

DHAKA TUESDAY OCTOBER 7, 2025

## BNP confident it'll win, form govt alone

Tarique tells FT and BBC that he'll return to Bangladesh soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, in his first interview in nearly two decades, said he would return to the country soon to contest the upcoming election.

In an interview with the Financial Times yesterday, he said, "We're confident we will win... We strongly believe that we're in the position to form the government alone. I think the time is very close for my return to Bangladesh."

The BNP leader spoke to two media outlets - London-based newspaper the Financial Times and BBC News Bangla -- in separate interviews, both published yesterday.

Tarique, 59, has been living in London for almost 18 years since the last BNP government lost power in 2006. Party leaders have long said he is expected to emerge as the party's prime ministerial candidate after the election scheduled for February 2026.

Speaking to the Financial Times, Tarique said his party was prepared to form a government with other parties,



"During the past fascist government, a court order stopped my right to speak. If I wanted to say something to the media, maybe the media wanted to publish it, but they could not."

TARIQUE RAHMAN, BNP acting chairperson



Construction of the Tekarghat bridge in Jessor's Abhaynagar has been halted for a long time, affecting the people of Abhaynagar and Manirampur upazilas. The work over the Teka river began in 2021 and was scheduled to finish by 2023. Locals now have to cross the river using a wooden bridge, top left.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

India calls  
Hasina's stay  
there a legal  
matter  
Urge bilateral  
engagement

UNB, New Delhi

Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's presence in India is part of a "judicial legal process" that requires "engagement and consultations" between the two governments.

He said, "We are examining these issues. We look forward to working together with Bangladesh authorities on these issues."

Beyond that, the Indian foreign secretary said, he does not think it would be constructive to say anything further at this point.

He was speaking during an interaction with members of Diplomatic Correspondents

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## Most fertiliser plants starved of gas

Petrobangla pushing for gas price hike for fertiliser plants

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Most of the fertiliser factories are facing production losses every year due to gas shortages, forcing the government to import fertiliser from abroad at high prices.

year.

All the fertiliser factories are running below capacity except the newly-built Ghorashal Palash Fertiliser, which started production in March last year.

For instance, Jamalpur's Jamuna

for 147 days due to gas scarcity.

The government had not only imported 16.44 lakh tonnes of urea from abroad that fiscal year but also needed to bear the cost of maintaining an idle workforce throughout the year for those

FACTORIES SHUTDOWN OVER LAST 3YRS	I DAYS IN FY25	I DAYS IN FY24	I DAYS IN FY23
Shahjalal Fertiliser Company LTD	<b>147</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>17</b>
Chittogram Urea Fertiliser LTD	<b>81</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>62</b>
Jamuna Fertiliser Company LTD	<b>351</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>210</b>
Ashuganj Fertiliser and Chemical Company LTD	<b>259</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>15</b>
Ghorashal Palash Fertiliser PLC	<b>0</b>		

\*Started operation in March 2024

Currently, the government needs to import as much as 50 percent of the country's annual urea demand of 30-32 lakh tonnes to maintain stable agricultural production.

In contrast, about 60 percent of local urea production capacity remained unused in the last fiscal

Fertiliser Company remained idle for 351 days in the last fiscal year. It produced about 4,000 tonnes of urea against the annual production capacity of 5.6 lakh tonnes.

Shahjalal Fertiliser Company in Sylhet, which is one of the modern factories in the country, was shut

plants, according to data from Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC).

BCIC submitted the data to a public hearing yesterday, organised by the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC),

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ATTACK ON NUR  
People will lose trust in judiciary if justice not served: Rashed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People will lose trust in the judiciary if justice is not served in the attack on Gono Odhikar Parishad President Nurul Haque Nur, Rashed Khan, the party's General Secretary, warned yesterday.

After meeting the judicial investigation commission at the Supreme Court's main building, the parishad leaders emphasised the need for transparency and accountability in the ongoing probe.

"The commission has already gathered evidence regarding all those present on the spot," Rashed told The Daily Star after the meeting.

On August 29, 2025, Nur was critically injured in Dhaka's Kakrail area. After clashes between activists of his party and the Jatiya Party near the latter's central office, police and army personnel reportedly baton-charged the crowd as Nur and his supporters prepared for a press conference, leaving him and over a hundred activists injured.

Nur sustained a severe head injury and a fractured nasal bone. He was first admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for 18 days. He was later flown to Singapore for advanced treatment on September 22. He underwent extensive tests and treatments at Mount Elizabeth Hospital for 12 days before returning home on October 4.

The government subsequently formed a three-member judicial commission, headed by a High Court judge, to investigate the incident and identify those responsible.

"Nur's health condition is a bit more stable now. He has been asked to go back to Singapore after four months for a check-up, and they will decide then if he needs a nasal surgery," said Rashed.

Rashed said his party men, who endured abuse during Sheikh Hasina's era, played a key role in paving the way for the mass uprising through the 2018 quota reform movement.



A girl sits outside one of the tents sheltering people displaced by war at the Qatari-built and now-damaged Hamad City residential complex in northwestern Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

US GOVT SHUTDOWN  
No sign of deal as stalemate enters second week

AFP, Washington

The US government shutdown entered its second week yesterday, with no sign of a deal between President Donald Trump's Republicans and Democrats to end the crisis.

Democrats are refusing to provide the handful of votes the ruling Republicans need to reopen federal departments unless the two sides can agree on extending expiring health care subsidies.

With the government out of money since Wednesday and grinding to a halt, Senate Democrats looked set to vote against a House-passed temporary funding bill for a fifth time.

The hard line taken by Democrats

marks a rare moment of leverage for the opposition party in a period when Trump and his ultra-loyal Republicans control every branch of government – and Trump himself is accused of seeking to amass authoritarian-like powers.

With funding not renewed, non-critical services are being suspended.

Pay for hundreds of thousands of public sector employees is set to be withheld from Friday, while military personnel could miss their first check on October 15.

And Trump has radically upped the ante by threatening to fire large numbers of government employees, rather than just furlough them, as has been done in every other shutdown over the years.

Republicans are digging in their heels,

with House Speaker Mike Johnson telling his members not even to come to Congress unless the Democrats cave.

Democratic House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries said that Republicans were the ones stalling any hopes of negotiations.

"Mike Johnson and House Republicans need to get back into town. Do your jobs. Democrats will be present," he told a news conference in New York Sunday.

Johnson – who was due to address journalists at the US Capitol – in turn blamed the Democrats' Senate leader Chuck Schumer.

"We need them to turn the lights back on so that everyone can do their work. The House did our work," he told NBC.

Talks begin to end Israel's war

FROM PAGE 1

Gaza health authorities reported 19 people killed by Israeli strikes in the past 24 hours, around a third the typical daily toll of recent weeks when Israel has been mounting one of its biggest offensives of the war, an all-out assault on Gaza City.

Egyptian state TV reported that the talks had begun at the Red Sea resort of Sharm El Sheikh.

The talks commenced on the eve of the second anniversary of the Israeli assault on Palestinians in Gaza.

Since then, Israel's military campaign has killed more than 67,000 Palestinians and left the majority of 2.2 million Gazans homeless and hungry in the rubble of the enclave destroyed by relentless bombardment.

Egyptian sources said Hamas was seeking clarification of several details, including guarantees that Israel would follow through with promises to withdraw its troops from Gaza once the militants give up their leverage by freeing their hostages.

With Israeli forces blasting their way through Gaza City and flattening neighbourhoods as they advance, Gaza residents say a ceasefire now is their last hope that the enclave will emerge habitable.

"If there is a deal, then we survive. If there isn't, it is like we have been sentenced to death," said Ghamar Mohammad, 20, displaced along with her family in central Gaza.

Inside Israel there is clamour for an end to the war to bring home hostages, although right-wing members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet oppose any halt to fighting.

Last fiscal year, local urea

Most fertiliser plants starved of gas

FROM PAGE 1  
following the proposal to hike the gas price in the fertiliser category.

Currently, the per cubic meter gas price for fertiliser factories is Tk 16.

On August 10, Petrobangla applied to BERC to hike the price to Tk 40 per cubic meter.

The Technical Evaluation Team of BERC yesterday recommended that the new price be set at Tk 30.

The BERC will take public opinion until October 13 and announce the decision later.

Most of the invited organisations were absent from the hearing, while the Consumers' Association of Bangladesh (CAB) boycotted it.

If gas prices are increased, fertiliser prices will also rise in the aftermath, said M Shamsul Alam, CAB's energy adviser.

"Once fertiliser prices go up, agriculture will collapse, and we will have to import food – the country is gradually turning into an import-dependent market."

In the interest of food security, the gas price for the fertiliser sector is typically kept low, he added.

In his submission, BCIC's Director (Planning & Implementation) Md Delwar Hossain said the authorities hiked the gas prices in 2022 with a promise to ensure uninterrupted supply.

But that commitment was not kept.

"Gas supply must be ensured. And if the price has to be increased, instead of raising it steeply, it could be increased from Tk 16 to Tk 20. That would still help protect the farmers."

Urea production has been declining since fiscal 2007-08 when the "gas rationing system" was initiated amid the gas shortage. Before that year, the local production was around 18 lakh tonnes.

Last fiscal year, local urea

production stood at about 10 lakh tonnes, 80 percent of which came from the Ghorashal Palash plant. This means the other factories produce only 2 lakh tonnes of urea, he added.

"The import dependence has increased manifold and a huge amount of foreign currency is leaking because of this," he added.

If the gas supply is ensured, the per tonne urea production would cost Tk 38,000, as per the BCIC's submission. It

of the agriculture ministry, also didn't oppose the recommendation of raising gas prices.

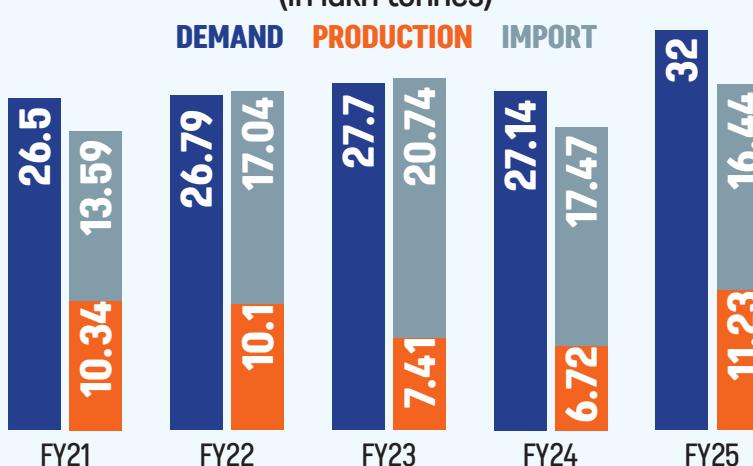
There is no decision to raise fertiliser prices at the retail level from the government, he said.

"If the government covers the increased production costs through subsidies, then the gas prices may go up," he added.

The fertiliser factories have a

demand of 245 million cubic feet of gas

FERTILISER PRODUCTION, IMPORT  
(in lakh tonnes)



said the government pays Tk 13,000 as subsidies and they sell it to the dealers at Tk 25,000.

In fiscal 2024-25, the import cost for per tonne urea was Tk 56,547 and in fiscal 2023-24, Tk 51,418, according to data from the BCIC.

If the new rate is fixed at Tk 30, the production cost will be lower than the import cost.

Md Moniruzzaman, deputy secretary

per day (mmcfid), while Petrobangla has provided an average of 116 mmcfid.

If the price is hiked, it will not be possible to supply more than 181 mmcfid on average, said AKM Mizanur Rahman, director (Finance) at Petrobangla.

"The increased price will help Petrobangla to reduce the cost deficit as the fertiliser sector pays less than the average cost of gas supply," he added.

Brunkow, born in 1961 and a senior

project manager at the Institute for Systems Biology in Seattle, and

Ramsdell, a 64-year-old senior advisor at Sonoma Biotherapeutics in San Francisco, made the other key discovery in 2001, when they were able to explain why certain mice were particularly vulnerable to autoimmune diseases.

"They had discovered that mice have a mutation in a gene that they named Foxp3," the jury said.

"They also showed that mutations in the human equivalent of this gene cause a serious autoimmune disease, IPEX."

Two years later, Sakaguchi was able

to link these discoveries.

The trio will receive their prize – a

diploma, a gold medal and \$1.2 million

split three ways – at a ceremony in

Stockholm on December 10.

Researchers from major US

institutions typically dominate the

Nobel science prizes, due largely to the

US' longstanding investment in basic

science and academic freedoms.

But that could change down the

line following massive US budget cuts

to science programmes announced by

NEWS

Army chief made no statement on giving indemnity: ISPR

'Conspirators' spreading disinformation online

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR) yesterday denounced what it described as a calculated smear campaign against the military, accusing certain social media users of deliberately distorting recent remarks by Army Chief General Waker Uz Zaman.

In a press release issued yesterday, ISPR said the posts misrepresent the discussions of an event held on September 30, which focused on enhancing the operational effectiveness of army units deployed to assist the civil administration.

According to the statement, a research report was presented at the event exploring legal, administrative, and institutional challenges faced by army personnel deployed under the "In Aid to Civil Power" framework.

The discussion highlighted relevant provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), specifically sections 127-132, which govern the army's role in controlling unlawful assemblies and maintaining public order.

The session aimed to ensure that deployed forces fully understand and professionally apply these legal provisions.

ISPR noted that during the session, the issue of legal indemnity under CrPC Section 132 was raised.

The army chief addressed its implications and potential conflicts with the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, emphasising the need for legal safeguards for personnel acting under government orders. The army has already informed the relevant authorities about this concern.

ISPR clarified at no point did the army chief mention indemnity for individuals accused of enforced disappearances, killings, or crimes against humanity.

The press release accused a "known group of conspirators", particularly some individuals living abroad, of maliciously distorting the discussion and spreading disinformation to undermine public trust in the armed forces.

"The Bangladesh Army remains committed to the constitution, the rule of law, and its duty to the people," the statement read.

ISPR urged the public to remain vigilant against such disinformation and reaffirmed the army's dedication to professionalism and discipline.

BNP confident it'll win, form govt alone

FROM PAGE 1

military-backed caretaker government. He was granted bail in September 2008 and left for London with his family for medical treatment, where he has since been living with his wife and daughter.

He said if he returns to power, he would pursue a "Bangladesh before all" foreign policy with India, which has historically favoured Sheikh Hasina's administration, seeking to reset what he called a "one-sided" relationship.

He also pledged that a new BNP government would break the cycle of retaliation, saying the party had already disciplined or expelled around 7,000 of its members for such actions since August last year.

The Financial Times noted that Tarique was evasive when asked

whether the Awami League, which is still thought to enjoy popular support, would be allowed to return to politics. "If they are convicted as criminals, then how can the Awami League... contest the election," he said, referring to leaders of the party facing criminal charges.

In his BBC Bangla interview, Tarique said, "For some valid reasons, my return hasn't happened yet. But I think the time has come. InshaAllah, I will return very soon."

Asked about security concerns surrounding his return, he said they have often heard apprehensions from many quarters.

On whether Khaleda Zia would play a role in the upcoming polls, he said, "If her physical ability allows, she will certainly play some roles."

Asked why he had not spoken to

the media for so long, Tarique said,

"During the past fascist government, a court order stopped my right to speak. If I wanted to say something to the media, maybe the media wanted to publish it, but they could not."

The uprising, he said, may have culminated in July but its roots stretched back years. He added that people from all walks of life – not just political activists – joined hands with democratic forces during the protests.

"The movement belonged to the people of Bangladesh," he said, adding that it was led not by any one party or individual, but by all who believe in democracy.

During the Awami League government, around 100 cases were filed against him, while he was sentenced in five in his absence.

After the fall of the AL government on August 5 last year, he was cleared of all charges through legal processes.

Asked why he had not spoken to

President Donald Trump.

Since January, the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) has terminated 2,100 research grants totalling around \$9.5 billion and \$2.6 billion in contracts, according to an independent database called Grant Watch.

Thomas Perlmann of the Nobel medicine prize committee told AFP it was "no coincidence that the US has by far the most Nobel laureates".

"But there is now a creeping sense of uncertainty about the US' willingness to maintain their leading position in research," he said.

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## 'As if a part of my son has returned'

Firefighter's baby born 12 days  
after his death in Tongi blaze



### STAR REPORT

Twelve days after firefighter Nurul Huda sacrificed his life while battling the devastating chemical fire in Gazipur's Tongi, a new life entered his home -- a baby boy who will never see his father.

The child was born around 10:30am yesterday at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, bringing both tears and solace to a family still mourning the loss of their beloved one.

"My son gave his life serving the nation, and today Allah has blessed us with his son -- as if a part of my son has returned. It's a moment filled with both joy and sorrow," Nurul's father Abul Mansur told The Daily Star.

He sought prayers for the baby.

"Nurul had been kind and helpful since his childhood. He was always the first to help others, and now, while trying to help others, he gave his own life," said Nurul's cousin Mostafa Kamal.

Nurul Huda, a member of the Fire Service and Civil Defence, was among those who rushed into the flames at a chemical warehouse in Tongi on September 22, risking everything to save others.

He suffered severe burns while trying to extinguish the fire. Despite days of treatment and prayers at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, he lost his battle for life on September 24.

Two other firefighters and a shop employee also succumbed to the injuries they sustained in the fire.

Born on July 21, 1987, in Gafargaon upazila of Mymensingh, Nurul Huda joined the force in 2007 with a dream to serve his country and protect lives.

In his 17 years of service, he lived true to that vow -- even to his last breath, fire service officials said.

Nurul Huda left behind a grieving wife, a 10-year-old daughter, a 3-year-old son, and now a newborn baby -- a child who will grow up hearing stories of his father's courage and dedication.



### ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES Investigation reports on major cases by this week

#### Says Tajul

##### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

ICT Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam yesterday said investigation reports of several major enforced disappearance cases committed during the Awami League's tenure will be submitted this week.

Tajul made the remarks while talking to reporters after the ICT-2 took cognisance of charges against AL leader and former Kushtia lawmaker Mahbubul Alam Hanif and three others in a crimes against humanity case.

The tribunal ordered the authorities concerned to arrest the four accused, who are on the run, and produce them before it on October 14.

"Many cases are now at their final stages,"

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

##### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With 782 new dengue cases reported yesterday, the total number of cases this year has surpassed 50,000, marking an alarming trend, according to official data.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said at least three dengue patients died yesterday, raising the total death toll to 215 and confirmed cases to 50,689.

Currently, 2,473 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at hospitals across the country, of whom 1,622 are from outside Dhaka.

Prof Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist at Jahangirnagar University, said dengue comes in waves, and when mosquito density is high alongside rising cases, it becomes very difficult to stop.

"Our forecasting model shows that cases will peak in October, start to decline in November, but continue significantly until January. Stopping it completely now is almost impossible," he said.

He stressed that while city corporations must intensify source reduction, breeding site

management, hotspot control, and other measures, community involvement is equally crucial.

"Without active participation in eliminating breeding grounds, controlling this outbreak will be extremely difficult," Bashar added.

GM Saifur Rahman, an entomologist at National University, also urged intensified mosquito

control drives in hotspots, including targeted breeding site eradication, adult mosquito elimination, and sustained nationwide action.

He further called for community mobilisation through awareness campaigns.

In a press statement on October 6, the DGHS urged all patients with fever to undergo dengue testing

immediately at the nearest hospital and to seek prompt medical attention if diagnosed.

Abu Hussain Md Moinul Ahsan, director (hospital) at DGHS, told The Daily Star that delayed hospitalisation has been a major factor behind the recent rise in fatalities.

According to DGHS data, seven of the nine patients who died recently passed away on the very day of hospitalisation, while one of the remaining two died the following day. "Primarily, the delay in reaching hospitals caused the dengue infection to become complicated, leaving little opportunity for effective treatment. Late admissions or delayed consultation with doctors make treating complicated cases extremely difficult," read a DGHS statement.

The health authority also said all hospitals are stocked with sufficient dengue testing kits, saline, and medicines. However, it emphasised that reducing fatalities will require rapid detection, treatment in line with clinical guidelines, and simultaneous mosquito control measures.

## Dengue cases cross 50,000 mark

3 die, 782 get hospitalised in a day

» Total cases this  
year: **50,689** 

» Total deaths this year: **215**

» Currently hospitalised: **2,473**

» Last month's death toll: **76**

control drives in hotspots, including targeted breeding site eradication, adult mosquito elimination, and sustained nationwide action.

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In a press statement on October 6, the DGHS urged all patients with fever to undergo dengue testing

Hold referendum  
on July Charter  
on election day  
Says Salahuddin

UNB, Dhaka

BNP standing  
committee member  
Salahuddin Ahmed  
yesterday said those  
insisting on holding  
a referendum on the  
July Charter before  
the upcoming national election have an  
ulterior motive to delay the polls.



"The next parliamentary election is only a few months away, and arranging it is already a huge national task. If we try to hold a separate referendum before the election, it will need the same preparations, manpower, logistics, and budget as a general election. This will only waste time and delay the polls," he said.

The BNP leader made the remark while speaking at a discussion organised by Nagarik Jubo Oikya at Jatiya Press Club.

He said referendum can easily be held on the same day as the national election, using the same polling stations, officials, and ballot boxes.

Without naming anyone, Salahuddin

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CA's duty  
goes beyond  
holding polls

#### Says Sarjis

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Thakurgaon

National Citizen Party Chief Organiser (North) Sarjis Alam yesterday said the chief adviser's responsibility extends beyond simply holding an election.

The position demands bold and visionary leadership to meet expectations of people who placed their trust in him, Sarjis told reporters at Rajshahi.

He said the chief adviser has earned public trust and must act accordingly. If July Charter is implemented and parties cooperate; there should be no obstacle to holding elections by February next year, he said.

Referring to Nahid Islam's earlier remarks on advisers' "safe exit", Sarjis said, "We want to see how their chapter ends. When they embraced the uprising, they were supposed to bring reform, take bold decisions, and end misdeeds. Now that those same issues have resurfaced, they must take responsibility."



Makeshift shops have occupied the footpath in front of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital on Mirpur Road in Dhaka, leaving little space for patients and their attendants to reach the entrance. The stalls also cater to visitors, the food sold is often unhygienic and unsuitable for patients. The photo was taken recently.

## 'Draft Labour Act undemocratic'

Labour leaders tell event

##### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Industrial Bangladesh Council (IBC) has protested what it termed an attempt by the government to finalise amendments to the Labour Act without considering workers' key proposals.

At a press conference at Jatiya Press Club yesterday, former IBC general secretary Salauddin Swapan read out a statement saying the government's draft is "undemocratic and contrary to ILO Convention 87".

He said recent Tripartite Consultative Council discussions were concluded abruptly without allowing labour representatives to speak on the minimum membership needed to form unions.

Under the proposed formula, factories with 51 to 60 workers would need 80-100 percent support to form a union, those with 60 to 70 workers over 72 percent, 70 to 100 workers over 50 percent, and 100 to 150 workers over 30 percent. "This will make forming unions even more difficult than before," the IBC said.

It proposed instead that 10 workers be enough to form a union in factories with 20-50 workers, 20 members for 51-200 workers, and gradually up to 300 for factories with over 3,000 workers.

Other demands include six months' maternity leave, reducing the resignation notice period from 60 to 30 days, and one month's wages per year of service for those resigning after a year.

The IBC will submit a memorandum to the labour adviser on October 12 and warned of a wider movement if the law is finalised without addressing their concerns.



Khwaja  
Habibullah  
Askari no more

##### CITY DESK

Khwaja Habibullah Askari, founding secretary and a former member of Board of Trustees of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Foundation Bangladesh passed away yesterday, said a press release.

Khwaja Habibullah Askari was the youngest son of Nawab Hasan Askari.

As a representative of the Rangoonwala Foundation UK, he played an instrumental role in the establishment of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Foundation Bangladesh in 2006 and served as its honorary secretary from

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

## Dipu Moni tells court she is being denied treatment

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Former social welfare minister Dipu Moni yesterday told a Dhaka court that she was being denied necessary medical treatment in custody.

Appearing before Metropolitan Magistrate Mehedi Hasan during a remand hearing in a murder case filed with Shahbagh Police Station over the July uprising, she said, "He [former industries minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun] died due to lack of treatment. Do we now have to desperately prove that we are ill?"

Dipu Moni, also Awami League joint general secretary, was brought to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court around 10:30am under tight security.

"I was admitted to Shahed SEE PAGE 9 COL 8

## Civil society platforms urge release of Shahriar Kabir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five European and global civil society platforms have issued an urgent appeal for the immediate release of journalist and author Shahriar Kabir.

The 75 year old has been in jail since September 17 last year after he was arrested in a murder case.

The joint statement was released on October 5 by the South Asia Democratic Forum (Belgium), the European Bangladesh Forum (EU and Great Britain), the Working Group Bangladesh in Germany, Earth Civilization Network, and the Freedom and Justice Alliance (Global Platform).

The groups also expressed concern over Kabir's deteriorating health after he was recently transferred to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj. They alleged that he was being denied medical treatment and subjected to inhumane conditions.

They also said Shahriar Kabir has spent the past year in prison under fabricated murder charges. "His life is now at serious risk," the statement also read.



PHOTO: STAR

## Floods hit four districts in the north

Teesta flowing above danger level; thousands marooned in char areas

S DILIP ROY, *Latmonirhat*

Floods have struck four northern districts -- Latmonirhat, Rangpur, Nilphamari, and Kurigram -- as the Teesta river rose above the danger mark following heavy rain and onrush of upstream water.

Over 150 chars and low-lying areas have been submerged since Sunday night, with vast tracts of Aman paddy and vegetable fields inundated.

At 10:00pm on Sunday, the Teesta was flowing 35cm above the danger level at the Teesta Barrage point in Doani of Latmonirhat's Hatibandha upazila, prompting the Water Development Board (WDB) to issue a red alert and warn residents through loudspeakers.

Although water began to recede slightly by dawn yesterday, it remained above the danger level, measured at 52.25 metres -- 10cm higher than the danger mark.

Amitav Chowdhury, executive engineer of Dalia

WDB, said, "As the water level rose sharply on Sunday night, we evacuated people from risky areas. Had it not receded by dawn, we might have cut the bypass road to protect the barrage. All 44 gates of the barrage are open."

Lalmonirhat WDB Executive Engineer Shunil

Engineer Rakibul Hasan said that although flooding hit the Teesta basin, water levels in the Brahmaputra, Dudhkumar, Dharla, Ghaghata, Jinjiram, and Kaljani rivers were still below danger levels.

Solaiman Ali, 65, of Char Gobordhan in Aditmari, said, "Waist deep water entered



Kumar said, "Water has slightly dropped at the barrage but is rising downstream. Around one lakh people are marooned along the Teesta shoal areas.

Flood control embankments are under threat, although no major damage has occurred yet."

Kurigram WDB Executive

Aman and one of vegetables were flooded.

Similar accounts came from Mobarok Hossain, 60, a resident of Char Mohipur in Rangpur's Gangachara.

Sirajul Islam, additional director of the Rangpur regional Department of Agricultural Extension, said officials are assessing crop damage. "Vegetables are at risk, although Aman can survive waterlogging for a few days."

Lalmonirhat Deputy Commissioner HM Raqib Hayder said evacuations were carried out on Sunday night and relief, including dry food, is being distributed.

In Kurigram's Nageshwari, timber trader Mansur Ali, 45, of Khamar Nokula village, went missing yesterday after being swept away by the Dudhkumar's strong current while collecting floating logs.

Police and locals said logs floated downstream from India due to hill torrents. Despite rescue efforts by a fire service team with divers, he remained missing as of 6:00pm.

## House To Let

**3-Storied Building** Plot No. 10A, Road No. 35, Gulshan-2, R/A, Dhaka. Contact No: 01914-326615, 01914-326634

### Pureit Service Update for Our Esteemed Community

Dear Pureit Family,

We would like to inform you that, in certain areas outside Dhaka and Chittagong City Corporations, our service may experience slight delays during October & November 2025 due to unavoidable circumstances. Please be assured that we are working diligently to resolve the situation as early as possible. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your continued trust and understanding. Thank you for being a valued member of the Pureit family.

**pureit**

## Hold

FROM PAGE 3

said some quarters are still repeating old arguments that constitutional order must be issued before a referendum. "We think these unnecessary complications should be avoided. The real challenge is not the election itself but the attempts by some to delay it through unnecessary legal and political debates," he said.

He also said some quarters are trying to create confusion and instability by raising new issues both on the streets and in discussions. "These are the real challenges," he added.

**FROM PAGE 3** Tajul said, "No one involved in such crimes will be spared. There will be no indemnity for anyone, nor can anyone evade justice by going into hiding," he added.

The ICT-2, led by Justice Nozrul Islam Chowdhury, observed that there was prima facie evidence against Hanif and the three others for their alleged involvement in crimes against humanity during the July uprising and

found sufficient grounds to proceed with the case.

The other accused are Kushtia district AL president Sadruddin Khan, district AL general secretary Azgar Ali, and Kushtia city AL general secretary Ataur Rahman Ata.

On Sunday, the prosecution pressed formal charges against them.

Meanwhile, at the ICT-1, defence counsel Amir Hossain yesterday

**TO LET**  
A GOOD LOOKING DUPLEX INDEPENDENT (HALF FURNISHED) HOUSE, 5 BEDROOM, 6 BATHROOM, 7000 SQFT, 19 CAR PARKING AND A NICE GARDEN, EVERY ROOM HAS BRAND NEW 2 TON SPLIT TYPE A/C. RESIDENCE - RECENTLY VACATED BY EMBASSY. FIRST PRIORITY (WHO, UN, EMBASSY).  
MAQSOOD ALI  
ROAD # 68, HOUSE # 18, GULSHAN-2; (Adjacent to American Club). 01762369757

**NOTICE**  
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH HIGH COURT DIVISION (STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION) COMPANY MATTER NO. 1733 OF 2025  
IN THE MATTER OF: Abdul Alim Mondol- Petitioner -Versus-

The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies - Respondent

Notice is hereby given that an application under sections 81(2) and 85(3) read with Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 ("the Act") is filed by the petitioner. That a Bench of Hon'ble Supreme Court of Bangladesh comprising of his lordship Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel was pleased to admit the application upon hearing of the petitioner on 16.09.2025. Any person/creditor(s) interested in the said application may appear on the date fixed for hearing either himself or through his Advocate. A copy of the said application may be obtained from the undernamed.

Thanking You

**Mohammad Whaiduzzaman,**  
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh  
Chamber: Z & J Law Firm  
152/1, North Shamoli, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar,  
Dhaka-1207

## Over 50 roadside trees felled, stolen in Habiganj

MINTU DESHWARA

Miscreants have cut down and stolen more than 50 akashmoni trees from both sides of the LGED Road in Bahra union of Madhabpur upazila in Habiganj.

An on-site visit revealed that the trees along both sides of the road, stretching from the Gilatoli Char Road intersection to Khanka Sharif and Changar Bazar areas, were felled over the past month.

Locals alleged that the thefts occurred at night, with the trees being cut down using electric saws under the cover of darkness and later smuggled away.

Bahra Union Parishad panel chairman Mosharrif Hossain said, "We have collected the names and addresses of those involved in the tree theft and submitted them to the upazila nirbahi officer." A formal complaint has also been filed with the UNO office, he added.

"The incident in Bahra union will also be investigated, and necessary action will be taken," said UNO Zahid Bin Kasem, adding that action had already been taken in another union of the district in a similar incident.

Madhabpur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Shahidullah said, "We are prepared to assist the forest department if requested. An investigation will be conducted."

"Locals estimate that government trees worth Tk 20-25 lakh have been felled and smuggled over the past few months in the area," he added.

Tofazzal Sohel, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon's Habiganj unit, condemned the illegal tree felling, saying, "Such indiscriminate cutting of roadside trees not only robs the area of its natural beauty but also severely disrupts the local ecosystem."

## RU entry tests begin Jan 16

RU CORRESPONDENT

The admission tests of Rajshahi University for the 2025-26 academic session will be held in January next year, said Prof Md Akhtar Hossain Mazumder, administrator of the Public Relations Office at RU.

The entry tests for the "C Unit" will be held on January 16, followed by the "A Unit" on January 17, and the "B Unit" on January 24, it said.

Each test day will feature two shifts -- from 11:00am to 12:00pm and 3:00pm to 4:00pm.

The tests will be conducted not only on RU campus but also at centres in Dhaka, Chattogram, Khulna, Rangpur, and Barishal.

## Investigation reports on major cases by this week

Khan -- who was involved with Odhikar -- had hostility towards Hasina.

The defence further claimed that all videos and audio clips of Hasina's phone conversations were AI-generated.

The IO denied all the allegations.

The cross-examination will continue today.

জনতা ব্যাংক পিএলসি	
ট্রেডপোর্ট ডিপার্টমেন্ট	
প্রধান কার্যালয়	
১১০ মিডিলিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-১০০০	
Website : www.jb.com.bd	
"স্টেফ বাস ভাড়ার দরপত্র বিভাগ"	
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# INTERNATIONAL

DHAKA TUESDAY OCTOBER 7, 2025

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The Daily Star

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Swedish climate campaigner Greta Thunberg raises her fist after arriving at the Athens International Airport yesterday. She was among 161 nationals from 16 European countries expelled by Israel for taking part in a Gaza aid flotilla. The 22-year-old climate campaigner was one of hundreds of people who had boarded a flotilla that tried to break through an Israeli blockade of the war-stricken territory. Israel's foreign ministry yesterday said it had deported 171 activists overall to Greece and Slovakia.

PHOTO: AFP

## INDONESIA SCHOOL TRAGEDY Death toll hits 63; 6 missing

AFP, Sidoarjo

The death toll from an Indonesian school collapse rose to 63 yesterday, officials said, as workers pulled more remains from the rubble of the building that collapsed last week.

Part of the multi-storey Islamic boarding school on Indonesia's Java island collapsed as more than 150 students gathered for afternoon prayers.

Around half a dozen youngsters are still unaccounted for.

"We hope we can conclude the recovery today (Monday), and we will return the bodies (to the families)," National Search and Rescue Agency operations director Yudhi Bramantyo told a press conference Monday.

The collapse was Indonesia's deadliest disaster so far this year, Budi Irawan, the deputy head of the national disaster agency, said.

Investigators have been examining the cause of the collapse, but initial indications suggest that substandard construction may have contributed to the incident, according to experts.

The families of the missing agreed last Thursday for heavy equipment to be used, after the 72-hour "golden period" for the best chance of survival came to an end.

REUTERS, Jerusalem

A rift within Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right coalition is emerging as a flashpoint in efforts to end the war in Gaza, threatening to derail a US push to reshape the political landscape of the Middle East.

Under pressure from Donald Trump to end the two-year-old war, Netanyahu is facing a backlash from ultra-nationalist allies whose opposition to the US president's Gaza proposal could force the Israeli leader into early elections.

Netanyahu has embraced Trump's 20 point plan to end the war, which calls for Gaza's demilitarisation and rules out any future governing role for Hamas, though it allows its members to remain if they renounce violence and surrender their weapons.

Hamas also responded positively, partially accepting Trump's plan, saying it was ready to negotiate the hostages' release and would be part of a "Palestinian national framework" as Gaza's future is addressed.

But the idea that Hamas could still exist, let alone be in a position to continue discussing the Gaza plan after hostages are released, enraged Netanyahu's right-wing coalition partners.

"We cannot agree under any circumstances to a scenario in which the terrorist organisation that brought the greatest calamity upon the State of Israel is revived," said National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir.

"We will in no way be partners to that," he said in a post on X

after the Sabbath, threatening to quit the government.

If far right ministers believe Netanyahu has made too many concessions to end the war, his ruling coalition -- the most right-wing government in Israel's history -- could collapse a full year before the next election, which must be held by October 2026.

But insisting on more war

administration pursues its own interests in the Middle East, but Riyadh has made it clear it will not normalise with Israel until the Gaza war ends and there is a path to Palestinian statehood.

Trump has called for Israel to stop bombing Gaza so talks on his plan can play out, starting with indirect negotiations between Israel and Hamas in Egypt's Red

position as it pursues its aims of freeing the hostages, eliminating Hamas and carrying out the demilitarisation of Gaza.

Ben Gvir and Smotrich, whose parties hold 13 of the Knesset's 120 seats, have long pushed Netanyahu to pursue sweeping, seemingly unattainable goals in Gaza. If both were to leave the government, it would likely trigger an election.

Israeli government spokesperson Shosh Bedrosian told reporters on Sunday that the military had stopped what she said was certain bombings but that there was no ceasefire in place.

Netanyahu has framed the plan as a joint effort that advances the government's goals, which include Hamas' surrender and Israeli security control in Gaza and its perimeter.

But Trump's plan lacks details, including any sort of time frame for Hamas to disarm. A vague reference to Palestinian statehood is also likely to infuriate Netanyahu's far-right allies.

Israeli pollster Mitchell Barak, who worked for Netanyahu in the 1990s, said he believed that the government was nearing its end, though he did not expect an immediate collapse given that the opposition supports the Trump plan while Smotrich and Ben Gvir have few options other than staying aligned with Netanyahu.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid has offered to lend the government support to prevent it from collapsing in order to see through Trump's plan.



in Gaza would antagonise the families of hostages still held by Palestinian militants in Gaza, and could further alienate a war-weary Israeli public as well as Israel's international allies.

Continued conflict could also extinguish Israeli hopes that more Arab and Muslim states like Saudi Arabia or Indonesia could join the Abraham Accords, a set of US-backed agreements that normalised relations between Israel and several Arab states.

But on Saturday, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said that pausing attacks in Gaza was a "grave mistake". He said that over time this would erode Israel's

Sea resort of Sharm el Sheikh yesterday for the release of all remaining hostages.

Netanyahu sees the plan starting with the release of hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners. Of the 48 hostages remaining in Gaza, 20 are believed to be alive. A second phase would focus on disarming Hamas and demilitarising Gaza.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid has offered to lend the government support to prevent it from collapsing in order to see through Trump's plan.



Buddhist devotees light lamps at Botahtaung Pagoda to mark the full moon day of the Thadingyut festival in Yangon yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Drone attack triggers power cuts in Russia

Zelensky says Western parts found in Russian drones, missiles

### AGENCIES

Russia said a Ukrainian drone barrage triggered power cuts in one of its border regions -- one of Kyiv's largest attacks of the war.

Kyiv has vowed to increase its strikes on Russian territory, in particular on Russia's oil infrastructure, in what it sees as a legitimate response to Moscow's daily barrages of Ukrainian cities and its energy network that have at times cut off heating and power to millions.

Russia's defence ministry said it had downed 251 Ukrainian drones overnight.

In the Belgorod border region, thousands were left without electricity.

A refinery in the southern Krasnodar region was also hit, wounding two people, local authorities said.

Meanwhile, Ukraine said it found of foreign parts, including Western-made, in the drones and missiles Russia fired in a weekend air attack on the country.

"During the massive combined strike on Ukraine on the night of October 5, Russia used 549 weapon systems containing 102,785 foreign-made components," Zelensky said on social media, referring to an attack in the early hours of Sunday.

Russia fired almost 500 drones and over 50 missiles at Ukraine that night, killing five people -- including in the western Lviv region hundreds of kilometres from the front line -- and damaging its energy infrastructure.

Zelensky said the parts of drones and missiles intercepted in the attack came "from companies in the United States, China and Taiwan, the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the Netherlands."

### NEPAL, INDIA FLOODS

Rescuers scramble to deliver aid; more than 70 killed

AFP, Kathmandu

Rescuers in Nepal and India yesterday scrambled to deliver emergency aid after days of torrential rain triggered landslides and floods that have killed more than 70 people, officials said.

The downpours, which began on October 3, have now eased, but rescue teams are still struggling to reach several cut-off areas with roads blocked and bridges washed away.

Monsoon rains, usually from June to September, bring widespread death and destruction every year across South Asia, but the number of fatal floods and landslides has increased in recent years.

Nepal's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority said at least 46 people have died in rain-related incidents -- two more than the previous day -- while six others remain missing.

Security forces have been deployed with helicopters and motorboats to assist the efforts.

Several highways blocked over the weekend slowly opened up Monday to allow the movement of stranded travellers.

Across the border in eastern India, at least 28 people were killed in the storms, officials said, as rescuers struggled to reach the worst-hit spots in the Himalayan region.

The tea-growing hills of Darjeeling in West Bengal state were among the hardest hit.

"Landslides have been reported from 35 locations in the hills of Darjeeling and more than 100 houses have been destroyed," Praween Prakash, a West Bengal state police official told AFP, confirming 28 deaths.

### সতর্কীকৰণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সম্প্রতি পরিলক্ষিত হচ্ছে যে, বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের ও আন্তর্জাতিক মুদ্রা তহবিলের নাম কিংবা লোগো ব্যবহার করে <https://dbbloan.com>, <https://bbloan.com> ও <https://www.bdloan71.com> নামে খুব প্রদান সংজ্ঞান ভূম্যা আয়প ও ওয়েবসাইট পরিচালিত হচ্ছে, যার সাথে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক কিংবা আন্তর্জাতিক মুদ্রা তহবিলের কোনো প্রকার সংশ্লিষ্টতা নেই। এসব আয়প ও ওয়েবসাইটে মেইনস্ট্রিমে মাধ্যমে নাম, ঠিকানা, জন্ম তারিখ, মোবাইল নম্বর, ই-মেইল ঠিকানা ও জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের নথিরে ন্যায় সংবেদনশীল তথ্য সংরক্ষিত হচ্ছে, যার আইনে ব্যবহারের ফলে জনসাধারণ অর্থনৈতিক প্রতিরক্ষার শিকার হতে পারেন কিংবা বিভিন্ন আইনগত ঝুঁকিতে পড়তে পারেন। আর্থিক দ্রুতি ও আইনি ঝুঁকি এড়ানোর লক্ষে সবাইকে উপরের কিংবা এ ধরনের অন্য কোনো ভূম্যা আয়প ও ওয়েবসাইটে যে কোনো ধরনের সংবেদনশীল তথ্য প্রদান এবং আর্থিক লেনদেন হতে বিরত থাকার পরামর্শ দেয়া যাচ্ছে।

পরিশেখ ও নিষ্পত্তি ব্যবস্থা আইন, ২০২৪ এর ১৫(২) ধারা অনুমোদন ব্যতিরেকে জনসাধারণের নিকট হতে বিনিয়োগ গ্রহণ কিংবা খুব প্রদানের উদ্দেশ্যে কোনোরূপ অনলাইন বা অফলাইন প্ল্যাটফর্ম পরিচালনা করা আইনের ধারা ৩৭(১) অনুযায়ী একটি অপরাধ, যার জন্ম কোনো বাজি ০৫ বছর কারাদণ্ড বা ৫০ লক্ষ টাকা অর্থদণ্ড বা উভয়ভেন্দু দণ্ডিত হবেন। এ ধরনের অপরাধমূলক কার্যক্রম পরিহারের জন্য সবাইকে নির্দেশ দেয়া যাচ্ছে।

পরিশেখ ও নিষ্পত্তি ব্যবস্থা আইন, ২০২৪ এর ১৮(৮) ধারার ক্ষমতাবলে জনস্বার্থে এ বিজ্ঞপ্তি জারি করা হচ্ছে।

## Protect our children at all costs

### Brutal killing of six-year-old a reminder of vulnerabilities facing children

The regularity with which children are being harassed, abused, and raped is quite alarming. Several reports published over the past few months have revealed stark findings on child violence in the country. The latest gruesome incident involved the murder of a six-year-old girl in Shariatpur's Bhedarganj upazila. Reportedly, the child, a nursery student, went missing on September 24. Two days later, her body was recovered from a neighbour's septic tank. According to the post-mortem report, she was sexually assaulted before being strangled to death. The details of the torture inflicted on this little girl would leave one numb with horror. What kind of society do we live in where children face such brutal fates? Why is the state failing to ensure that our children grow up in a safe environment?

According to Ain o Salish Kendra, between January and August this year, a total of 297 children were killed across the country. The ages of the victims make the incidents even more disturbing. Among the children who were killed, 65 were between the ages of 0-6, and 66 were between 7-12. ASK data on child rape is similarly disturbing—326 girls and 34 boys raped in the first eight months of 2025. Worryingly still, the actual number of such victims could be much higher as many incidents go unreported, and cases are filed in only a handful of incidents. But what do those numbers say about our state's child protection measures? Evidently, not much has improved even after decades of discussions and numerous government programmes aimed at ensuring child rights.

Unfortunately, our justice system also often fails the victims of such crimes, with numerous loopholes in the legal system obstructing the path to justice. Reportedly, between January and August this year, the conviction rate for crimes against children was just 0.52 percent, with a punishment rate of only 0.30 percent. Clearly, such low conviction rates only embolden the perpetrators. To create a safe environment for our children, this culture of impunity must be broken. The state must ensure that those who commit crimes against children are convicted without fail by strengthening the legal process. In the Shariatpur case of child murder, we urge the government to deliver justice following a swift and thorough investigation. Only by ensuring justice in such cases can the state prevent the recurrence of crimes against children.

## Fix the Dhaka-Sylhet corridor project

### Govt must form taskforce to resolve land disputes, end ongoing paralysis

Five years since its inception, the Dhaka-Sylhet corridor project stands as a testimony to project paralysis and administrative failure typical of many government undertakings. Intended to be a 210-kilometre lifeline connecting the capital to the northeast, the four-lane highway has instead become a source of daily torment for travellers, with only 15 percent of the project's objectives said to be achieved. The cost of this delay has been staggering, turning a once six-to-seven-hour drive into an agonising 12-to-15-hour endurance test.

Currently, the Tk 16,919 crore undertaking lies functionally stalled. A protracted legal quagmire, with 56 out of 66 land acquisition lawsuits unresolved, has prevented contractors from even accessing key areas. Alongside legal issues, delays in utility relocation have further complicated matters. The project director's admission that the December 2026 deadline cannot be met clearly indicates the extent of things gone haywire.

Its ripple effect has been quite evident. The old road is now riddled with deep potholes and craters, rendering travel slow and dangerous. Massive tailbacks and single-lane bottlenecks have made a 11-kilometre stretch from Ashuganj to Sarail particularly notorious. Falling under a separate, Indian-funded project, this particular stretch was abandoned after the change in government in August 2024, when Indian contractors also departed, citing security concerns. Moreover, the entire highway suffers from a lack of basic maintenance, with the authorities claiming to be "low on funds" and constrained by the future need to "break up" the old road. This highlights a critical flaw in planning: the absence of interim maintenance to manage the existing infrastructure during the multi-year construction delay.

The argument by the Roads and Highways Department for avoiding maintenance is untenable. A minimum standard of road safety and usability must be enforced. The government must allocate funding for repairs, which should be an immediate priority in the worst-hit, gridlocked zones, so that the two lanes can be properly restored wherever feasible.

The bigger problem here is the economic drag. Infrastructure delays of this magnitude multiply transport costs for businesses and impede regional connectivity. The Dhaka-Sylhet corridor is a vital trade link. Allowing it to decay to this extent demonstrates a worrying inability to execute essential public works. Commuters are now shunning the highway, causing a massive surge in demand for alternative transport. Airlines on the Dhaka-Sylhet route are reporting 90-100 percent load factors. Bangladesh Railway, overwhelmed by passengers, is struggling to cope by adding carriages and even allowing ticketless travel on "humanitarian grounds". These issues need to be resolved.

As the most critical bottleneck here is land acquisition, the authorities must immediately establish a high-level, inter-ministerial taskforce with a mandate to resolve the ongoing lawsuits. This taskforce should fast-track legal processes for disputes that directly impact all national infrastructure, since the current system is broken.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Hamas attack sparks Israel's war on Gaza

On this day in 2023, Hamas conducted an aerial attack on Israel from the Gaza Strip, resulting in over 1,200 deaths. This led Israel to launch a still-ongoing war on Gaza that has so far killed over 66,000 Palestinians.

# EDITORIAL

## NDC 3.0 SUBMISSION

# Bangladesh raises the bar in global climate commitment



### MACRO MIRROR

Dr Fahmida Khatun is executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

#### FAHMIDA KATUN

As the world gears up for the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP 30) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), scheduled to be held in Brazil next month, Bangladesh has renewed its climate pledge through the submission of its Third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0). NDCs are national plans through which countries outline their commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement. Bangladesh had earlier submitted two NDCs, the first in 2015 and the second in 2021.

NDC 2.0 committed to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 6.7 percent from the business-as-usual (BAU) level of base year 2012 on an unconditional basis. In addition, it pledged a further 15.12 percent reduction below BAU, conditional on international financial and technical support. These targets covered emissions from sectors or areas such as energy; agriculture, forestry and other land use; livestock; industrial processes and product use; and waste management.

The new submission extends Bangladesh's mitigation horizon to 2035, as opposed to 2030 in NDC 2.0, and introduces updated emission-reduction targets. It also presents a wider integration of socio-economic priorities into the climate policy. For a country responsible for less than half a percent of global GHG emissions but suffering acutely from floods, heatwaves, and sea-level rise, this represents both a moral statement and a strategic exercise in national resilience.

As with the first and second NDCs, the third also makes a dual track commitment. First, an unconditional reduction of 6.39 percent of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>eq) emissions from the BAU level by 2035, with 2022 set as the baseline year; and second, an additional 13.92 percent CO<sub>2</sub>eq reduction conditional on international finance, technology, and capacity support. Thus, Bangladesh's total emission reduction target by 2035 stands at 20.31 percent from the BAU level. The BAU projection for 2035 is roughly 418 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>eq, meaning the projected reduction will amount to 84.97 million tonnes if both unconditional and conditional targets are achieved.

A major feature of NDC 3.0 is that energy remains the focal point. Bangladesh pledges to reduce emissions from energy sources by

26.46 percent by 2035. Smaller but significant targets have been set for industry (7.71 percent), agriculture and forestry (11.46 percent), and waste (5.06 percent). The NDC also stresses that financing will be the hinge of its implementation. This is important, as without a clear financing pathway even the best-crafted commitments risk remaining aspirational. The plan's implementation will cost about \$116.8 billion over the next decade; of this, \$25.95 billion will be from domestic sources and \$90.23 billion from external sources.

an economy-wide agenda. Proposed actions on methane control, waste-to-energy conversion, and reforestation could yield relatively low-cost emission savings. Another positive feature is the application of a social lens to climate action: by linking decarbonisation with jobs, reskilling, and social protection, NDC 3.0 places human welfare at its centre. Recognition of women and youth as active agents of the transition enhances both legitimacy and inclusiveness.

Additionally, the new NDC presents innovative financing options to achieve its targets. It references green bonds, blended finance, and carbon-market participation under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, signalling a more sophisticated approach to mobilising capital beyond traditional aid. However, there is limited self-financed ambition, which is understandable in the context of low domestic resource mobilisation and competing fiscal priorities. Even so, efforts must be strengthened to

developed countries that emit more but also possess greater financial and technical capacity. However, as our economic activities expand, emissions are likely to rise, making stronger energy efficiency measures crucial to meeting the targets. Renewables currently supply less than 5 percent of total generation, so achieving the 25 percent target by 2035 will require large-scale investment in land, grids and storage. Our policymakers must be mindful that ongoing expansion of LNG and gas infrastructure could undermine NDC objectives.

Moreover, stronger actions are necessary to address methane and waste management gaps, particularly through improved processes and technology in rice farming and livestock feeding. Agriculture and waste measures currently lack details on implementation incentives, data collection, and monitoring, which are crucial for verifiable reductions. To support a just transition, the



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

As stated above, NDC 3.0 pushes the horizon five years ahead and, crucially, signals that emissions should peak around 2029-2030 before declining. It also introduces cross-cutting priorities such as gender equality, youth participation, and a just transition. Structurally, NDC 3.0 is more data-driven and grounded in measurable indicators. One of its strengths is a clearer energy vision compared to previous submissions, setting specific numeric targets for renewable energy and efficiency. These provide predictability for investors and utilities, while commitments to curb grid losses and expand solar and wind energy mark a tangible policy shift.

Moreover, as before, the new NDC adopts a broader sectoral reach, transforming climate planning into

mobilise more resources through the private sector and innovative financial mechanisms. Nearly three-quarters of the NDC's target hinges on international support. Hence, if global funding falters, the conditional pledges will remain unfulfilled.

Another thing about financing is that it requires coordination. Mobilising the total implementation cost of \$116.8 billion will definitely test the government's institutional capacity. As climate action is inherently cross-cutting, spreading across multiple ministries, a strong coordinating body will be essential to ensure effective delivery.

For a low-emitting country like Bangladesh, the emission targets should remain realistic and not be compared with those of developing or

government must invest in skills training, social protection, and green entrepreneurship to ensure that no community is left behind in the low-carbon shift.

Overall, NDC 3.0 reflects pragmatic ambition, whose success will hinge on effective delivery. Embedding the NDC within national development planning, linking it to jobs and investment, and maintaining transparent progress reporting will determine its credibility. Bangladesh has long stood as a strong moral voice for climate justice. If it can now pair that voice with tangible implementation of its commitments, it will offer the world a new model of climate-responsible development—a proof that even the most climate-vulnerable nations can pursue prosperity without compromising the planet.

## Save the future of our mango growers



### MOSTAFA SHABUJ

is a journalist at The Daily Star.

Naogaon, a district historically renowned for rice cultivation, has emerged over the past decade as a leading mango producer, bringing prosperity to thousands. Yet, this success is now under threat from rising costs, systemic failures in local administration and the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).

Soheb Rana of Naogaon, a Master's graduate from Rajshahi University and a former journalist in Dhaka, returned to his village in 2013 to begin mango farming. Starting with just 12 bighas, he and his brother now cultivate nearly 200 bighas, producing more than 450 tonnes of mangoes this year with a market value exceeding Tk 1 crore. Recently, he obtained the Bangladesh GAP certificate for toxic-free mango farming and is now preparing to export his produce to Europe.

According to the DAE, mango cultivation in Naogaon has surged from under 6,000 hectares in 2015 to more than 30,300 hectares today. In 2024 alone, farmers in the district harvested around four lakh tonnes of mangoes, with a market value of Tk 3,000 crore. This shift has been driven largely by the fact that thousands of hectares of high, arid land across the district's nine upazilas are unsuitable for paddy

cultivation due to declining water levels. Farmers who once earned a meagre Tk 7,000-8,000 per bigha from a single season of paddy—barely enough to cover production costs—are now reaping annual profits of Tk 50,000 to Tk 1 lakh from mango cultivation on the same land.

This economic pivot has triggered a dramatic socio-economic transformation. The expansion of mango orchards has not only boosted farmers' incomes but also stimulated local development. Land values around Sapahar town have reportedly risen 60 to 80 times over the last decade, spurring the establishment of quality private schools, colleges, and clinics, and further enhancing the quality of life.

Yet, beneath this success lies growing anxiety. Many farmers are considering abandoning mango cultivation due to sharply rising production costs. The once-lucrative profits from a bigha of Amrapali mangoes, which previously ranged from Tk 1 lakh to Tk 1.5 lakh, have been eroded by soaring expenses. Annual pesticide costs per bigha have more than doubled, from Tk 5,000-10,000 to Tk 25,000-30,000. Similarly, the cost of leasing a bigha of land for 12 years has jumped from Tk

10,000 to Tk 28,000.

A more pressing threat is the continuous onslaught of pests and insects. Reportedly, for the past three years, orchards have been plagued by an insect known as thrips, which blackens mangoes and renders them unsaleable at a desirable price. Farmers lament that no currently available pesticide or insecticide has proven effective against it.

On top of this, farmers face financial exploitation. When selling mangoes at Sapahar Bazaar, they must pay Tk 80 per maund as a "depot fee" to depot owners, in addition to Tk 6 toll per maund to the local district administration as khajna. Furthermore, this toll reportedly increases every year, according to the local upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) and the agriculture officer of Sapahar.

Additionally, the unethical practice known as *dholan*, which forces farmers to give an extra 10-12 kg of mangoes free for every maund sold, has been causing a significant financial loss. Although a directive abolishing this practice was issued on June 11 by the Rajshahi division commissioner, traders continue to ignore it. Combined with alleged syndicate activities and extortion by local political figures, this leaves farmers and traders in an increasingly vulnerable position.

The sector has made remarkable progress, with farmers now harvesting mangoes from March to September, and some varieties like Katimon being available year-round. However, systemic mismanagement in key production hubs and high cost of air freight threaten to undermine these achievements.

While Bangladesh produces 25-27 lakh tonnes of mangoes annually, exports remain disproportionately low, with only 2,167 tonnes shipped by August this year. The primary obstacle is the high cost of air freight to Europe—Tk 600 per kg—compared with Tk 150-200 per kg for competitors like India and Pakistan. Bangladesh's reliance on costly passenger flights instead of dedicated cargo aircraft significantly undermines its export potential. Experts suggest that introducing seasonal cargo flights could raise exports to at least 20 percent of national output, helping to secure the dreams of thousands of growers from collapse.

According to agricultural experts, up to 30 percent of Bangladesh's mangoes are lost annually at various stages. By contrast, countries such as Vietnam have built multi-billion-dollar export industries by processing mangoes into high-value products like jams, jellies, mango bars, powders, and pulp. With the right technology and training, the government could empower farmers and unemployed youth to convert this waste into both a new source of foreign exchange and employment.

Safeguarding the future of the mango sector requires urgent, multifaceted action. Local authorities must work alongside farmers to reduce production costs and curb exploitative practices. To minimise post-harvest losses, cooling vans and temporary cold storage facilities in the northern districts are essential. Most critically, the government must prioritise export infrastructure, such as establishing cargo facilities at Saidpur or Rajshahi airports, to make the progress of the sector sustainable in the long run.

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# Ahmad Rafique: A story that must not fade away



**Firoz Ahmed**  
is a member of political council, Ganosamhati Andolok and former president of Bangladesh Chhatra Federation. He has also served as a member of the Constitutional Reform Commission under the interim government. The article was translated from Bangla.

FIROZ AHMED

I first heard this tragic story 11 years ago from Ahmad Rafique himself. It is a story of his personal defeat, humiliation, and rejection. At the same time, perhaps it is also a reflection of the countless "hijacked revolutions" of this land.

It was on a February afternoon in 2014 that I first met Ahmad Rafique in person. A small, informal meeting about the use of the Bangla language was organised by someone at Dhaka University's Teachers' Club. However, hardly anyone attended. As a result, instead of the meeting, we had a lively *adda* making the most of our time. Ahmad Rafique told us how, along with a large and enthusiastic group, he had taken a remarkable initiative to translate medical science textbooks into Bangla. He also told us how that promising project was ultimately dismantled.

The story was so depressing that it stayed with me for years and grew increasingly unsettling in my mind. So, seven years ago, on the evening of February 19, 2017, encouraged by Zahid Sohag, literary editor of *Bangla Tribune*, I went to Ahmad Rafique's house. I had the strong urge not to let this story

**The Language Movement of 1952 changed the lives of many young people forever. Matin, Tohaha, Oli Ahad and many others devoted their lives to politics. Many others, while staying close to politics, tried to carry out other sociocultural responsibilities their entire lives. Ahmad Rafique is one of them. Not only did he seek to faithfully record the memories and history of the Language Movement, but he also remained ever-alert in his efforts to rebuild society in its spirit.**

vanish. Even a history of failure—such as how, after the most extraordinary beginnings, we are eventually dragged back to the starting point—needs to be recorded. Sitting in his simple living room, Ahmad Rafique spoke:

"I have always been an advocate for education in Bangla, not just at the primary level, but in higher education. Studying medicine is quite complex. Many students, after writing excellent answers in written exams, stumble and stammer in oral exams, as it is difficult to express what one knows in another language (English). Then the examiners think the

perform much better. But nothing came of it. The principal said, 'So many new researches are coming out in English.' I said those could be included in the next editions. I told them, 'You were a student and so was I; we both know that if students could answer in Bangla, they would express themselves much more easily.' But there was no result. The books were left in Bangla Academy's warehouse to be eaten by termites. Hundreds of thousands of taka were wasted."

**Terminology and classism**

Ahmad Rafique considered translating

those textbooks because of his long-term involvement with Bangla terminology. Recalling those days, he said:

"Everyone talks about the problem of terminology, so I created the *Medical Science Terminology Dictionary*. Before me, Bangla Academy had a very small terminology glossary. Another friend of ours, Dr Mortaza, a doctor at Dhaka University who was martyred in the Liberation War, had worked on that.

to English-medium schools? The reason is simple: otherwise, they will fall behind in the race. If the standard is not knowledge itself but the ability to read and write in English, no parent would want their children to lag in that competition.

"So, I don't blame the parents anymore. I blame the state, the system." This system is not about individuals. It is the class in power that, through the language of its dominance,

turned the pages, I saw the year 1983—and the names of Ahmad Rafique, Sayeed Haider, and Subhagata Chowdhury gleaming brightly.

The project did not bring about a revolution; it ended in failure. Yet it will remain a noble example of an effort to write the history of higher education in Bangla—a project born of immense labour and love for the language.

Ahmad Rafique is not defeated, nor is Bangla. There has been a temporary retreat, however. What could have been achieved did not happen due to non-cooperation, arrogance, and covert or overt conspiracies, sometimes even through the sabotage of institutions.

**Bigger picture**

Had the Dhaka Medical College approved Ahmad Rafique's initiative back then, it could have marked the beginning of a major transformation in our higher education system. Inspired by his endeavour, many young people had also joined the cause. Let me quote from a reminiscence by Dr Khairul Islam:

"We came to know that Bangla Academy had taken up a project to translate various English academic books into Bangla. They were eager to translate medical college textbooks. Language veteran Dr Ahmad Rafique and his friends dared to translate *Davidson's Medicine*. We decided to translate *Midwifery by Ten Teachers*. We went to Bangla Academy.

Thus, under the editorship of Suraiya Jabin, *Midwifery by Ten Teachers* was translated into Bangla in two volumes in 1988, with the names of Khairul Islam, Liaqat Ali, and Khosru Islam.

This translation work met the same fate. It was also never reprinted. In a dynamic field like medical science, these books are now no more than relics. But this event is a relevant example of why our nation still lacks meaningful access to the realm of science. In the meantime, countries like China, Malaysia, Thailand, Iran, Korea, and many others have fully mastered modern medical science in their native languages. The initiative to translate medical science into quality Bangla, which the entrenched establishment did not allow to advance, is now slowly creeping into the market as informal, often rote-learning-based books, as medical education expands.

The Language Movement of 1952 changed the lives of many young people forever. Matin, Tohaha, Oli Ahad and many others devoted their lives to politics. Many others, while staying close to politics, tried to carry out other sociocultural responsibilities their entire lives. Ahmad Rafique is one of them. Not only did he seek to faithfully record the memories and history of the Language Movement, but he also remained ever-alert in his efforts to rebuild society in its spirit.



Ahmad Rafique (1929 – 2025).

ILLUSTRATION: BIPLOB CHAKROBARTY

When Bangla Academy asked me, I added several thousand words to it. I expanded and refined many terms. Bangla Academy published it. Later, I also published a magazine called *Paribhasha* (Terminology) for some time. Then came the *Chemistry Terminology Dictionary*, *Physics Terminology Dictionary*, *Botany Terminology Dictionary*...

But while the terminology dictionaries were being published, giving exams in Bangla was being banned on the pretext of a lack of terminology! Ahmad Rafique grew a little agitated: "I say, terminology is not a problem at all. The problem is in our thinking. It's a class problem. The class that holds economic and social power, if they make education accessible to all, and if more students come in, they will face greater competition."

But Ahmad Rafique did not believe in blaming individuals. He said, "Even the other day, a woman told me that her child was punished for speaking in Bangla."

Then why are parents sending their children

draws newcomers or drags them into the same competition, he explained.

**In search of lost books**

After returning home, realising I hadn't even seen the books, I troubled the old man again. With a tone of sorrow, he told me that he had no copy. He had changed houses so many times that they had disappeared somewhere.

The books that were supposed to be present in every medical student's home were not even with the person who created them! He said if not in Bangla Academy, they may never be found.

The books did not vanish entirely, however; they survive like relics. On the morning of February 20, 2017, Zahid Sohag and I went to Bangla Academy and saw them: *Cunningham's Manual of Practical Anatomy* and *Davidson's Chikitsa Bigyan: Moolsutra o Prayog (Principles and Applications of Medical Science)* in two volumes, and the *Medical Science Terminology Dictionary*—all silently sitting in the dust-covered library. As I

## MEDICINE IMPORT DEPENDENCY

# Can BIDA unlock Bangladesh's API potential?



**Dr Syed Abdul Hamid**  
is professor of health economics at Dhaka University, convener of Alliance for Health Reforms Bangladesh and Network for Healthcare Excellence, and chief adviser of Universal Research Care Ltd.

SYED ABDUL HAMID

The National Drug Policy, 1982 marked a revolutionary shift in Bangladesh's pharmaceutical industry. Following its adoption, domestic production surged, local companies gained market dominance, and Bangladesh began making headway in medicine exports. Today, local pharmaceutical firms meet 98 percent of the country's total demand, with export earnings of \$177.42 million recorded in the first ten months of FY2024-25.

Despite these achievements, one fundamental weakness persists: over 85 percent of the industry's key raw materials—or active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs)—are imported. As a result, a substantial portion of the sector's contribution to GDP is effectively drained abroad. Moreover, this heavy dependency undermines consistent quality assurance and poses a challenge to the prospects of long-term stability, especially in the post-LDC period.

Several local firms, including Beximco Pharmaceuticals, Square Pharmaceuticals, Active Fine Chemicals, ACI Ltd, Gonoshasthaya Basic Chemicals, Globe Pharmaceuticals, and Opsonin Pharmaceuticals, have initiated API production on a limited scale. However, their output is largely confined to basic ingredients such as paracetamol. Most APIs produced here are used internally, with only a few companies, such as Gonoshasthaya Basic Chemicals Ltd, supplying other firms on a small scale.

To address this challenge, the Ministry of Commerce introduced the National API and Laboratory Reagents Production and Export Policy in 2018. Its objective was to position Bangladesh as a competitive player in the global API market while reducing import dependency. The policy aimed to attract large-scale investment, expand domestic production of diverse API molecules, create employment, and strengthen export

reagents, and raw materials until 2032; cash incentives for at least 20 percent value addition; concessional long-term loans; and the right to retain a significant portion of export earnings. A key initiative was the establishment of a specialised API Park in Munshiganj's Gazaria, envisioned as a fully functional industrial hub for API production.

However, progress has fallen short of expectations. Despite 27 companies receiving

an investment-friendly environment; and (v) market expansion opportunities. Currently, most key starting materials (KSMs) and fine chemicals are imported from China and India. Complex organic compounds, costly metal catalysts like palladium, platinum, and ruthenium, and specialised enzymes are also import-dependent. While Bangladesh has a basic workforce, there is a severe shortage of high-tech, specialised, globally competitive

The first critical step is to ensure a reliable supply of raw materials and develop a strong backward linkage system for API production. Building a self-sufficient, dependable, and sustainable supply chain—from raw material production to API manufacturing—would reduce costs and establish the foundation for global competitiveness. Second, long-term industry-academia collaboration must be institutionalised to accelerate R&D, technological innovation, and workforce training. Third, the involvement of international experts and effective technology transfer can modernise the industry, improve efficiency, and ensure compliance with global quality standards.

These elements need to be integrated into a robust business model, which can then be strategically presented to countries such as China, the global leader in API production. Chinese firms may not naturally be inclined to invest in API production in Bangladesh, given the country's current dependency on API imports from China. However, demonstrating that such investments can serve both local demand and strategic re-export opportunities—for instance, easier access to the US market due to lower tariffs on Bangladeshi products—can make the proposition attractive. Additionally, Chinese firms could transfer technical expertise to Bangladeshi, improving processes, reducing costs, and enhancing quality standards.

The outcome would be mutually beneficial: Chinese firms would gain cost savings, market access, and supply chain integration, while Bangladesh would develop a self-sufficient, globally competitive API industry. Ensuring API quality would become easier, ultimately raising the overall standard of medicines in the country.

If the government extends tariff concessions, tax incentives, and technology transfer support to investors, many initial obstacles can be overcome. A well-designed proposal would attract foreign investment, establish long-term strategic partnerships, and position Bangladesh not only to meet domestic API demand but also to secure a place in the global API value chain with sustainable export potential.

The Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) must engage with domestic API producers to design a viable business model and take proactive steps to attract investment in this critical sector.



Today, local pharmaceutical firms meet 98 percent of the country's total demand, with annual export earnings of \$177.42 million in the first ten months of FY2024-25.

FILE VISUAL: MAHIYA TABASSUM

capacity. In 2017, the total number of locally produced API molecules and laboratory reagents stood at 41. The API policy aims at helping reduce raw material manufacturing costs significantly, and produce 370 key API molecules for exports. It also aims to reduce API import dependency to 80 percent by 2032.

To achieve these goals, the government offered a range of incentives: unconditional tax exemptions in the initial years; additional tax benefits for producing specific APIs; VAT exemptions on locally produced APIs;

land allocations, only two have established factories and commenced production, while two others have partially constructed facilities without operationalisation. Major bottlenecks include a lack of gas connections, unavailability of intermediates, and a shortage of skilled manpower.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive understanding of the API ecosystem, which comprises: (i) supply of essential raw materials or intermediates for API production; (ii) skilled manpower; (iii) uninterrupted supply of gas and electricity; (iv)

expertise. Energy insecurity and limited access to concessional long-term loans further constrain growth. Additionally, the domestic API market is relatively small, and competing internationally against established players such as China and India remains difficult.

While the government can relatively quickly ensure a stable energy supply and a sustainable development of intermediates and skilled manpower requires long-term strategic planning.

## Taylor Swift drops eight new acoustic tracks from 'The Life of a Showgirl'

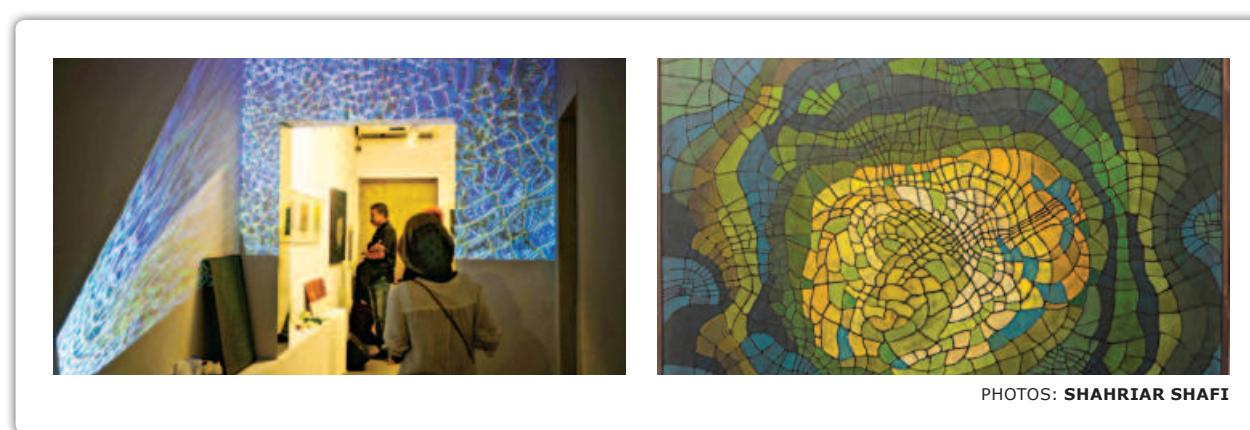


Taylor Swift has unveiled eight new acoustic tracks from her latest studio album, *The Life of a Showgirl*, originally released on October 3.

The limited-edition acoustic versions, featuring re-recorded vocals and new production by Max Martin and Shellback, include *Opalite*, *Ruin the Friendship*, *The Fate of Ophelia*, *WiSh List*, *The Life of a Showgirl*, *Eldest Daughter*, and *Elizabeth Taylor*.

Available across four CDs for 24 hours via Swift's website, the release follows her record-breaking *Eras Tour*, which ran from March 2023 to December 2024, spanning 149 shows and generating over USD 2 billion.

*The Fate of Ophelia* has already become the year's most streamed song in a single day on Spotify, cementing Swift's continued influence in contemporary pop music.



PHOTOS: SHAHRIAR SHAFI

## 'A MEDITATION ON PEACE' a sensory delight through artistic hypnotism

AISHWARYA RAIHAN

As a child, staring at stained glass windows in movies was one of my greatest delights. In architecture school, when I learned about Gothic architecture, my love for this particular building element deepened. Fast forward to last week, I stumbled upon an artwork similar to stained glass. Dwip Gallery shared their event of upcoming art exhibition *A Meditation on Peace* by Farhana Afroz Bappy. Needless to say, I had to visit and write about her art in any way I could.

On 3rd October *A Meditation on Peace*, second solo exhibition by Farhana Afroz Bappy, curated by Shehzad Chowdhury was inaugurated at Dwip Gallery, Lalmatia

in the presence of Art. Luva Nahid Chowdhury, Director General of Bengal Foundation as the chief guest.

Born in 1971, she completed her MFA and BFA on printmaking from the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka. During the pandemic, the world came to a standstill and most humans were confined within the four walls of their home. To process the anxiety, the turmoil, the overwhelming emotions, like many other artists, Farhana resorted to her creative pursuits.

Dwip Gallery is filled with Farhana's enthralling abstract paintings. They have the ability to put the viewers into a meditative state. The gradual shift from one hue to another, creating abstract forms with a hierarchy of colors speak of the artist's skills,

whereas the lines creating the cells are fluid, precise, and effortlessly flowing. The shapes are intriguing as I felt like I saw a hooded child, the Pegasus, and a butterfly in a single painting. A lovely and lively audio visual experience.

The artist explained that she needed to meditate and pass her long hours during the pandemic. These paintings became the reflections of her musings. Curator Shehzad Chowdhury described Farhana's art as "strangely dynamic despite having a minimalist approach". Even though she began this particular journey back during the COVID lockdown, she decided to continue this path of healing, reflecting, meditating, and enriching her soul. Dwip Gallery will run this exhibition till October 12, 2025.

### WHAT'S THE HAPS?

#### 'Her & the City'

*Her & the City*, the second group exhibition by nine women artists, brings together bold, vibrant, and thought-provoking works at Bhumi Gallery. Curated by Easel, the showcase celebrates women's creativity, offering a dynamic glimpse into the city's artistic pulse and the diverse voices shaping its cultural landscape.

Date: Friday-Saturday October 3-11, 2025

Time: 4 pm-9 pm

Venue: Bhumi Gallery, Lalmatia



3-11 October 2025

## Nuhash Humayun's 'Waqt' heads to SXSW Sydney



Nuhash Humayun's *Waqt* has been officially selected for the Episodic strand of the South by Southwest (SXSW) Sydney festival, which opens on October 13.

Part of Chorki's second anthology season of *Dui Shaw*, the episode premiered last December. Co-written by poet Gultekin Khan and Nuhash, *Waqt* tells the tale of five friends whose sins spiral into five eerie, supernatural fates. The cast features Allen Shubhro, Rizvi Rizvi, Refat Hasan, Abdullah Al Sentu, Rafayatullah Sohan, Saikat, Sahana Sumi, and Yashrib Habib.

"This project has received equally strong responses from both festival curators and local audiences, which is rare. Usually it's one or the other, but with *Waqt*, both sides have embraced it," says Nuhash.



## Jason Bateman, Tom Holland to adapt Grisham's 'The Partner' for screen

Emmy-winning director Jason Bateman is set to collaborate with actor-producer Tom Holland on a film adaptation of John Grisham's 1997 legal thriller *The Partner*.

Produced under Bateman's Aggregate Films, with Michael Costigan also involved, Holland will both produce and star as Patrick Lanigan, a young Biloxi lawyer who fakes his death in a fiery car crash.

Lanigan absconds with \$90 million stolen from client accounts, fleeing to South America where he finds love and freedom. His past, however, catches up as the firm's client tracks him down, forcing Lanigan to confront the FBI and the family he left behind.

Bateman, acclaimed for *Ozark* and *Bad Words*, continues his focus on complex, character-driven narratives.

## NEWS

### NCP warns

FROM PAGE 12

He said, "If the NCP does not get the Shapla symbol, it will definitely affect the election. Without an independent commission, there can be no fair polls. If the election is not fair, there will be bloodshed on the streets. But we will try to avoid that. If our backs are against the wall, we will have no choice but to resist."

"If we are deprived of this right, we will work to form an independent and constitutional election commission democratically. We will not back down from achieving our demands and will continue our fight politically."

"We are not fighting for Shapla alone. We are fighting to give the people of Bangladesh the gift of democratic transformation and an independent Election Commission," the NCP leader said.

The NCP, founded in February this year, has been campaigning with the Shapla symbol since July, using it at rallies, and on posters, social media.

According to EC records, the party initially proposed Shapla, Pen, and Mobile as its preferred symbols in a letter submitted on June 22, and later, on August 3, revised the list to include Shapla, Sada Shapla (white water lily), and Lal Shapla (red water lily).

However, under Rule 9(l) of the Representation of the People, 2008, Shapla is not currently among the approved symbols.

Contacted, EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said that the NCP's registration was approved despite unresolved issues regarding its requested symbol. "Since Shapla is not on the Election Commission's list, we asked the party to confirm an alternative one. Upon getting its reply, we will issue the public notice specifying the final symbol."

### French PM

FROM PAGE 12 immediately urged President Emmanuel Macron to resign, or call a snap parliamentary election.

Lecornu, who was Macron's fifth prime minister in two years, stayed in the job for only 27 days. His government lasted just 14 hours, highlighting divisions in the French parliament as the euro zone's second-largest economy struggles to put its finances in order.

French politics has been increasingly unstable since Macron's re-election in 2022. Macron's decision to call a snap parliamentary election last year deepened the crisis by producing an even more fragmented parliament.

## Bangladesh, KSA ink deal

FROM PAGE 12

reports of labour abuses, including high recruitment costs, joblessness, underpayment and deportation of Bangladeshi workers.

"It is hoped that through the signing of this agreement, the recruitment of skilled workers in various professions from Bangladesh to Saudi Arabia will increase, and the rights and interests of both workers and employers will be better protected," the statement said.

"This will play a role in further strengthening the bilateral relations between the two brotherly nations," it added.

Prior to signing the agreement, Asif Nazrul and Ahmad Bin Solaiman Al-Rajhi held a bilateral meeting.

During the meeting, the adviser requested the Saudi minister to

ensure that the employers provide the right job contracts to the workers, take full responsibility for paying the fees for work permit renewals, and arrange exits quickly when workers wish to return home.

The Saudi minister instructed relevant parties to take effective steps for the speedy resolution of these issues, while also calling upon Bangladesh to play its role in ensuring safe and fair migration.

They also discussed the issues of recruiting more skilled workers and increasing cooperation to ensure the welfare and protection of workers.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Delwar Hossain, Deputy Chief of Mission SM Nazmul Hasan, and Labour Counsellor Muhammad Reza E-Rabbi were present on the occasion.

## Restoring public trust

FROM PAGE 12

the EC stands at a crossroads, with two possible paths ahead: either emerge as a hero or risk being seen as a villain. "We hope the commission chooses to be the hero."

Referring to the consensus commission's proposal to have a referendum on the July Charter, The Financial Express Editor Shamsul Huq Zahid cast doubt over whether it is possible to hold the referendum on election day.

The dialogue was conducted in two sessions: the first with representatives from electronic media and the second with print media journalists.

Several journalists also urged the commission to ensure that they can work and broadcast live from the voting centres without any hassles.

They said EC's guidelines for the media are not conducive to effectively covering the election. Without supportive guidelines, it becomes difficult to expose those involved in electoral malpractice, they said, adding that a media-friendly policy framework therefore must be developed.

Journalists also recommended that returning officers be appointed from within the EC rather than the civil administration and that EC officials be granted magisterial authority.

They also suggested that ballot papers be sent to the polling centres the morning of election day.

To prevent uncontested elections, journalists proposed introducing provisions for either re-voting in single-candidate constituencies or allowing the nomination of alternative candidates.

At the beginning of the second round of dialogue, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) AMM Nasir Uddin said, "This is not a discussion for the sake of discussion. Your advice and opinions will be useful. If there are any gaps or shortcomings in our preparations, we hope to be enlightened by you."

"At this critical juncture of the nation, we want to deliver a good election. For the sake of the nation, it is extremely important that this election be free and fair. The Election Commission alone cannot manage it."

Saying that updating the voter list was a massive undertaking, the CEC said, "However, the results were not only fruitful but, in some ways, astonishing. We identified more than 21 lakh deceased individuals who were still listed as active voters. Many of them, despite being dead, had reportedly cast votes under their names. The issue was widely covered in print media..."

Nasir said the EC has successfully removed the deceased and incorporated the previously excluded eligible voters, marking a significant step toward a cleaner and more credible electoral roll.

## Tobacco use drops

FROM PAGE 12

The current rate exceeds global and regional averages, and without multi-pronged government action, like stronger anti-tobacco laws, it will be hard to reduce the rate further.

Tobacco use is a common risk factor for four major non-communicable diseases -- cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, cancer, and diabetes, health experts say.

According to a research conducted by the Bangladesh Cancer Society and published in 2019, the economic losses due to tobacco consumption -- covering treatment costs and productivity losses -- amounted to Tk 30,560 crore in 2017-18 fiscal year.

**GLOBAL, REGIONAL SCENARIO** The trend analysis in this report is based on data from nationally representative, population-based tobacco-related surveys conducted between 1990 and 2024.

According to the report, the global average is projected to be 19.2 percent in 2025, down from 26.2 percent in 2010.

The report shows the global number of tobacco users dropped from 1.38 billion in 2000 to 1.2 billion in 2024.

The average for the South and East Asia region is projected at 22.7 percent this year.

Among the 10 countries in the region, Bangladesh ranked third from the bottom, just ahead of Myanmar (42.5 percent) and Timor-Leste (48.9 percent), the report says.

The rates of tobacco consumption in India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka are projected to be 21.9 percent, 28 percent, and 20.4 percent respectively this year.

Contacted, Ataur Rahman, advocacy manager of Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, said decline in the use of bidi and some smokeless tobacco products like Sada Pata contributed to reduction in the overall prevalence rate.

He, however, referring to the data from the National Board of Revenue (NBR), said cigarette sales have increased lately, posing a new challenge to go down the prevalence rate further.

Even though the prevalence rate has reduced, the number of real tobacco users has increased, making it a mammoth task to achieve the target of tobacco-free nation by 2040.

According to the WHO, a country is considered "tobacco-free" or having achieved "tobacco-free status" when the prevalence of tobacco use among adults drops below 5 percent.

## No surprises as Bulbul

FROM PAGE 1

Council (NSC) nominated directors.

Although neither Ishfaq nor Yasir were on the final voter list, they received NSC nominations after Salman Hossain and Ibrahim Khalilullah resigned as councillors. Election Commissioner Kazi Nazrul Islam, who is also the executive director of NSC, confirmed the development to The Daily Star.

Following the polls, the newly formed board held its first meeting, where director Faruque Ahmed proposed Bulbul's name as the new president and he was elected unopposed.

Former BCB president Faruque Ahmed and Barishal Division's director Shakhat Hossain were also elected unopposed as vice-presidents.

Former vice-president Fahim, who was expected to retain his position, did not contest.

Bulbul said the board meeting, adjourned yesterday, would resume today at the BCB headquarters at noon. He also expressed optimism about announcing the chairmen of the 23 standing committees today.

"The important thing is that our board is completely new -- you could say it was born today," Bulbul said in his first press conference after getting re-elected.

"We will evaluate everyone's skill sets, decide who fits which department best, and hopefully announce the committees tomorrow [today]."

Bulbul also vowed to invite all stakeholders to work together for the betterment of Bangladesh cricket.

"We all want to work together for Bangladesh cricket. Whether someone is in the cricket board or not, we will invite all stakeholders to work for Bangladesh cricket and assist us."

The outcome of the election seemed like a formality after several candidates -- including former national skipper Tamim Iqbal -- withdrew their nominations, alleging government interference and conspiracies.

Two major controversies clouded this year's election. The first arose when Bulbul sent a letter to the Ministry of Youth and Sports on September 18, admitting that several divisions and districts had failed to properly nominate councillors through ad-hoc committees and thus the BCB twice extended the

nomination deadline.

The second controversy involved 15 Dhaka Metropolis clubs, whose councilorships were repeatedly cancelled and reinstated within a week, triggering protests and eventually leading to nearly 20 candidates withdrawing from the race.

Tamim, representing Old DOHS Sports Club, was among 34 club voters who abstained from voting. In total, 115 out of 156 voters cast their votes -- both through e-voting and in person.

Earlier in the day, Bulbul and Fahim were elected from Category-1 (Dhaka Division) with 15 votes each. Mukhslesur Rahman and Hasanuzzaman were elected from Rajshahi and Rangpur Divisions, respectively, each securing seven votes.

In the club category, Iftekhar Rahman Mithu and Manzur Alam retained their positions from the previous board with 34 and 39 votes, respectively. Others elected from this category included Faruque (42), Ishaque Sadeque (42), Adnan Rahman Dipon (40), Fayazur Rahman (40), Abul Bashar (40), Amzad Hossain (41), Shahriar Taneeem (42), Mokhsedul Kamal (41), M Nazmul Islam (37), and Mehrab Alam Chowdhury (41).

In Category 3, former national captain Khaled Mashud Pilot defeated Debrabrat Paul of Jahangirnagar University by 35-7 votes to secure his place on the new board.

### Sign deals

FROM PAGE 12

block attempts to transfer the properties to other parties, he added.



# High-performance computing a path forward for Bangladesh



Professor Torsten Hoefer, Professor of Computer Science at ETH Zurich and recipient of the 2024 ACM Prize in Computing

MOHAMMAD KAWSAR UDDIN

As Bangladesh continues its journey toward digital transformation and scientific advancement, high-performance computing (HPC) is emerging as a key driver of progress in sectors such as healthcare, climate prediction, disaster preparedness, and urban development.

In this conversation, Professor Torsten Hoefer, a globally recognised expert in supercomputing, Professor of Computer Science at ETH Zurich, and recipient of the 2024

ACM Prize in Computing, shares his insights on the potential of HPC to catalyse development in Bangladesh.

**How can high-performance computing contribute to improvements in healthcare, climate prediction, and urban planning in Bangladesh?**

**Professor Torsten Hoefer:** While I am not intimately familiar with the specific circumstances in Bangladesh, the deployment of high-performance computing infrastructure is certainly feasible, assuming there is sufficient local expertise to utilise it effectively. The presence of skilled human capital is fundamental, alongside the establishment of the necessary technological infrastructure. These two elements can be developed in parallel; however, where a qualified talent pool already exists, HPC can unequivocally serve as a powerful catalyst for advancing healthcare, climate modelling, and urban planning initiatives.

**To what extent can HPC and large-scale simulations enhance Bangladesh's preparedness for floods and cyclones?**

**Hoefer:** Enhanced regional weather forecasting, whether through refined numerical models or AI-driven approaches, can significantly increase lead times and reduce forecasting errors. This capability can substantially improve disaster preparedness and response. Regional cooperation is often advantageous in this domain. Collaborations with neighbouring countries can enable shared

investments in computational infrastructure and facilitate the recruitment and retention of specialised expertise.

**What advice would you offer to Bangladeshi researchers seeking to cultivate world-class skills in HPC and computational science?**

**Hoefer:** I would recommend a dual strategy: learning from international research communities and contributing actively to local scientific endeavours. Such reciprocal collaboration tends to accelerate progress. For individual researchers, it is critical to develop deep expertise within a focused area to maximise impact. Furthermore, forming well-structured teams with complementary skill sets is essential to achieving significant scientific breakthroughs.

**In your view, what is the most transformative impact that HPC could have on everyday life in Bangladesh over the next decade?**

**Hoefer:** Although I am not personally acquainted with the nuances of daily life in Bangladesh, broadly speaking, high-performance computing holds the potential to significantly enhance public services. These include improved regional and extreme weather forecasting, healthcare delivery, and strategic planning in transportation and logistics. Such improvements facilitate more informed decision-making and yield better societal outcomes. Moreover, HPC forms the foundation for the advancement of artificial intelligence, which increasingly plays a vital role in driving innovation and supporting human development worldwide.

## Your data will train LinkedIn's AI unless you opt out



IMAGE: UNSPLASH

### NEXT STEP DESK

LinkedIn has recently announced that its user data will soon be shared with Microsoft and its affiliates to help train AI systems, a move framed under what the company describes as its "legitimate interest".

In a recent post, LinkedIn said, "On

November 3, 2025, we'll start to use some data from members in these regions to train content-generating AI models that enhance your experience and better connect our members to opportunities." In the United States and other countries, LinkedIn has confirmed that data will also be shared with Microsoft

from the same date, including profile information, feed activity, and advertising interactions.

How to opt out: Navigate to Settings & Privacy > Data privacy > Data for Generative AI Improvement. Toggle off 'Use my data for training content creation AI models'. Users may also file a Data Processing

Objection request to formally object. The objection form can be accessed by selecting 'Object to processing for training content-generating AI models' and submitting the request. Non-members are also able to file an objection if their personal data has been shared on LinkedIn by a member.

## JOBS SPOTLIGHT

Standard Chartered Bank



standard chartered

Centre Manager, Priority

Deadline: October 13

Eligibility:

• Bachelor's degree with prior banking experience in a relevant field.

Minimum experience: 5-7 years

British Council



BRITISH COUNCIL

Teacher of English

Deadline: October 15

Eligibility:

• First degree (or equivalent) and a Cambridge CELTA or Trinity Cert TESOL, with high proficiency in English (IELTS Band 8/9 in all sections of the academic module).

Minimum experience: 2 years

Bangalalink



CVM & Digital Analytics Senior Manager

Deadline: October 9

Eligibility:

• Graduation in Computer Science/ Applied Statistics/Business/relevant field.

Minimum experience: 4 years

MJL

Mobil

Bangladesh PLC.

Senior Executive, Sales & Marketing

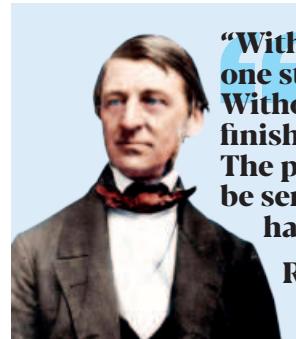
Deadline: October 11

Eligibility:

• BBA or equivalent from any reputed university. MBA or equivalent from a reputed university is preferred.

Minimum experience: 4 years

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.



**"Without ambition one starts nothing. Without work one finishes nothing. The prize will not be sent to you, You have to win it."**

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

## THE CAREER JUNGLE GYM: thriving when there's no ladder to climb

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

For decades, career success was symbolised by the ladder - a predictable climb toward seniority. Today, that model is becoming obsolete. Welcome to the career jungle gym, where progress is multi-directional and success is defined by versatility rather than vertical ascent. Unlike the single-path ladder, the jungle gym celebrates movement in all directions. Strategic lateral moves, diagonal advancements through cross-functional projects, and occasional downward steps to gain new platforms - all represent meaningful progress. The goal shifts from climbing to exploring, from following a predetermined path to crafting your own unique route through the corporate landscape.

powerful market forces. According to the 2025 Global Leadership Development Study by Harvard Business Impact, AI integration is causing a "nonlinear evolution of roles", fundamentally reshaping jobs rather than merely enhancing them. Organisations now focus on building "collective intelligence of humans and machines", creating partnerships that demand unprecedented adaptability from professionals.

**TO THRIVE IN THIS NEW ENVIRONMENT, EMBRACE THESE THREE STRATEGIES:** First, become a strategic explorer. Success requires looking beyond the traditional promotion path. Try to develop what might be called 'career peripheral vision', the ability to spot opportunities in unexpected places. This means

proactively seeking lateral transfers, volunteering for cross-departmental initiatives, and considering roles that offer crucial skill development rather than just title advancement.

Second, prioritise skills over titles. In the jungle gym, your capabilities, i.e. your grip strength, matter more than your position. The Harvard study reveals that the half-life of skills has collapsed from approximately 26 years to under five years, making continuous learning essential. Thus, seek to build a dynamic skills portfolio through what might be termed 'fractional professional development', i.e. maintaining deep expertise in your core area while systematically acquiring complementary skills through stretch assignments and side projects.

Finally, champion your humanity. While technical

skills form the structure's sturdy poles, human capabilities provide the coordination and creativity to navigate it effectively. As AI handles more analytical tasks, your ability to connect authentically with colleagues, exercise ethical judgment, and inspire teams becomes your strategic advantage. The study emphasises that leaders must now blend "strategic, digital, social, and emotional intelligence" to succeed in this new environment.

The career jungle gym isn't a temporary trend but the new reality of professional growth. By embracing fluid movement, committing to continuous learning, and leveraging uniquely human strengths, you can build a career that's both fulfilling and resilient, one that is ready for whatever changes the future may bring.

## Meta tracks employee AI usage with 'games': report



### NEXT STEP DESK

Meta is monitoring employee adoption of AI tools through internal dashboards and has created a gamified system to encourage usage, according to a recent Business Insider report.

The company's Reality Labs division has set a target of achieving over 75% AI adoption among its teams, as per internal sources that spoke to Business Insider. As per the inside sources, the AI usage tracking initiative includes a voluntary game called 'Level Up', where

employees earn badges for reaching AI usage milestones. Expectations vary across departments, with some teams encouraged to experiment while others face specific adoption targets.

The push reflects a broader industry trend where major tech firms are actively promoting internal AI use. Google tracks productivity gains from AI tools, while Microsoft is attempting to link AI usage to performance reviews, states the report, adding that a Meta spokesperson acknowledged that increasing AI adoption is a company priority.

## BCB POLLS AT A GLANCE

**Total Voters:** 156 (Dhaka Division: 17; Rajshahi Division: 9; Rangpur Division: 9; Category 2: 76; Category 3: 45)

**Votes cast:** 115 (73.71%) (Dhaka Division: 15; Rajshahi Division: 7; Rangpur Division: 8; Category 2: 42; Category 3: 43)

**Didn't cast vote:** 41 (Dhaka Division: 2; Rajshahi Division: 2; Rangpur Division: 1; Category 2: 34; Category 3: 2)

**Cancelled vote:** 1 (Category: 3)

**First-time directors:** 20

**Ex-directors in new board:** 5 (Aminul Islam, Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, Faruque Ahmed, Manzur Alam, Eftekhar Rahman Mithu)

## LIST OF DIRECTORS (CATEGORY-WISE)

**Total:** 25

**Category 1:** 10 -- Aminul Islam Bulbul, Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, Mukhlesur Rahman, Hasanuzzaman, Ahsan Iqbal Chowdhury, Asif Akbar, Abdur Razzak, Zulfikar Ali Khan, Rahat Shams and Shakawat Hossain

**Category 2:** 12 -- Ishaque Sadeque, Adnan Rahman Dipon, Fayazur Rahman, Abul Bashar, Amzad Hossain, Shahnian Taneem, Mokhsedul Kamal, M Nazmul Islam, Faruque Ahmed, Manzur Alam, Mehrab Alam Chowdhury and Iftekhar Rahman Mithu

**Category 3:** 1 -- Khaled Mashud Pilot

**NSC nominated directors:** Ishfaq Ahsan, Yasir Mohammad Faysal



## 'FELL IN LOVE WITH DEVELOPMENT OF BANGLADESH CRICKET'

**"This is part of a journey I've embraced. I've fallen in love with the development of Bangladesh cricket. I came for a short term, and that short term was my plan. But when I started doing small tasks through a fruitful programme and saw success, I didn't think of anything else. I have stayed with the goal of serving my country... This board's term is for four years. We have already started working towards where we want to see Bangladesh cricket after these four years with today's board meeting."**

AMINUL ISLAM BULBUL said after being re-elected as BCB president



## Tigresses to stick to 'natural game'

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Bangladesh pacer Marufa Akter, who starred in the team's opening win against Pakistan at the ICC Women's World Cup, has shown she can handle the hype surrounding her performances. Skipper Nigar Sultana Joty said the team remains focused on playing their natural game against title contenders England in Guwahati today.

"We try to keep her to a simple gameplan," Joty explained in yesterday's pre-match press conference. "We don't burden her whether she succeeds or not."

"We all know about her struggles from an early age so she's very hardworking and now she's getting the result. There was a lot of hype after the first game but from what I have seen, she doesn't bother with those things because of the child-like nature that she has," she added.

With conditions in India differing from Colombo, Joty stressed relying on instincts developed during the Pakistan win. "The first match was important; a good start boosts team mentality. In these tournaments, spinners usually dominate, but Marufa gave us a brilliant start, and the spinners combined to pick eight wickets. Bowling-wise, we are in rhythm."

On batting, she added, "Our batters looked confident against Pakistan. We want to carry those positives into the next game."

Joty acknowledged England's line-up, last faced at the 2022 T20 World Cup, may prompt changes. "We want to play our natural game, but there will be adjustments because of many right-hand batters. If needed, we'll add a spinner or seamer; Fariha Trisna could be considered if conditions suit."

England all-rounder Charlie Dean, meanwhile, suggested negating Marufa's swing early would be the way to go for the four-time champions. "I guess looking to negate the swinging ball early with Marufa. And then, I guess, settling in against the spin and batting really long, I think, is how we're going to approach the game," she said.



SHABAB CHOWDHURY

Bangladesh batter Saif Hassan has done what many of his peers could not. He stepped away from the national fold, returned stronger, and finally proved himself ready for the demands of international cricket.

After registering binary digits in his first two T20Is against Pakistan in 2021, just months after an underwhelming Test debut, it seemed the international arena was too daunting for the then 21-year-old. Fast forward to 2025, and Saif has undergone a metamorphosis to evolve into arguably the poster boy of the current national setup.

Since his unexpected recall to the T20I side in late August for the home series against the Netherlands, Saif has amassed three half-centuries in 10 innings, beginning with an unbeaten 20-ball 36 in the opener. A crucial 30 against Afghanistan in the Asia Cup group stage, followed by a match-winning 61 against Sri Lanka that sealed Super Four qualification, and then a commanding 69 against India -- all showed how a batter once lost in the fray became the pillar of the lineup.

After a couple of misfires in the subsequent Afghanistan series, Saif capped things off with an unbeaten 64 off 38 balls. In doing so, he silenced his doubters. Admirers warmed not just because everyone loves a comeback story but because Bangladesh cricket has long been starved of genuine examples of players remodelling their game to thrive at higher levels.

It is almost poetic that a batter

once dismissed as technically flawed now embodies the batsmanship so absent elsewhere in Bangladesh's order.

Saif's journey is not one of inflated redemption but of pragmatic evolution -- not by relying on the flattery of talent that so often leads young players astray.

Too often, youngsters lean on domestic form without addressing technical flaws exposed at international level.

**His transformation has almost erased the image of the lanky opener with a tentative, soft grip and a peculiar low backlift betrayed by hesitant footwork.**



His transformation has almost erased the image of the lanky opener with a tentative, soft grip and a peculiar low backlift betrayed by hesitant footwork. Those days are gone. Now, a mature mind works in cohesion with a stronger frame. Assuredness defines his game: a minimal shuffle, a strong base, the alignment of head and front foot -- all combine to set him up for commanding options. A tighter grip, a higher backlift, and better balance between the hands now give him control and power -- a far cry from the tentative version of 2020.

Equally telling is his approach to scoring. Saif favours the straight boundary, opting for low-risk, high-reward strokes in the Powerplay. His flicks remain a strength; he rarely misses a chance to punish anything on his pads. But what sets him apart now is batsmanship. His clarity of thought, arising without premeditation, and the patience to play on the merit of the ball and the game situation were evident in his latest knock when he chose to see off Rashid Khan's over without bothering for a run.

This awareness, coupled with his leadership as a batter, has become even more evident in the absence of long-serving middle-order mainstays and in contrast to the hit-and-miss style of many contemporaries. Saif's presence offers a cushion to a side transitioning from a generational gap.

Equally important, by setting a benchmark for the next in line, Saif has shown what a meaningful comeback truly looks like.

## Hong Kong ready for Bangladesh challenge

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Mahama Awal, a Cameroonian-born naturalised forward for Hong Kong, China, is expecting a tough challenge from Bangladesh in front of a packed National Stadium in Dhaka on October 9. However, he insists that Hong Kong are strong, focused, and ready to claim all three points in their crucial away fixture of the Asian Cup Qualifiers.

"We've heard Bangladesh is a very difficult place to go, but we're strong and ready. We'll go there full of energy and positivity, and give everything to win... we need the points to qualify," Awal told the South China Morning Post.



Hong Kong currently sit joint top of their group alongside Singapore with four points each, and are aiming to secure back-to-back qualifications for the Asian Cup in China. A pair of victories over Bangladesh would significantly strengthen their chances.

Brazilian-born striker Juninho echoed Awal's confidence, backing Hong Kong to handle the pressure in the two potentially decisive qualifiers.

"Every game we play for Hong Kong is important, but if we beat Bangladesh twice it will be

and I'm ready to perform," said Awal, who has 14 international appearances for Hong Kong. He was one of the standout performers in the second half against India, a match Hong Kong won 1-0.

"We know how big this competition is for everybody. We will fight and give our all to qualify," said the 34-year-old striker, looking ahead to the return leg at the sold-out 50,000 capacity Kai Tak Stadium on 14 October.

Meanwhile, Leicester City midfielder Hamza Choudhury joined the Bangladesh camp yesterday, just hours after arriving in Dhaka following a long journey from England.

Choudhury appeared cheerful during his first training session at the National Stadium, sharing smiles with teammates during the 15 minutes of practice that were open to the media. However, head coach Javier Cabrera did not allow any players to speak to the press.

The tie against Hong Kong is a



Leicester City midfielder Hamza Choudhury (L) walks into the National Stadium in Dhaka alongside Bangladesh captain Jamal Bhuyan for a practice session with the team yesterday afternoon, hours after landing in Dhaka. The Bangladesh team will host Hong Kong for an Asian Cup Qualifiers fixture in Dhaka on October 9 before playing away to Hong Kong five days later.

"I'm so happy to come back

## The silence of Shams-ul-Huda Stadium

MOHSIN MILON, Benapoli

Jashore's Shams-ul-Huda Stadium opened more than six decades ago with pride and promise. For years it staged football, cricket, hockey and national tournaments, while also serving as a cultural stage for the south-western district. At present, however, the once-vibrant ground lies abandoned, its turf buried under knee-high weeds and stagnant water.

Even around a decade ago, it hosted international football contests, drawing packed crowds -- on March 24, 2014, the 12,000 capacity stadium saw more than 30,000 spectators during Bangladesh's friendly against Sri Lanka, with the hosts winning 1-0. It also staged international fixtures during the 2016 Bangabandhu Cup.

For the past three years, footballers and athletes have been forced to leave the stadium behind. More than two thirds of the field is overrun by invasive grass, while the rest remains waterlogged even in the dry season. "It looks more like a grazing field for cattle than a stadium," one spectator remarked bitterly.

The neglect runs deeper than the turf. Cracked galleries, broken seating and the lack of a proper drainage system have rendered the stadium unusable. For two years no football matches have been held here, leaving the ground eerily silent by day and a gathering spot for miscreants by night,



spreading fear among locals.

What was once the district's sporting hub has scattered its athletes to borrowed corners. Jashore's district football team now trains at the Hamidpur Orphanage Shams-ul-Huda Academy ground. Cricketers have shifted to the Municipal Preparatory School field, while handball players practice at the Muslim Academy ground. Volleyball, hockey and other athletes are left to make do with temporary arrangements at different institutions.

Sports organisers blame years of neglect by the authorities. District Sports Association officials acknowledge the crisis, estimating that repairing the drainage and restoring the stadium would require around Tk 1 crore. Yet repeated appeals for funding have gone unanswered.

The decline feels even more tragic given the stadium's rich history. Originally known as Rai Bahadur Mamnathan's field pre-1959 and officially inaugurated as a stadium in 1959 -- with the foundation stone laid by then East Pakistan governor Mohammad Zahir Hossain -- it became the district stadium in 1978 and was renamed in honour of philanthropist Shams-ul-Huda.

"Unless urgent steps are taken, this historic venue will be permanently lost to weeds and neglect," organisers warn.

Jashore Deputy Commissioner Azharul Islam said, "We have written to the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Youth. A delegation visited recently. The ground will be repaired as soon as possible and turned into a modern stadium."

For the people of Jashore, though, the question remains: how much longer must their stadium, once a symbol of pride, remain a symbol of decay?

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



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## NATIONAL ELECTION

# NCP warns of fallout if denied Shapla symbol

SHAMIMA RITA

National Citizen Party said if it did not get Shapla (water lily) as its electoral symbol, then it would have major political consequences and seriously impact the upcoming polls.

On September 30, the Election Commission asked the party to select an alternative from 115 available symbols by October 7, as Shapla was not in the commission's approved list.

Rejecting the request, the NCP plans to respond tomorrow and seek an explanation from the EC for what it describes as a "denial of rights".

The party also said it would work to form an independent and constitutional Election Commission through democratic means if its demand is not met.

There is no obstacle to allocating Shapla to the NCP, and there are no legal barriers to obtaining it, NCP Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary told The Daily Star yesterday. "We will explain this clearly in our letter."

"We will inform the Election Commission that we will not consider any alternative symbol and will ask why our rights are being taken away."



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# Restoring public trust an uphill task for EC

## Journos tell commission during dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalists said yesterday that restoring public confidence in the electoral process will pose a major challenge for the Election Commission, given the widespread allegations of irregularities that were reported in the last three general elections.

During a dialogue with the EC at its headquarters in Agargaon, they also warned that combating disinformation, misinformation, and rumours on social media will test the commission's preparedness.

Hasan Hafiz, editor of Kaler Kantha and president of the Jatiya Press Club, said journalists expect EC officials to stand before the nation with integrity.

"You are walking a razor's edge. Those who oversaw past elections are now facing public scrutiny. You, too, may face the same fate. So it's a do-or-die moment."

He also said the EC needs to have "a clear stance" on the Awami League, whose activities are currently banned. "You cannot exclude Awami League voters; they are citizens of this country... You must clarify your position; otherwise, the election won't be seen as credible."

Shariful Islam Khan, head of News at News24, said, "The greatest challenge for the EC is to restore confidence among ordinary citizens. As we envision a new and promising Bangladesh, the demand for a free, fair, and inclusive election becomes all the more urgent."

Daily Inqilab Editor AMM Bahauddin urged the EC to take steps to combat misinformation and disinformation surrounding the upcoming election.

Prothom Alo Executive Editor Sajjad Sharif said the EC is attempting to do many things, but what people will truly assess this time is its moral strength. "Whatever you intend to do, make it visible. Set precedents in at least a few cases."

Abdul Hye Sikder, editor of Jugantor, remarked that

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2



As Saiful Islam works on a road near the Jatiya Press Club, his grandson sleeps beside him on a concrete slab. With both his wife and son also working as day labourers and no one else to care for the child, Saiful brings the boy to work so he can watch over him. The photo was taken yesterday at noon.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Sign deals with firms to recover stolen assets

### BB asks banks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank yesterday advised banks to prepare for signing deals with internationally reputed law firms to recover money allegedly laundered by ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, her family, and 10 business groups, including S Alam Group.

The suggestion came at a meeting, chaired by BB Governor Ahsan H Mansur, between the managing directors of banks and the top officials of the BB and the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit.

During the meeting, information on alleged money laundering by the industrial groups was shared with the top bankers.

Mati Ul Hasan, managing director of Mercantile Bank PLC, said they have been advised to sign agreements with international law firms with expertise in tracing and realising laundered money.

Based on the agreement, the firms will be able to trace laundered assets through its vast international network and take steps to

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is at 31.4 percent in 2025 compared to 44.2 percent in 2010, according to the report titled "WHO global report on trends in prevalence of tobacco use 2000-2024 and projections 2025-2030".

Bangladesh had a target to cut down the tobacco consumption rate to 29 percent by this year, meaning it is still 2.4 percent behind the goal.

Although WHO report says Bangladesh is on track to achieve a 30 percent relative reduction by this year, anti-tobacco campaigners said it would be challenging to bring it down further because the number of tobacco users in real terms is still very high.

Bangladesh has a vision to be a tobacco-free nation by 2040.

Prof Sohel Reza Choudhury, head of epidemiology and research at the National Heart Foundation Hospital and Research Institute, said the base estimate of tobacco users in 2010 was very high -- 44.2 percent.

This rate has come down in last one and a half decades due to various government and non-government initiatives, he said.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



- » Bangladesh has **1.97cr** smokers as of last year
- » **3.71cr** people (aged 15 and above) used tobacco products
- » Country is supposed to be tobacco free by 2040

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