be upgraded to international airport. "That's why we couldn't start the process of selling tickets."

"We are planning to operate a weekly flight on Kolkata-Cox's Bazar-Dhaka route. But we couldn't start

the process as we don't know when the Cox's Bazar airfield will become an international airport."

During a recent visit to the under-construction international terminal at the airport, workers were seen busy installing glass panels on the outer sections of the terminal building.

Golam Murtaza Hossain, director of the airport, said customs and immigration facilities are already in place. "We are partially using the new terminal. For now, the arrival section is being used, while the departures will continue from the old building."

Mohammad Yunus Bhuiyan, director of the runway expansion and international terminal project at Cox's Bazar Airport, said 83 percent of the terminal's construction has

been completed. Interior works such as tiling, electrical wiring, and AC installation are underway, which are expected to be done by December.

The construction of boarding bridge has already been completed. Work on the car parking facility is also progressing. The 362-crore project for building the terminal is being implemented by China Railway First Group and National Development Engineering Ltd.

Another Tk 1,794-crore project for runway extension and other works is scheduled for completion in December 2026. China's Changjiang Yichang Waterway Engineering Bureau (CYWEB) and China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) is implementing the project.

His relatives, however, claimed that he was killed in a planned way for his stance against the drug trade.

Police said Sohel had at least 15 cases against him, including charges of drug dealing, robbery, and extortion. He was arrested by Rab-II in June in Cumilla's Daudkandi but was later released on bail.

In another incident, Aynal Hossain, 42, was beaten to death near his home in Phrabharkardi village on September 8. Police said he stood accused in at least eight cases, including robbery and rape.

For the wild

FROM PAGE 12

Africa and then across the globe, seeking to understand chimpanzees and the role humans play in safeguarding their habitat and the planet's health.

Goodall was a pioneer, both as a female scientist in the 1960s and for her work on primate behaviour. She cleared the way for other women, including the late Dian Fossey.

She also drew the public into the wild, partnering with the National Geographic Society to bring her beloved chimps into homes through film, TV and magazines.

She defied scientific norms, giving chimpanzees names instead of numbers, observing their personalities, and noting their family bonds and emotions. She also found they, like humans, used tools.

Israel intercepts Gaza flotilla

FROM PAGE 12

Israel's genocide against Palestine.

"I'm Shahidul Alam, a writer and photographer from Bangladesh. Bangladesh is the eighth most populous country in the world, and the entire population is here with me because they support the cause," he said in a video post from Otranto, Italy, published by the photography institute Drik in Dhaka.

Later, Drik posted a photo from Conscience, one of the 45 vessels in the flotilla. Shahidul is the first Bangladeshi to join such a mission to break the blockade on Gaza.

"I have made multiple attempts to go to Palestine, but I've always been stopped. This is my way to be there and ensure that Israel cannot stop me or us."

"This is undoubtedly a situation of genocide and apartheid. International action against South Africa was able to dethrone a powerful regime. There is no reason we cannot do the same

for Israel," he said, referring to the apartheid system that collapsed in the early 1990s.

"I'm here along with 180 million Bangladeshis, all of whom unite in saying Palestine will be free," he said.

THE PERILOUS VOYAGE

After a 10-day stop in Tunisia, where organisers reported two drone attacks, the flotilla resumed its journey on September 15.

Earlier, the flotilla said they faced intimidation off the Egyptian coast, some 182 kilometres away from Gaza.

One of its main ships, the Alma, was "aggressively circled by an Israeli warship", the group said, before another vessel, the Sirius, was subjected to "similar harassing manoeuvres".

The flotilla had earlier vowed to press on with its bid to deliver aid to the devastated coastal territory despite what it called "intimidation" tactics by the Israeli military.

For the restoration of democracy in Myanmar, beginning with those who recently fled to Bangladesh and those internally displaced.

"This is a new proposal made by Bangladesh," said Kabir, also the president of the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute.

Not a single Rohingya volunteered to return despite several attempts including under a tripartite mechanism involving Bangladesh, Myanmar and China. They argued that there was no guarantee of citizenship and safety back in Rakhine.

Bangladesh's stance is that repatriation is the only solution to the Rohingya crisis, and creating conditions for that was essential. That requires involvement of the global community.

Meanwhile, the UN has been advocating for livelihood options for the Rohingya in Bangladesh, but Bangladesh repeatedly said it was a difficult choice for the country given its huge unemployed youth population.

Yunus repeated it at the conference, emphasising that the country was suffering immensely -- economically, socially and environmentally.

Much of Bangladesh's foreign

policy now focuses on the Rohingya, said Chowdhury. Meanwhile, its own issues of climate change, poverty and migrant rights are getting low priorities.

"It is true that the Rohingya need more funding, but nobody is speaking about efficient use of funding."

The UN and international NGOs' overhead costs are very high when they operate in the Rohingya camps.

Such humanitarian activities should be managed by the national NGOs, he said.

"Whether we want or not, the Rohingya crisis is a reality. We are a victim -- we cannot ignore it. So, we must keep pushing the issue until it is addressed," said Sk. Tawfique M. Haque, director at the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance of North South University.

However, the government must have a coherent policy and smart diplomacy.

"Before the Rohingya conference in New York, we held a stakeholders' dialogue in Cox's Bazar. Later this year and early next year, we will have conferences in Qatar and Malaysia as follow-ups. I think this would be background for the next government to take the issue to the next level."

Crushing debt forces mother

FROM PAGE 12

Ismat Ara arranged for the woman to give up her child for Tk 65,000.

The mother said, "If my son had stayed with me, he would have grown up amid a lot of hardship. If he is raised by a better family, I will be at peace."

When the matter came to light yesterday afternoon, Mahesphur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Khadija Akhtar and Upazila Health Officer Helena Akhtar raided Pearless Private Clinic and arrested its owner Selim Reza Babu.

A mobile court later sentenced him to six months in jail and fined him Tk 1 lakh, said UNO Khadija, adding that Ismat Ara, who arranged for the baby to be sold, was also detained and a

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

In which Arundhati gives it those ones

A non-book review of 'Mother Mary Comes to Me' (Penguin, 2025) by Arundhati Roy

What I will attempt instead is to list eight things this book might do to you. And in that you might identify yourself as a suitable reader of Roy's memoir, or you might not—not until you are ready to face all the triggers, traumas and truces this memoir will press against you.

BIRONGO

This is not a book review. At least not in the traditional sense where the reviewer recaps the gist of a book, quoting and analyzing parts, drawing or pointing to conclusions. Arundhati Roy's memoir *Mother Mary Comes to Me* is not something to be summarised. I believe if a reviewer tries to do so, they will only come up with much lesser versions of what Roy has already vividly painted in every page of this book of love—sorrow; eccentric, horrifying, strangely warm mother-daughter relationship; the eternal bond of a set of broken siblings; friendships; integrity; politics; injustice; rebellions; deaths; survival; living for one's truths and lies; and healing—the overused yet inescapable word of our century.

What I will attempt instead is to list eight things this book might do to you. And in that you might identify yourself as a suitable reader of Roy's memoir, or you might not—not until you are ready to face all the triggers, traumas and truces this memoir will press against you.

1. *Mother Mary Comes to Me* will confuse you about its actual protagonist. Mary Roy, Arundhati's mother, whom she describes as her "gangster", "shelter and storm", will baffle and enrage you and then strangely make you giggle. In some pages you might even give her a standing ovation for her courage, commitment, and for being an important catalyst of change in children's education and women's rights. Arundhati will turn your heart around about what could have been one of the most insufferable real life characters you have ever read and open you to the complexity of human nature. You will experience both a super-human and a demon in Mary Roy. At times you will wonder about the humour. You will ask yourself if this is a caricature or did this person actually exist? You will be constantly tossing a coin with love and hate, cruelty and kindness, intelligence and incoherence, anger and helplessness



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

embossed on opposite sides. You will keep changing your mind and realise life is inconclusive, and people are not squarely decipherable.

2. If you are a woman who has lost your voice, suppressed your needs, or felt guilty for wanting to be different, you will locate your lost power in these pages and reclaim yourself. You will become less apologetic for wanting and needing what is essential for you. You will laugh at the conventions which have tied you to lethargic comforts, social obligations, invisible and visible patriarchy. You will see Arundhati and Mary as women who were ahead of their times, or perhaps they were right on time so that those who came later found the nerve to keep doing what these two ladies did for the first time, a second, third, fourth and hundredth

time and if we are brave, to even go some extra miles.

3. The book will make you cry, laugh, pause, hurt. If you have had strict parents, you will go back to your childhood and reexamine events, motives. You will find new eyes to look at yourself and your vulnerability and those of your parents. If you grew up fatherless, or with a parent who used you as a punching bag, you will find it almost unbearable to continue reading this book. Yet, you will read on. You will weep. And then, who knows, you might even find forgiveness.

4. If you are a fan of *The God of Small Things* (1997), Arundhati's Booker Prize winning novel, you will love all the descriptions that wait for you in the first hundred pages. You will devour again the prose on the village of

Ayemenem in Kerala, the Meenachil river, its fishes and fishermen, the rain, the forest and all the tiny heart-breakingly gorgeous things that the siblings Rahel and Estha lived amongst. The inspirations behind characters of Velutha, Chacko, Baby Kochamma will come alive. You will understand from where Arundhati picked up the themes of oppression, Naxal movement, intellectuals, elites, and outcasts.

5. You might stop labeling yourself according to the larger society's definitions. You might pick up a pen and write down your confessions even if it is for your eyes only.

6. You will learn about a woman, Arundhati to be specific, who has an extraordinary capacity to love. Like her protagonist Anjum, from her second novel *The Ministry of Utmost*

Happiness (2017) who builds a guest house in a graveyard and where each room contains a grave, you will see how—through her activism and life—Arundhati, too, has experienced the deaths of many close and important individuals. Individuals whose causes and sacrifices Arundhati believed in—unheard and mistreated individuals who came to her to be heard or to whom she ran to understand, witness and fight for the injustices they faced. Many of these individuals embraced deaths, some were forcefully killed. You will get a glimpse of the chambers holding each of their graves in Arundhati's heart.

7. As the book wraps up and Mary Roy passes away, you will read a prolific description of her funeral and all that followed, including how and where her ashes were spread. And then suddenly you will look down at your hands and notice the book you are holding, *Mother Mary Comes to Me*, and recognise that this spectacularly designed red-almost-velvety covered book is also Mary's ashes. Arundhati, in her most fantastic of ways, has given you a part of her mother. These thousands of copies now floating around various continents, in our hands are all but fragments of Mary Roy. We too now hold a piece of thorny love, thoroughly lived life, a thoughtful song, and triumphant celebration. Like that, you will touch what is most precious to the author and she will dig a new hole in your being and fill it with emotions that will make you feel drugged. You will want to be silent after you fathom all these.

8. You will walk away with these lines: (A) Anything Can Happen to Anyone. (B) It's Best to Be Prepared.

Just like Arundhati Roy's *Rahel from The God of Small Things*, and *Anjum from The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, who lived with Roy as she wrote them out, *Birongo* is a vivid entity who lives with her author until she has her own complete novel to reside in, hopefully in thousands of prints around continents.

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

AT THE NEOLIBERAL TABLE: Who eats and who gets eaten in 'Carnivore'

Review of 'Carnivore' (HarperCollins, 2025) by K. Anis Ahmed

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

K. Anis Ahmed's *Carnivore* serves up a daring and disturbing literary dish. The novel is part crime thriller, part immigrant narrative, and part sociopolitical allegory. The author dares to mix genres to pursue a culinary metaphor: the best way to get to someone's heart is through their palate. The same can be said for a migrant trying to win the hearts of the members of his adopted country. But what if, in an age of overconsumption, the palate craves more—meat from the grey zone? The desire to have a taste of the taboo can test humans (pun intended) and form the basis of this transgressive noir.

The plot sizzles with the American dream of a Bangladeshi immigrant who shoves up in New York with a fake Diversity Visa. The protagonist, Kash, moves from the memory-haunted alleys of Dhaka's Dhanmondi to the glitzy eateries of New York as the author weaves a braided narrative of daring ambition and desperate gambits. Along the way, he also explores the psychological complexity of a diverse range of immigrants. He does so through his signature style of



ILLUSTRATION: MAHMUDA EMDAD

layering flashbacks, parallel settings, and moments of lyrical reflection. He crosses borders, both geographical and emotional, with the ease of a cosmopolitan man and urbane wit. From the very *Breaking Bad* kind of start, *Carnivore* proves to be an intoxicating novel that grips the reader by the throat and doesn't let go.

The protagonist has a rather normal childhood in Dhanmondi that belies family dysfunction and sexual taboos. The surface normalcy is fractured when we get to know his carnal secrets: thwarted love at 15 but twisted further by an unexpected—or unknown—sexual rivalry with, of all

people, his father. The older brother turns to humble entrepreneurship with a tehari shop, while Kash prepares to leave it all behind.

The American Dream is tickled first by American TV shows, a Cold War era largesse, but blossoms more due to an English teacher who is a rare evangelist for America in a time when it was more in vogue to be left-leaning. The "secondhand Americana" is achieved through forged documents. The hidden support structure of the deshi community in Queens, NY, helps him settle down and eventually enter the restaurant business. But his rejection of

his deshi community is evident in his desire to go beyond curry-in-a-hurry to a much more exotic menu for the upscale New Yorkers. He partners with a friend whom he assumes comes from old money.

To keep the business afloat, Kash borrows from an East European loanshark, misses payment schedules, and becomes a prey to the predatory lender. The social cannibalism turns out to be literal as Kash loses his pinky finger as a punishment. The mortal wound, or rather the severed pinky, inspires a sick epiphany—Kash cooks up a plot. And soon after this injury, he learns of a secretive billionaires' dining club which

becomes his potential ticket out from his debt burden.

His partner in crime is his life partner, Helen: a blonde former model who, like Kash, is an outsider to the swankier world of New York, and brings her own darkness to the table. She is not simply a sidekick or love interest but recalls a lost Wild Wild West which resonates with Kash—they feed each others' yearning for recognition, and revenge. Together, they become a new kind of Bonnie and Clyde: Bangladeshi grit, American depravity or vice versa.

Ahmed doesn't simply tell a crime story. He interrogates capitalism, hedonism, identity, and consumption. *Carnivore* is about who gets to eat and who gets eaten. Ahmed gives examples from myths from different cultures to reflect on the price of assimilation. There are stories of the grotesque lengths they go to belong. The bitter irony in America, it turns out, is that sometimes the immigrant must serve himself up to survive.

To say Ahmed is fearless in his style is an understatement. His prose switches from the nostalgic past of Dhaka childhood to the well-researched gourmet culture of New York's high-end kitchens. His cultural commentary refuses to look away from class betrayal or moral decay.

The novel has all the elements of joining the streaming era; *Carnivore* begs for a Netflix adaptation to join the ranks of *Hannibal*, *Breaking Bad*, and *The White Lotus*. But even without the screen, the story sears itself into your memory with its visceral, unflinching cost-benefits of the American Dream seen through Bangladeshi eyes.

Dr Shamsad Mortuza is a professor of English at Dhaka University, and former pro-vice-chancellor of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB).

BCB POLLS DRAMA SO FAR

Set for October 6, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) election has been nothing short of dramatic. Here are the events that have transpired so far:

Sept 1: BCB election announced

After a board of directors' meeting in Sylhet, BCB vice-president Nazmul Abedeen Fahim announced that the polls would take place in the first week of October. A three-member Election Commission (EC) was formed, with BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury issuing letters to Division and District Sports Associations, Dhaka Metropolis Clubs and their other affiliated organisations, asking them to send their councillors' names by September 17.

Sept 14: BCB extends councillorship deadline

BCB extended the submission deadline for councillor nomination, pushing it to September 19 from 17.

Sept 18: Further extension

BCB president Aminul Islam Bulbul sent a letter to the secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, mentioning the new letters the board sent to those divisions and districts that didn't follow the process of nominating councillors from the ad hoc committee. As a result, the deadline was extended to September 22.

Sept 19: Voices raised over Bulbul's letter

A group of organisers under the Bangladesh District and Divisional Sports Organiser Association issued a letter to divisional and deputy commissioners, asking them not to follow Bulbul's 'misinterpreted' letter regarding the councillorship nomination.

Sept 21: Tamim alleges 'government interference'

In a press conference held by an alliance of Bangladesh's district and divisional sports organisers, Tamim Iqbal alleged 'government interference' in BCB polls. EC set October 6 as the date for the election.

Sept 22: First involvement of court

A Supreme Court chamber judge stayed, until September 28, a High Court order that had suspended the effectiveness of Bulbul's letter. Draft voter list, expected to be revealed, got deferred by a day.

Sept 23: Draft voter list revealed

EC revealed a list of 171 councillors, without 15 clubs, who were excluded due to several irregularities, under investigation by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). EC did not receive councillors' names from six districts.

Sept 24: EC receives objections on draft voter list

A total of 38 objections on the draft voter list were received, with hearings held the following day.

Sept 26: 15 clubs included in final voter list

A final voter list of 191 councillors was revealed, including 15 clubs and five districts.

Sept 27: Candidates collect nominations

Of the 60 nomination forms collected, 25 were from Category 1, 32 from Category 2 and three from Category 3. Bulbul collected his nomination form from the Dhaka Division, while Tamim collected his in the club category.

Sept 28: Nomination submission

A total of 51 candidates submitted their nomination forms.

Sept 29: EC rejects three nominations

EC rejected three nominations after screening.

Sept 30: More court drama unfolds

A HC bench issued a stay order on former president Faruque Ahmed's writ petition challenging the inclusion of 15 clubs. Following the order, the 15 disputed clubs lost their voting rights. Also, EC heard five appeals, granted two.

Oct 1: Tamim and Co withdraw from BCB polls

Tamim and 15 others withdrew their nomination forms, citing government interference and conspiracy. EC later announced a final list of 33 candidates. Among them, six directors were elected unopposed from Category 1, while there will be elections in Dhaka Division (3), Rajshahi Division (3), Rangpur Division (3), Category 2 (16) and Category 3 (2).



Tigresses eye to 'set the tone' against Pak

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will begin their campaign in the ICC Women's World Cup 2025 today with arguably their biggest match in the league phase against Pakistan at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo.

Heading into their second-ever appearance in the tournament, the Tigresses have set a realistic goal for themselves to outdo their performance in the 2022 edition in New Zealand, where they won one out of seven matches.

That sole victory had come against Pakistan in Hamilton, where a 71-run knock from Fargana Hoque laid the foundation for a nine-run victory.

Captain Nigar Sultana Joty, who had scored a valuable 46 in that game, is once again leading the side in the mega event and is hopeful that her teammates can beat their South Asian rivals again to kick off their campaign on the right foot.

"A lot has changed after that [2022 World Cup]. It's a new day. It will be a good opportunity for the team to get a good start tomorrow [Thursday], definitely, because it's the opener for us. It will set up a good tone for the whole tournament," Joty said in the pre-match press conference on Wednesday.

"For us, it is a good thing to play against Pakistan because we have played together for a long time and we know each other. We played against them in the qualifiers and have played bilateral series as well. So, it could be a good contest," she added.

The Bangladesh camp was struck by the news of their head coach Sarwar Imran suffering a minor stroke on



Monday. Sarwar's condition has since stabilised, and he is at the team hotel, Joty confirmed to the media.

Before the tournament, the coach had earmarked two opponents in the eight-team event – Pakistan and Sri Lanka – believing they had a good chance of beating them.

Going by the ICC WODI rankings, his assertion holds weight as the Tigresses are currently sitting at seventh, sandwiched between Sri Lanka (sixth) and Pakistan (eighth).

Bangladesh are aiming for gradual ascension with a goal of two victories, but fulfilling such a target is easier said than done – just ask the Tigers.

The Bangladesh men's team had burst onto the scenes with two wins in their maiden World Cup appearance in 1999, against Pakistan and Scotland, but in the following edition they went winless, even losing to Canada.

Even in women's cricket, consistent

progression in global events is hard to accomplish.

Pakistan, for example, didn't win any games in their maiden World Cup appearance in 1997, then won two matches in 2009, only to go winless in the 2013 and 2017 and winning just one game in the last edition to finish dead last in the eight-team event.

The Tigresses have not played any international matches since the World Cup Qualifiers in Pakistan in April. Their first warm-up game for the World Cup got rained out against South Africa and in the second and final one, they beat Sri Lanka by one run in Colombo on Saturday.

Batter Sharmin Akter Supra top-scored with 71 and star left-arm spinner Nahida Akter claimed three wickets in that match. Skipper Nigar would hope that these players will carry their form into the Pakistan tie and start the tournament with a crucial win.



After missing the reporting on Monday and skipping the first training session the following day over the club's decision not to release players, Mohammedan Sporting Club's six footballers eventually joined the national team's camp and trained with the 20 other players at the National Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Niaz crowned national chess champion again



SPORTS REPORTER

Grandmaster Niaz Murshed became unbeaten champion in the 49th National Chess Championship with 10.5 points after beating FM Subroto Biswas in the final and 13th round, held at Level 4 of Youth Tower in Shewrapara, Dhaka yesterday.

The eighth win alongside five draws in 13 matches saw Niaz clinch the title of the national championship for the seventh time overall and first since 2019.

The latest title makes the 59-year-old the second highest winner in the national championship following late GM Ziaur Rahman, who won the title 14 times.

Niaz and IM Fahad Rahman had started the last round with 9.5 points each. But Fahad lost to Mohammad Saker Ullah, settling instead for a runner-up finish with 9.5 points.

SHORT CORNER

Aus ease to six-wicket win against NZ

An unbeaten maiden century by New Zealand's Tim Robinson wasn't enough to deny Australia a comfortable six-wicket win in the opening Twenty20 at Bay Oval on Wednesday. Captain Mitchell Marsh made 85 off 43 balls as they raced to 185-4 off 16.3 overs, cahsing a 182-run target.

Abhishek sets T20I rating points record

India's flamboyant opener Abhishek Sharma has set a new rating points record for batters in the ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings after his Player of the Series effort in the Asia Cup. The 25-year-old reached 931 ratings point, which is 12 more than the previous best rating of 919 attained by England's Dawid Malan in 2020.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star's website

Tigers hope to go level with Afghans

Just days after beating Afghanistan in a crucial Asia Cup game and pushing them to the brink of elimination in the process, the Jaker Ali-led Bangladesh will be taking on Rashid Khan and Co in a three-match T20I series in Sharjah

from today. The second and third matches are scheduled for October 3 and 5, respectively, at the same venue, before the teams move to Abu Dhabi for a three-match ODI series, starting from October 8.

Bangladesh will be hoping to go level on head-to-head in T20Is with Afghanistan when they face the hosts tonight. The Tigers have won six and lost seven of their 13 T20Is against the Afghans.

The Tigers, however, have lost just one of their last four T20Is against Afghanistan.



LIVERPOOL STUNNED IN ISTANBUL

Victor Osimhen's first-half penalty sealed a bitter night in Istanbul for Liverpool on Tuesday. Galatasaray's supporters had set the tone long before kickoff, lighting up the skies outside the Reds' hotel with a relentless midnight fireworks barrage on the eve of the Champions League clash. That same ferocity carried into the stadium, where the deafening atmosphere drove the hosts to a 1-0 victory that sent fans into another night of celebration. Liverpool, who were on a roll with seven straight wins in all competitions, have now slumped to back-to-back defeats after last week's Premier League setback at Crystal Palace. Earlier in the evening, Kylian Mbappe struck a hattrick in Real Madrid's 5-0 demolition of Kairat, Jose Mourinho's return to Chelsea with Benfica ended in a narrow 1-0 loss, and Lautaro Martinez's brace powered last year's finalists Inter past Slavia Praha 3-0. Harry Kane netted twice in Bayern Munich's 5-1 away rout of Pafos, while Atletico Madrid matched that scoreline at home against Frankfurt.

PHOTO: X





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Bijoya
Dashami
today



STAR REPORT

The five-day Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Hindu community, ends today with the immersion of the Goddess Durga in the capital and elsewhere in the country.

Devotees will throng Puja mandaps to celebrate Bijoya Dashami, the last day of the festival.

Bijoya Dashami is the special ceremony of reaffirming peace and good relations among people.

On this day, families visit each other to share sweetsmeats.

Devotees will bid farewell to the mother deity and her children -- Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartik, and Ganesh -- through the immersion of their idols in the water wishing Durga's return next year.

Today is a public holiday.



The family of a Palestinian man killed in an Israeli strike mourn over his body outside al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

COX'S BAZAR INT'L AIRPORT Launch blows past deadline

CAAB waiting for govt nod for inauguration; work on new terminal, runway yet to be finished



RASHIDUL HASAN and MOKAMMEL SHUVO

The upgrade of Cox's Bazar airfield to an international airport has been delayed by about a week as it awaits government approval.

"We wrote to the government for getting approval for turning the Cox's Bazar domestic airport into an international airport. But we are yet to get the approval," Air Commodore Abu Sayeed Mehboob Khan, member (Ops and Planning) of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), told The Daily Star.

"We are expecting to obtain the approval on October 5 following the return of Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus from New York," he said.

International flight operations from the airport were scheduled to be inaugurated today.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Man beaten to death on suspicion of robbery

Mobs killed 3 in Araihazar in less than a month

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Narayanganj

A man was beaten to death on suspicion of being a robber in Narayanganj's Araihazar upazila early yesterday.

The victim was Nabi Hossain, 32, of Pashchim Agukandi village.

Tarek Al Mehdi, additional superintendent of police (crime), said some robbers attempted to break into a house at Dari Bishnandi village around 2:30am, injuring at least four people with sharp weapons.

The injured are Kulsum Begum, 40, her son Nayem, 18, relatives Faruk Mia, 45, and Abul Hossain, 28. Kulsum was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Citing a preliminary investigation, Md

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

US government shuts down

Trump and Congress fail to reach deal on funding; analysts warn of prolonged crisis

AFP, Washington

The United States entered a government shutdown yesterday with President Donald Trump and Democrats in an acrimonious stand-off and banking on the other side to blink first in what could be a prolonged crisis.

With the government out of money after Trump and Congress failed to agree on a funding deal, federal agencies -- except for essential services -- stopped work from midnight.

Around 750,000 public sector workers are expected to be placed on furlough -- a kind of enforced leave, with pay withheld until they return to work.

Essential workers such as the military may be forced to work without pay and some will likely begin noticing missing checks by next week.

Shutdowns are a periodic feature of gridlocked Washington, although this is the first since a record 35-day pause in 2019, when Trump was in his first term. They are unpopular because multiple services used by ordinary voters, from national parks to permit applications, become unavailable.

This time, the shutdown comes against a darker backdrop, with Trump racing to enact hard-right policies, including slashing entire government departments.

The White House is threatening to turn many of the furloughs into mass firings.

"A lot of good can come down from shutdowns," Trump told reporters Tuesday. "We can get rid of a lot of things that we didn't want. They'd be Democrat things."

Democrats -- motivated by grassroots anger over expiring health care subsidies and Trump's dismantling of government agencies -- are withholding Senate votes to fund the government as leverage to try and force negotiations.

Republicans in the House of Representative have already passed a stop-gap funding fix to keep the lights on through late November while a longer-term plan is thrashed out.

But the 100 member Senate does not have the 60 votes required to send it to Trump's desk and Democrats say they won't help unless Republicans compromise on their planned spending cuts -- especially in health care.



"The Israeli Navy has reached out to the... flotilla and asked them to change course," the French foreign ministry said in a statement.

"Israel has informed the flotilla that it is approaching an active combat zone and violating a lawful naval blockade."

Spain and Italy, which both sent naval escorts, had urged the ships to halt before entering Israel's declared exclusion zone off Gaza.

Italy's foreign minister yesterday said that his Israeli counterpart had assured him the Israeli armed forces would not use violence against activists on board the flotilla of ships sailing towards Gaza.

"The boarding was planned, we are talking about it ... with Minister Saar so that there would be no violent actions on the part of the Tel Aviv armed forces, and this has been assured to me," Antonio Tajani said to Italian TV broadcaster Rai.

SHAHIDUL ALAM'S CALL

Among the activists is Bangladesh's internationally renowned photographer and activist Shahidul Alam, who yesterday accused world leaders of being complicit in

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Crushing debt forces mother to sell newborn

Clinic sealed; staffer who arranged sale held

A CORRESPONDENT, Jhenaidah

A private clinic was raided and its owner arrested yesterday after a staffer arranged for a widowed patient to sell her newborn to pay off debts and hospital bills in Jhenaidah's Maheshpur upazila on Tuesday.

The incident took place at Pearless Private Clinic, located in the upazila's Nepa Mor area. Later, the upazila health department has sealed off the clinic.

The woman, in her early 30s, whose husband passed away when she was four months pregnant, said she was not accepted in her in-laws' or her father's home after her husband's death. "I eventually had to leave and stay at my maternal grandfather's house...."

The Daily Star is withholding the name of the woman.

As she struggled financially with two other children, she had to borrow money for basic needs. She had racked up Tk 40,000 in loans from several NGOs.

Before her C-section on Tuesday, clinic staffer



THE FACE OF STRUGGLE ... For two decades, Firoza Begum has sustained her family by separating iron from re-rolling mill scraps with a magnet. Widowed and now earning only Tk 300 a day, she bears all household expenses alone. Scorching sun, dust and heat from the metals have darkened her face to a copper hue. The photo was taken recently in Dhaka's Shyampur area.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

For the wild, unto death

Revered primatologist Dame Jane Goodall dies at 91



REUTERS

Scientist and global activist Jane Goodall, who turned a childhood love of primates into a lifelong mission to protect the environment, died yesterday, the Jane Goodall Institute said.

The 91-year-old was on a speaking tour in California when she passed from natural causes, it said.

"Dr Goodall's discoveries as an ethologist revolutionised science, and she was a tireless advocate for the protection and restoration of our natural world."

The primatologist-turned-conservationist carried her love of wildlife from a seaside English village to

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3