



If a war can be stopped in one region [Gaza], then surely other wars can be stopped as well – including the Russian war.

Zelensky, Ukrainian president in phone call with Trump

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

SECOND EDITION



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ICT CASES

Army takes 15 officers into custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The army has taken 15 officers into custody after they were formally charged in three cases at the International Crimes Tribunal over enforced disappearances during the Awami League rule and killings during the July uprising.

Of the 15, one is currently on leave preparatory to retirement (LPR).

Among the serving officers facing arrest warrants, one remains missing.

So far, 25 current and former military officials have been formally charged; of them, nine are retired or suspended, the army said at a press briefing at Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

Speaking at the presser, Major General Md Hakimuzzaman, adjutant general of the army, said the army issued an attachment order on October 8, instructing the serving and the one on LPR to report to a designated facility at Dhaka Cantonment by October 9.

Of them, 15 were in custody, while the other -- Major General Kabir Ahmed -- has been missing since the morning of October 9.

"He left home that morning saying he was going to consult a lawyer. He did not return, and no one has been able to contact him since," said Hakimuzzaman.

Standard protocols were activated in line with army regulations, he added. "When any serving member goes missing, we declare them AWL (absent without leave) and follow a prescribed appendix listing which departments must be informed and what actions must follow."

He said the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, National Security Intelligence, and Border Guard Bangladesh have been alerted at all ports to prevent anyone named from leaving the country illegally. "Army teams have also been checking homes, relatives' residences, and hospitals for any clue to the missing officer's whereabouts."

Hakimuzzaman said the army law does not apply to the nine retired or

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

- 'We acted even before receiving warrants'
- All serving officers named in charge sheets were ordered to report by Oct 9
- 15 of them complied with the order
- Maj Gen Kabir Ahmed remains absent without leave



PHOTO: REUTERS

Palestinians walk among rubble following Israeli forces' withdrawal from the area as a ceasefire took hold between Israel and Hamas in Gaza yesterday.

Palestinians return to devastated Gaza City

Truce holds; Hamas official says disarmament 'out of the question', second round of talks will be difficult

AFP, Gaza City

Hundreds of thousands of war-weary Palestinians returned to a devastated Gaza City yesterday, with families picking their way through rubble-strewn streets only to find many of their homes in ruins.

On the second day of a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, the scale of the recovery operation was daunting, even as negotiations and preparations for a prisoner swap continued.

US President Donald Trump is due in the Middle East in the next two days to celebrate the promised release of Israeli hostages -- still held in Gaza two years after Hamas's October 7 attack -- and to promote the next phase of his plan.

But in an early sign that much political wrangling remains, a senior Hamas official told AFP that it was "out of the question" that the Palestinian Islamist movement would disarm,

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

NCP weighing its paths to JS

Half of the central leaders favour alliance with BNP

SHAMIMA RITA and ZYMA ISLAM

Nearly half of the NCP's central leaders favour forging an alliance with the BNP ahead of the 13th national election in February.

The other members are considering three options -- an alliance with Jamaat-e-Islami, a broader centrist coalition without the BNP, or just running independently.

At a recent executive committee meeting, half of the party's leaders proposed allying with the BNP and finalising

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Police use a water cannon as officers approach the stage after dispersing the participants of a Jatiya Party rally, organised by blocking the street in front of the party's central office in the capital's Kakrail yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: STAR

Teacher who accused BNP leader of rape held in a gold smuggling case

ANIS MONDOL, Kusthia

A music teacher who had accused Chuadanga BNP General Secretary Sharifuzzaman Sharif of rape by deception has been arrested and sent to jail in a gold smuggling case.

The district's additional superintendent of police, however, said she has no prior criminal history, and investigators have yet to find any evidence linking her to the smuggling.

The teacher worked as an assistant music instructor at several educational institutions, including a high school, under the Darshana upazila administration.

Rape by deception is when a perpetrator tricks the victim into a sexual act they would not have otherwise consented to. In this case, Sharif allegedly lured the victim with a false promise of marriage.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

LPG remains overlooked despite great potentials

Say speakers at conclave

LPG INDUSTRY


- 27 importers, 5,000 dealers, 45,000 retailers
- Current demand: 1.5 million tonne/year
- Projected demand by 2030: 2.5 million tonne/year
- 80% household users, 12% industries, 8% autogas
- Local production 2%, imports 98%
- \$3b investment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) sector has grown on its own and remained largely overlooked for years even though it could serve as an alternative fuel amid the ongoing pipeline gas shortage, speakers said at a policy conclave yesterday.

LPG is the only energy product that grew without any subsidy and it

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



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Yunus leaves for Rome today to join WFF event

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus will leave for Rome, Italy, today to attend a flagship event of the World Food Forum (WFF).



A Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight carrying the chief adviser and his entourage will depart from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 11:30am, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam told BSS.

According to the tour schedule, Prof Yunus will deliver a speech as an invited guest at the main session of the WFF.

He will also meet with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and heads of various international organisations. The meetings will focus on global issues, including food security, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development.

The WFF is a platform of the Food and Agriculture Organization

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3



Palestinians, who were displaced to the southern part of Gaza at Israel's order during the war, make their way along a road as they return to the north as a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza takes hold in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

2 killed as Rab minibus collides with bus in Patuakhali



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Two people, including a member of the Rab-8, were killed and around 50 others injured in a head-on collision between a bus and a Rab minibus on the Patuakhali-Kuakata highway yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Rab-8 minibus driver and Assistant Sub-Inspector Abdul Alim, and three-year-old Prion, son of Rab member and police sub-inspector Prosenjit, said Imtiaz Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Patuakhali Sadar Police Station.

The accident occurred around 8:30am near Fatullah Bus Stand when the Kuakata-bound Rab minibus from Barishal collided head-on with a bus.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

LPG remains overlooked

FROM PAGE 1

is a very competitive energy source compared to the price of other fuels and their availability, said M Tamim, vice-chancellor of the Independent University, Bangladesh at a conclave titled "LPG in Bangladesh: Economy, Environment and Safety".

"Its cost-effectiveness, cleaner burning, ease of transportation and secured supply have increased the industrial usage by nearly 15 percent in the last two years," he said at the event organised by Daily Bonik Barta at Pan Pacific Sonargaon.

The advantage of LPG is that it is relatively easy to import with lighterage, said Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, adviser to the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources.

"But the major problem lies in its price – it needs to be reduced. The entire LPG sector is controlled by private companies, and prices remain too high," he said, adding the price of a 12-kg cylinder should be below Tk 1,000 but it is more than Tk 1,200.

Drives will be initiated under mobile courts to monitor whether selling rates exceed the rates fixed by the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission.

Khan stressed the need to promote LPG use in industries by reducing prices, given the ongoing crisis in piped gas supply.

"We have limitations in LNG [liquefied natural gas] import as we are near to utilising our full regasification

facilities. But it is easier to import LPG."

A section of politicians and their allied businessmen, working together, have created the ongoing crisis in the gas sector.

"In the private sector, many industries were promised gas connections. Even knowing there was no gas, lines were given, unjustly, through corruption," he added.

Azam J Chowdhury, former president of the LPG Operators Association of Bangladesh, however, disagreed with Khan's comment about LPG pricing.

If the government can ensure 7 percent profit for importers on each 12kg LPG cylinder sales, the private sector operators would hand over their businesses to the government.

"Everyone in the business is struggling to survive while some are selling LPG at losses. All of the licensees are barely breathing. Some have even been forced to shut down their operations."

But closing a business means bank loans will remain unpaid and jobs will be at risk.

"I have coined a new term for this sector: NSPG – No Subsidy, No Patronisation and No Governance. Everyone is running their business in their own way," said Chowdhury, a director of Omera LPG.

Many places across the country are selling LPG cylinders illegally, while some are refilling small cylinders from larger ones by themselves, which is

highly dangerous.

"Is that the operators' fault?"

Mentioning the licence fee of Tk 1 crore per year for an LPG operator, he said: "On one hand, the government urges the use of green fuel, but on the other, it imposes heavy fees. The government itself sets the prices, so why should the blame fall only on us?"

The LPG market is being "manipulated" as the government has deliberately created the market by shutting down pipeline gas supply, said M Shamsul Alam, energy adviser to the Consumers' Association of Bangladesh.

He urged operators to ensure the safe supply of LPG through transparent business practices and proper service.

Besides, he urged the BERC not to take the side of the influential stakeholders in the pricing or in receiving complaints.

"You must ensure proper investigation, rulings and implementation as all the operators are your licensees," he added.

A total of 580 accidents occurred due to LPG cylinder blast in 2025, said Muhammad Jahed Kamal, director general of Fire Service and Civil Defence Directorate.

"LPG is a growing sector, and its use is expected to rise further in the future." As consumption increases, so does the risk of accidents, so it is crucial to raise awareness from the very beginning, he said.

Teacher who accused BNP leader

FROM PAGE 1

The matter gained public attention following several media reports on the incident. A day after she revealed her relationship with Sharifuzzaman and his alleged deceit, police arrested her from her home on October 7.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Chuadanga Additional SP Md Minhaj ul Islam said the woman was arrested under the Special Powers Act in connection with a gold smuggling case filed on September 30. "She was arrested after another accused, Asma Begum, mentioned her name in a confessional statement under Section 164."

According to the case statement, police arrested Asma with three gold bars on September 29. The next day, she gave a confessional statement before the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court, saying she knew the teacher because her daughter, a second grader, took music lessons from her at the school.

Asma allegedly claimed the teacher had previously offered her to join smuggling activities and that on the day of the incident, she had been asked to deliver a cigarette packet to a man – unaware that it contained gold.

Additional SP Minhaj acknowledged that investigators have not yet found any proof of the teacher's involvement. "They are also unsure whether she had any contact with Asma at all," he said, adding that no criminal record against her was found at the local police station. "If she's found innocent, her name will be dropped from the charge sheet."

Speaking to The Daily Star, the head teacher of the high school where she taught said, "She used to come once a week to take classes. I didn't have much contact with her. However, I don't recognise Asma Begum's daughter. If she's a second grade student, she isn't supposed to be learning music here. [As a high school] We start classes from grade six."

This correspondent spoke to at least 30 residents of the victim's village, all of whom said there was no possible way she could be involved in gold smuggling.

Rahima Begum, a tea-stall owner, said she had watched the teacher grow up. "I've never heard anything bad about her. I can't imagine how this happened."

Rickshaw puller Mamun, sitting at a nearby stall, said, "This is unimaginable. We don't believe she could ever do such a thing. She's such a kind-hearted woman."

A prominent cultural activist in Chuadanga Dhiru Baul said, "Politics is clearly at play here. I've never seen her involved in any crime, nor did I know of any relationship between her and Sharif. Now, we can't even speak out. The atmosphere doesn't allow it – we're in fear ourselves."

The teacher's brother said his sister had been framed. "Everyone knows what kind of family my sister comes from. She doesn't need to smuggle gold to survive."

He alleged that several lawyers they approached in the past two days

refused to take the case. "What crime has she committed that makes them so hesitant?"

He also claimed that his sister went to the police, court, and top BNP leaders in the district with her complaint against Sharif, but no one helped her. "Even the law enforcers advised her to settle the matter privately."

The Daily Star, as per its editorial policy, has not disclosed the victim's and her family's names and location for safety purposes.

Contacted, BNP leader Sharif said, "This woman went to the army, the police, the judge's court, and the juvenile court to file a complaint against me, but no one accepted it. They said evidence was needed, which she couldn't provide. She only showed some screenshots of messages. Later, the authorities sent her back without taking the case."

He claimed it was part of a conspiracy to frame him and block his party nomination in the upcoming election.

Asked why police refused to accept her complaint, the additional SP said, "I'm not aware of the matter. I'll look into it." President of Chuadanga Bar Association Syed Mahmood Shamim Reza said, "I don't know which lawyer they went to. It's unlikely they couldn't find one."

Sub-Inspector Shamsur Rahman of Darshana Police Station, also the investigating officer of the case, said, "Give us a few days and we hope to come up with results."

Army takes 15 officers into custody

FROM PAGE 1

suspended officers the same way it does to those in service. "If the police act upon the warrants, they may arrest those individuals directly."

However, the army has offered them an option to come under its custody. "A retired officer may go to court or the police himself. But if he prefers, he may come under army custody. We will provide a secure stay. The choice lies with them," he said.

Earlier on October 8, the prosecution formally charged 28 people, including the ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 23 top and mid-ranking current and former army officers, in two cases of enforced disappearances, secret detention, and torture in the 15 years of her rule.

On the same day, in a third case, formal charges were pressed against two other army officers, who had served in the BGB, and two police officers, over the killings of 28 people and crimes against humanity in Rampura during the July uprising last year.

Besides Maj Gen Kabir, the serving officers who were formally charged included Maj Gen Sheikh Md Sarwar Hossain, Brig Gen Md Mahbubur Rahman Siddique, Brig Gen Ahmed Tanvir Mazahar Siddique, Brig Gen Md Jahangir Alam, Brig Gen Tofail Mostafa Sarwar, Brig Gen Kamrul Hasan, Brig Gen Md Mahbub Alam, Col K M Azad, Col Abdullah Al Momen, Lt Col Moshir Rahman Jewel, Lt Col Saiful Islam Sumon, and Lt Col Sarwar Bin Kashem, Lt Col Redwanul Islam, and Major Md Rafat Bin Alam Mun.

Besides Hasina's former adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, the nine retired officers are former DGF chiefs Lt Gen (ret'd) Md Akbar Hossain, Lt Gen (ret'd) Md Saiful Alam, Lt Gen (ret'd) Ahmed Tabrez Shams Chowdhury, Maj Gen (ret'd) Md Saiful Abedin, and Maj Gen (ret'd) Hamidul Haque; CTIB director Maj Gen (ret'd) Mohammad Towhidul Ul Islam; DGF official Lt Col (ret'd) Mokhsurul Haque; Col (ret'd) Anwar Latif Khan and Lt Col (ret'd) Muhammad Khairul Islam.

Explaining the procedure, Adjutant General Hakimuzzaman said arrest warrants are issued by the tribunal and sent to the inspector general of police (IGP) for execution, with a specific deadline.

The IGP's office is responsible for delivering them through official channels.

"The warrant is not like an electricity bill. It cannot just appear on social media. It must come through the prescribed route: from the tribunal to the police, then to the individual, who will receive and sign."

Hakimuzzaman added that although copies of the charge sheets or their annexes have been circulated on social and mainstream media, the army has not yet received any formal warrant.

"Nonetheless, we respect every law

recognised by the constitution," he said. "That is why, even before receiving any warrant, we acted promptly on October 8 and ordered all serving officers named to report to army custody by October 9."

He said the decision to place the officers in custody was taken to maintain discipline, ensure accountability, and follow precedent.

The adjutant general also spoke of "legal complexities arising from the third amendment" to the ICT Act, passed on October 6, which disqualifies anyone formally charged from holding public office.

He read the relevant provision and noted that the accompanying clause states the disqualification does not apply to anyone acquitted or discharged by the tribunal.

"The army will seek legal clarification from the appropriate authority on how this disqualification clause will apply to serving members of the armed forces. We will ask how it should be executed in the case of soldiers and officers, including whether they remain employed during the proceedings," he said.

Asked whether the officers now in custody would be handed over to police or produced before the ICT by October 22, the deadline mentioned in the tribunal's order, Hakimuzzaman said the army would proceed strictly according to law.

"We are seeking legal clarification on the amendment, and once we receive that clarification, we will act exactly as the law requires," he said.

He further said that, unlike civil bureaucracy, the army's personnel management is bound by strict service-age limits. For example, majors retire at 50, lieutenant colonels at 52, and colonels at 54, which can make the timing of legal proceedings significant.

"If a trial continues beyond a person's service age, it raises practical questions," he said. "That is why we need formal clarification from the legal authority on how this law should apply to us."

ICT Prosecutor Mizanul Islam told The Daily Star that under the amended law, members of disciplinary forces can be tried for crimes against humanity and the disciplinary forces include the army, navy and airforce.

He also said they would provide a legal explanation if the armed forces seek any.

Addressing questions on whether the incidents occurred within cantonment areas, Hakimuzzaman explained that the place of occurrence does not automatically determine jurisdiction.

"Rab and DGF were the workplaces of those named, but these agencies are not under Army Headquarters. DGF functions under the Prime Minister's Office, currently under the Chief Adviser's Office. Even as a major general, I cannot simply walk into DGF without prior appointment. The chain

of command is completely separate," he said.

Hakimuzzaman said that both the National Commission on Enforced Disappearances and the ICT chief prosecutor had publicly stated that the Bangladesh Army as an institution was not involved in the alleged offences.

"It was mentioned clearly in the commission's interim report and in the prosecutor's remarks that as an organisation, the army was not involved. These were individual actions by officers who were then serving in Rab or DGF."

He said the army has been cooperating fully with both the commission and the prosecution since the beginning.

"Whenever they asked for documents or personnel, we provided them. Even last Thursday – after the charge sheets were filed – they sought documents, and we sent them immediately."

He admitted that the current legal situation has affected their morale but said the army remains focused on its mission. "Yes, it affects morale, but the chief of army staff has made it clear: we will remain steadfast. We will perform our duty with full discipline."

In response to a question about whether the army would take responsibility for any alleged wrongdoing by individual officers, Hakimuzzaman said, "The army of Bangladesh is the army of every citizen. It belongs to the nation, not to any individual or party. If any officer or member has done wrong elsewhere, the person will face justice. But the institution itself stands for the law, discipline, and the country."

Army Headquarters Director (military intelligence) Brig Gen Selim Azad, Director (military operations) Brig Gen Manzur Hossain, Director (judge advocate general) Brig Gen Asif, and Director (personnel) Brig Gen Mustafiz, among others, were present at the briefing.

Citing the office of the ICT Chief Prosecutor, Chief Adviser's

Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam yesterday said that currently there are no plans to issue warrants against any additional members of the armed forces.

On Facebook, he described social media posts that the ICT is going to issue arrest warrants against over a hundred more army officers as "completely baseless rumours".

The press secretary urged the public not to believe misleading information, saying that such falsehoods are part of efforts to create divisions among the general public and within the armed forces ahead of the general election.

He further clarified that the government has no plans to dismantle the DGF.

"The government is considering reforms to enhance the agency's focus on transborder and external intelligence operations," he said.

July Charter signing moved to Oct 17

FROM PAGE 12

signing of the July Charter is a historic event" that requires wider public engagement.

The commission on Thursday sent letters to all political parties, seeking their opinions by 4:00pm yesterday, on the repeal of article 4A. By the deadline, 11 parties had replied. BNP and Jamaat had not submitted their responses until 7:00pm.

Confirming the dispatch of letters, Ali Riaz told this newspaper, "We have reviewed the constitutions of 121 countries and found that none of them include a mandatory provision requiring the display of any individual's portrait in offices."

article 4a was introduced through the 15th amendment in 2011 during the Sheikh Hasina-led government, which was ousted in last year's July uprising.

The interim government's Constitution Reform Commission has already recommended abolishing the article, saying, "Such a provision encourages personality cults and paves the way for dictatorship. Bangladesh is the collective outcome of the leadership, sacrifice, and contributions of countless distinguished individuals."

A reform commission member earlier said nearly all of the 33 political parties consulted, except a few leftist ones, favoured repeal.

Contacted yesterday, BNP Standing

Committee Member Salahuddin Ahmed said, "This [repealing article 4a] was included as point number 5 in our response to the Constitution Reform Commission's report. At the time, we expressed our agreement with it. There was never any scope for disagreement."

Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Hamidur Rahman Azad also backed the move, saying, "By adding this article to the constitution, the Awami League had established a Zamindari system."

NCP Joint Convener Sarwar Tusher said his party, too, supported the proposal.

However, CPB central leader Ruhin Hossain Prince said the matter had not been discussed within his party forum.

NCP weighing its paths to JS

FROM PAGE 1

seat negotiations ahead of the polls, NCP sources said.

Requesting anonymity, a top NCP leader told The Daily Star, "Half of our party leaders are in favour of joining a BNP led alliance. We are also considering other options."

About why they are seeking an alliance, he said, "The upcoming election is important. NCP's participation in parliament is essential. The party is not yet as politically strong as the BNP or Jamaat – it needs both supporters and financial resources."

"If we fail to secure any seats, we won't be able to directly pursue NCP's key agendas, such as constitutional reforms, implementation of the July Charter, and the formation of a new state. These demands can't be effectively highlighted or implemented without entering parliament. Therefore, NCP cannot remain isolated. We must unite with another party..."

NCP leaders have already met with the BNP over seat sharing, while some of them are also in talks with like-minded

parties to form a broader alliance as a "secondary option".

Last Thursday, NCP senior leaders met with representatives of the Amar Bangladesh Party, Gono Odhikar Parishad, and the six-party Ganatantra Mancha alliance at the residence of ASM Abdur Rab, founding secretary general of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal. They discussed possible alliances with and without the BNP, meeting insiders said.

While the nine parties discussed the possibility of forming a centrist alliance without the BNP, meeting sources confirmed that some members of some parties were more eager to align with the BNP expected to form the next government.

Ganatantra Mancha is comprised of Ganasamhati Andolon, Nagarik Oikya, Rashtira Sangskar Andolon, Biplobi Workers Party, Bhasani Anusari Parishad, and JSD (Rab faction).

Regarding seat sharing with the BNP, Ganasamhati Andolon Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki said, "Discussions regarding seat sharing are

underway. However, nothing is final yet. There will be more discussions."

Nagarik Oikya President Mahmudur Rahman Manna confirmed his intent to The Daily Star, saying, "We have been with the BNP and have been agitating together from the beginning, so we will cooperate in building the next state. After finalising our candidates, we will hold discussions with the BNP and make a final decision on this matter within the next three days."

Rashed Khan, general secretary of Gono Odhikar Parishad, said, "Many kinds of discussions about alliances take place when political parties sit together. We talked about the possibilities of creating an alliance with the BNP and even Jamaat-e-Islami, and also about forming an alliance among ourselves."

AB Party sources said they were pushing for a centrist alliance excluding the BNP so that they could attract voters who would not vote for either the BNP or Jamaat.

"The idea is to collectivise and keep the spirit of the revolution alive," a senior party leader said.

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Farewell to a beloved teacher

Nation pays tribute to Syed Manzoorul Islam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rain fell steadily on Dhaka yesterday, soft and mournful, as friends, students, and admirers gathered to bid farewell to Professor Emeritus Syed Manzoorul Islam. The raindrops mingled with tears, blurring faces and flowers alike, as one of the country's most beloved teachers was laid to rest.

The noted educationist, writer, and former professor of English at Dhaka University was buried at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur after two civic tributes -- one at Dhaka University's Aparajeyo Bangla and another at the Central Shaheed Minar.

His body was brought to the base of Aparajeyo Bangla around 10:30am. Students and teachers stood in silence, their umbrellas unable to hide the grief etched across their faces. Around 11:00am, amid heavy rain, his coffin was taken to the Central Shaheed Minar, where hundreds gathered. They came not just to honour his achievements, but to remember the kindness and integrity that defined his life.

Under the supervision of the Jatiya Kabita Parishad, tributes were paid by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, DU's English department, BRAC, Asiatic Society, Bishwo Shahitto Kendro, Bangladesh National Museum, CPB, Jasad, Basad, Chhayanaut, Nazrul Institute, Bangla Academy, and Shilpakala Academy, among others.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7



Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury lays a wreath at the coffin of Professor Emeritus Syed Manzoorul Islam at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday. Manzoorul was buried at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur after two civic tributes -- one at Dhaka University's Aparajeyo Bangla and another at the Central Shaheed Minar.

PHOTO: STAR

BNP calls PR party-centric, Jamaat says it reflects people's voice

UNB, Dhaka

Two major political parties -- BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami -- took opposing positions on the proportional representation (PR) system at a discussion in Dhaka yesterday.

Several smaller parties, however, favoured keeping the existing electoral model, saying people have not lost confidence in it, while some suggested introducing the PR system in an "Upper House" to ensure checks and balances.

Leaders of different political parties and experts made the observations at a seminar titled "Election 2026: A Critical Look at Proportional Representation", organised by Cosmos Foundation at the city's Cosmos Centre.

BNP standing committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury questioned the idea of holding a referendum on introducing the PR system.

"Why should we go for a referendum on PR? Who has given us that responsibility? The people didn't give us this responsibility," he said, adding that discussions can instead take place inside and outside parliament on reform issues like PR.

Another standing committee member of BNP Abdul Moyeen Khan also opposed the system, saying it would only strengthen political parties while weakening the link between people and their elected representatives.

"People would vote for a party, not an individual, and the party would then decide who becomes a member of parliament. This goes against our democratic spirit, where people elect their own representatives," he said.

In contrast, Jamaat Assistant Secretary General AHM Hamidur Rahman Azad called for introducing PR to

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

STUDENTS' UNION ELECTIONS

Accommodation top priority

Says Cucsu VP candidate
Mahfuzur Rahman

SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK

Mahfuzur Rahman, vice president candidate from the "Shwadhini Shikharthi Shommilon" panel in the upcoming Chittagong University Central Students' Union (Cucsu) election, has said that if elected, he will work to ensure a safe and inclusive campus for all students, including women.

In an interview with The Daily Star, the former coordinator of Students Against Discrimination said that ever since his admission to the university, he has witnessed a conventional and hierarchical pattern in student politics where a few leaders became dominant figures. "They decided who would get seats, who would be evicted, even who could enter the campus," he said.

Mahfuzur, who is currently studying master's in Arabic, said from the beginning, he has stood by the students and spoken for their rights. "I led from the front during the uprising and continued my fight afterwards. I have always tried to stand

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Will serve students, not any party

Pledges Cucsu GS candidate
Sayed Bin Habib

SHARIF M SHAFIQUE

Sayed Bin Habib, the candidate for general secretary from the Islami Chhatra Shibir-supported panel in the upcoming Cucsu election, has pledged that if elected, he will work solely as a representative of the students, not for any political organisation.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Sayeed, a student of the History department (2019-20 session), said, "If I win, I'll work to fulfil students' expectations and protect their rights. Cucsu will not be used to serve any party's agenda. I'll keep it free from political influence."

He said holding the Cucsu election after 36 years is a major achievement for post-July Bangladesh. "We can now dream of student-union-based politics. We want the Cucsu election to be part of the university's academic calendar," he added.

Sayed, who is also the Literature and Human Rights Secretary of Chhatra Shibir's CU unit, described his panel "Sompritir Shikharthi Jote" as inclusive.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Hope rekindled as bone marrow unit resumes at DMCH

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

When Rejoan Rashid Fahad was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) over a decade ago with non-Hodgkin lymphoma, a form of blood cancer, few believed he would survive.

But he turned out to be one of the fortunate ones. In March 2014, DMCH -- the country's first hospital to introduce the sophisticated and costly bone marrow transplant (BMT) procedure -- began offering the treatment.

Fahad became the seventh patient to undergo the transplant in October that year, receiving the procedure at half the fixed cost, already much lower than abroad. He made a full recovery.

Now 30 and working in Saudi Arabia for the past five years, Fahad returned to the BMT unit yesterday -- the very day it resumed operations

AT A GLANCE

- Around 1,000 patients need BMT each year
- DMCH can perform 50-60 transplants annually
- Autologous BMT to cost Tk 5-7 lakh; allogeneic Tk 12-15 lakh.
- 60 transplants done so far
- Govt to create fund to support patients' treatment costs

after a long break -- rekindling hope that more patients like him will get a new lease on life.

"It's a coincidence. Returning home after a long time, I came here to meet the doctors and nurses who gave me a second life. I am so grateful to them. It feels good to see the unit resume operations. I hope many more people like me will receive treatment here," Fahad told this correspondent.

DMCH authorities said preparations for transplantation are underway, with the service expected to resume within two to three weeks. Among government hospitals, only DMCH has this facility, while a few private hospitals and CMH also offer it.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

Police disperse JP rally in Kakrail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police used water cannons and tear gas to disperse a Jatiya Party rally outside its central office in Kakrail yesterday, forcing organisers to cancel the event.

The rally, called to demand withdrawal of cases against Chairman GM Quader and other leaders, release of detained activists, and an end to alleged attacks on the party, was scheduled to begin at 3:00pm.

Around 3:45pm, police moved in to clear the crowd, saying the organisers had blocked the road without permission. "The deputy commissioner asked them to leave, but they refused," said Shah Mustafa Tarikuzzaman, assistant commissioner of DMP's Ramna Division.

He said the situation was brought under control by 4:30pm. After the clash, the party office gate was locked, with police remaining deployed outside.

The Kakrail office was earlier vandalised and partially set on fire on September 6, following another attack on August 30.

QUOTES OF THE DAY



India has always tried to put us in trouble... We want friendship with India, but it must be on equal terms, without interference in our internal affairs.

MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ALAMGIR
BNP Secretary General

If anyone creates chaos on polling day, shut down the centre. On that day, you (presiding officers) are the chief officer..., you are legally omnipotent.

AMM NASIR UDDIN
Chief Election Commissioner



One or two advisers and officials are secretly conspiring to bring a particular party to power. They seem to be under some kind of pressure.

MIA GOLAM PORWAR
Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General

Honouring the voices that keep Nazrul's legacy alive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ninth anniversary of Gems of Nazrul was celebrated with a musical event titled "Nirjharini" at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

The programme, held under the banner "Adi Shur Mancha", began with a group performance of the Nazrul Sangeet "Ghumonto Bonobhumi Rum Jhum K Bajay".

As part of the celebration, eminent Nazrul researcher Professor Dr Nashid Kamal and renowned violinist Sunil Chandra Das were honoured for their outstanding contributions to Nazrul Sangeet.

Dalia Nausheen presented them with flowers.

Nashid Kamal is not only an accomplished artiste but also a dedicated researcher. She has translated seven books, including Nazrul's

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Eminent Nazrul researcher Professor Nashid Kamal and renowned violinist Sunil Chandra Das were honoured for their outstanding contributions to Nazrul Sangeet at a musical event marking ninth anniversary of Gems of Nazrul at the capital's The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Typhoid vaccination campaign begins

BSS, Dhaka

A month-long typhoid vaccination campaign will begin in the country today.

The vaccination will take place in every school from 9:00am to 2:00pm, said Professor Dr Md Abu Jafor, director general of the DGHS.

He said the government is providing typhoid vaccines free of cost to around five crore children aged between nine months and 15 years.

The vaccine has no known side effects and is approved by the WHO. Students can safely take this vaccine, he said.

'Probe blast outside Tejgaon church' Catholic community urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Catholic community has urged the government to take immediate legal steps to investigate the crude bomb explosion outside Holy Rosary Church in Dhaka's Tejgaon and ensure that believers of all faiths can live and worship without fear.

In a statement yesterday, Archbishop Bejoy N D'Cruze OMI, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh, said they condemn the crude bomb attack on Wednesday night.

He called for swift action to ensure the safety of all religious communities.

According to police and witnesses, two unidentified assailants on motorcycles hurled improvised explosive devices in front of the church's main gate at around 10:00pm before fleeing the scene. The blast caused a loud explosion and smoke, triggering panic among residents.

Man, grandson killed as bus hits cars

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man and his grandson were killed, and several others injured, when a bus hit them and rammed into several cars in Dhaka's Gabtoli yesterday. The accident occurred around 8:30am near Parbat Cinema Hall, said Sub-inspector Shamsul Rahman of Darussalam Police Station.

The SI said Matiur Rahman, 60, and his grandson Parvez Biswas, 22, had arrived from Jhenaidah and were crossing the road when a Gulistan-bound bus from Dhamrai struck them before crashing into three to four moving cars.

Police have detained the bus driver.



Morjina Begum catches small fish using a trap net in a canal at Botbunia village in Dacope upazila of Khulna. Local villagers make the most of river water entering nearby canals, catching fish species such as patari (koral) and shrimp for consumption and selling the rest for extra income. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

'Govt following Hasina's path in Ctg port deal'

Says Prof Anu Muhammad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Eminent economist Prof Anu Muhammad yesterday accused the interim government of following the path of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina by deciding to hand over the New Mooring Container Terminal of Chattogram Port to UAE-based operator DP World without any tender or public consultation.

He also criticised the month-long ban on gatherings and meetings in the port area, imposed by Chattogram Metropolitan Police until November 11.

"The authorities cited traffic congestion as the reason. Does that mean after November 11, traffic will no longer disrupt import and export activities?" he asked.

He alleged that the ban was aimed

at suppressing public dissent while the government proceeds with a "dangerous, anti-national, and harmful agreement."

Anu Muhammad made the remarks at a views exchange meeting titled

The authorities cited traffic congestion as the reason for the month-long ban on gatherings and meetings in the port area. Does that mean after November 11, traffic will no longer disrupt import and export activities?



"National Capability and National Security: Chattogram Port and Bangladesh's Development Context," held at the Zia Memorial Museum in Chattogram.

He said national seaports should

remain under local management, warning that "any conspiracy to hand over the NCT, which is being efficiently operated by local firms, to a foreign company will be resisted."

"The chief adviser has already warned against those opposing foreign involvement in the port. Now, the police have banned all gatherings in the port area," he said, terming it a coordinated move.

Anu Muhammad further cautioned that placing the port under foreign control would endanger national security and strategic interests.

He said despite the Constitution Reform Committee's recommendation for broad discussions before signing international agreements, the government was proceeding without consultation or tender.

The event was jointly organised by the Democratic Rights Committee and the Democratic Rights Movement.

Scrap restrictive rules for polls coverage

Journalists urge EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalists engaged in election reporting have urged the Election Commission to withdraw the provision requiring them to inform presiding officers before entering polling centres and the rule limiting their stay inside polling booths to 10 minutes.

They said such restrictions would hinder transparency and independent observation of the electoral process.

They made the demands at a views-exchange meeting titled "Review of the Election Commission's Proposed Guidelines for the Media," held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

Reporters Forum for Election and Democracy (RFED) and the Broadcast Journalist Center (BJC) jointly organised the event with support from BBC Media Action.

Speaking as chief guest, Shipping Adviser Brig Gen (ret'd) Sakhawat Hossain said "I would urge the Election Commission -- there's still time -- to sit and review the issues. My request

- » Journos oppose 10-minute limit, entry permission for polling centres
- » Say restrictions will hinder transparency, independent reporting.
- » RFED says EC guidelines lack provisions for journos' safety

is: make it as transparent as possible. If you have to take two steps forward to achieve that, please do so."

He said, "The Election Commission says they will hold the best election of the century. We also want that. But the people you will be relying on are -- the media. And we should be absolutely crystal clear."

On the issue of media guidelines, Sakhawat said, "The rule requiring journalists to inform the presiding officer before entering polling centres doesn't seem appropriate. When the EC issues accreditation, it already grants permission. These are not major issues. The EC should discuss such matters directly with journalists. We used to hold several meetings with the media."

Presenting the keynote paper, RFED President Kazi Emad Uddin Jebel said the media guidelines, issued on July 23, lack any provision for journalists' safety.

RFED General Secretary Golam Rabbani even after RFED rejected the guidelines on August 6, the EC has not given any clear response in the past two months.

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Purchase & Procurement Department, GSSD

Honouring the voices

FROM PAGE 3

songs, poems, and editorials.

"I believe in Sadya Areen Mallick's work, and I am confident that Gems of Nazrul will celebrate its 90th anniversary one day," said Nashid Kamal.

Sunil Chandra Das expressed his appreciation, saying, "Events like this are rare. Sadya Areen Mallick organises it beautifully with musicians and artists. I am grateful for this honour and thank everyone involved."

The award ceremony was followed by live

performances by veteran artistes including Dr Asit Roy, Nasima Shaheen Fancy, Shaheed Kabir Polash, Dalia Nausheen, and others.

Speaking about the journey of Gems of Nazrul, founder Sadya Areen Mallick said, "Gems of Nazrul started as a form of protest. Now we are celebrating its ninth anniversary."

Over the years, Gems of Nazrul has released 37 songs on YouTube and honours researchers, musicians, and artistes every year.

Will serve

FROM PAGE 3

"Our campus is diverse. We want to work with everyone. That's why our panel includes five female students, one differently-abled student, and one from the Sanatan community. It reflects our inclusive vision," he said.

If elected, Sayeed said his main responsibility would be to ensure accountability and transparency.

"The GS will oversee the activities of other secretaries. I'll ensure complete transparency in all budgets. Regardless of panel, I'll help every elected member fulfil their promises," he said.

Their panel has announced a 24-point manifesto covering major campus issues such as accommodation, food, transport, and healthcare.

He said, "We'll install vending machines for menstrual hygiene products in female dormitories and strengthen medical services. The CU medical centre will be upgraded into a hospital. We'll expand dormitories and increase shuttle train compartments. Campus security will be improved."

Sayeed also plans to promote sports and recreation.

Recalling his role in the July movements, he added, "I was active in the anti-fascist movement and the July uprising. I followed up on false cases filed against students, worked with lawyers, and helped secure their release."

He concluded, "Other panels have shared their manifestos. Students will vote for those they find most capable and sincere. I don't want to compare Cucus with other universities. If I can convince students that I'll solve their problems, I believe they will vote for me."

Accommodation top priority

FROM PAGE 3

beside the students whenever they needed me," he said.

Mahfuzur also mentioned that his panel is not affiliated with any political party.

Outlining his priorities if elected, Mahfuzur said solving the accommodation crisis would be at the top of his agenda. "Another acute issue is transportation. I will work to improve the transport system within six months," he said.

He also emphasised the need for better food quality

and medical facilities on campus. "We also plan to upgrade the medical centre into a 50-bed modern facility," he added.

On academic issues, Mahfuzur said he will work to create more research opportunities. "Besides, session jams often occur due to teachers' negligence. I want to introduce a teacher evaluation system to ensure accountability," he said.

He further said that one of his major manifesto points is to make the campus completely safe for

women.

Commenting on the election atmosphere, he expressed concern that some groups are being favoured. "Despite allegations of code-of-conduct violations, no action has been taken. This raises questions about the administration's neutrality."

Concluding, Mahfuzur Rahman said, "I have full trust in the students' judgment. They know who stands by them and speaks for their rights without compromise. They will elect the right representative."

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To register as a prospective supplier and submission of bids, please follow the guidelines: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/guidelines-unhcr-suppliers-how-use-supplier-portal>

Existing suppliers use this link: <https://supplier-portal.unhcr.org/> to log in with your email address and password. Do not create a new profile if you are already registered. If you have forgotten your password, click on Forgot Password to reset your password.

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People attend a "United for Gaza" demonstration in support of Palestinians, in Berlin, Germany, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Pak Taliban claim attacks that killed 23

AFP, Peshawar

The Pakistani Taliban yesterday claimed responsibility for deadly attacks in several northwestern districts that killed 20 security officials and three civilians.

The attacks, which included a suicide bombing on a police training school, were carried out on Friday in several districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province that borders Afghanistan.

Militancy has surged in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since the withdrawal of US-led troops from neighbouring Afghanistan in 2021 and the return of the Taliban government in Kabul.

Eleven paramilitary troops were killed in the border Khyber district, while seven policemen were killed after a suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden car into the gate of a police training school in Dera Ismail Khan district, which was followed by a gun attack.

"Seven police personnel were martyred and 13 were injured in the attack, while six terrorists were also killed," Muhammad Hussain, a senior local police official, told AFP.

Five people, including three civilians, were killed in a separate clash between militants and paramilitary troops in Bajaur district, security officials told AFP on Saturday.

The Pakistani Taliban, the Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP), claimed responsibility for the attacks in messages on social media. The group is separate to but closely linked with the Afghan Taliban.

FIRST PHASE OF GAZA DEAL Trump wins, but will it stand test of time?

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump has undeniably scored a diplomatic victory by helping to broker a truce for Gaza, but the path to the lasting peace he says he wants for the Middle East is littered with obstacles.

And it remains to be seen whether the 79-year-old Trump - who is not exactly known for his attention to the fine print - will devote the same level of energy to the conflict over the long term, once his victory lap in the region is over next week.

"Any agreement between Israelis and Palestinians, but especially one indirectly brokered between Israel and Hamas is an extraordinary achievement," Aaron David Miller, who worked for multiple US administrations of both parties, told AFP.

"Trump decided to do something that no American president... of either party has ever done, which is to pressure and squeeze an Israeli prime minister on an issue that that prime minister considered vital to his politics," said Miller, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

But Miller, who has participated in Middle East peace talks over the years, warned of the "universe of complexity and detail" that remains to be hashed out with respect to the implementation of phase two of the deal.

The Israeli army said its troops had ceased fire at 0900 GMT Friday in the Gaza Strip, in anticipation of the release of all Israeli hostages, dead and alive, in the subsequent 72 hours, in compliance with the deal it reached with Palestinian armed group Hamas.

Trump has said he expects to head to the Middle East today, with stops in Egypt, where the talks took place, and Israel.

Given that every US president over the past 20 years has been unsuccessful in resolving crises between Israel and the Palestinians,

Trump's accomplishment is already remarkable.

But the president has broader aspirations - to revive the Abraham Accords reached during his first White House term, under which the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco offered Israel diplomatic recognition.

Officials and foreign policy observers agree that Trump deftly used a mix of carrot and stick - publicly and privately, and especially with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu - to get the deal done.

He also leveraged his strong ties with Arab and Muslim leaders including Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

For Miller, Trump clearly played a "decisive" role. But while the

for Gaza that will not include the Palestinian militant group.

Trump insisted Thursday that "there will be disarming" by Hamas and "pullbacks" by Israeli forces.

Then on Friday, he added: "I think there is consensus on most of it, and some of the details, like anything else, will be worked out."

But his administration will need to work hard to finalise the deal, and ensure that Arab countries in the region are invested in helping rebuild a devastated Gaza.

A team of 200 US military personnel will "oversee" the Gaza truce, senior US officials said Thursday.

Miller said there are "operational" holes in the plan as it stands, including "no detailed planning for



agreement's first phase appears to be on track, much remains undefined, including how - and if - Hamas will agree to disarm after two years of devastating conflict in the Palestinian territory.

Steven Cook, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote: "Whether this leads to an end to the war remains an open question."

Cook says the challenge now is to fully implement Trump's 20-point plan, which calls for Hamas to surrender its weapons, the creation of an international stabilisation force and new governing structures

either how to decommission and/or demilitarise Gaza, even if you had Hamas's assent, which you don't."

The plan also calls for the creation of a so-called "Board of Peace," a transitional body to be chaired by Trump himself - a proposal Hamas rejected on Thursday.

"Despite coming to office eager to shed America's Middle East commitments, Trump just took on a huge one: responsibility for a peace plan that will forever bear his name," wrote Robert Satloff, executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

RSF attack kills 60 in Sudan

AFP, Port Sudan

A drone and artillery attack killed at least 60 people at a displacement camp in Sudan's El-Fasher yesterday, activists said, as the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces intensifies its assault on the western city.

The resistance committee for El-Fasher, the North Darfur state capital, said the RSF hit the Dar al-Arqam displacement centre on the grounds of a university.

"Children, women and the elderly were killed in cold blood, and many were completely burned," it said.

"The situation has gone beyond disaster and genocide inside the city, and the world remains silent."

The committee had initially put the toll at 30 dead, but said bodies remained trapped underground.

It later said 60 were killed in the attack involving two drones and eight artillery shells. The local resistance committees are activists who coordinate aid and document atrocities in the Sudan conflict.

The RSF has been at war with the regular army since April 2023. The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people, displaced millions and pushed nearly 25 million into acute hunger.

El-Fasher, the last state capital in the vast region of Darfur to elude the RSF's grasp, has become the latest strategic front in the war.

CRISIS IN FRANCE

Lecornu again appointed PM

Tasked with forming govt

AFP, Paris

Pressure mounted yesterday on France's newly reappointed premier Sebastian Lecornu to get an austerity budget approved, as more parties threatened to topple a man whose first term lasted a mere 27 days.

President Emmanuel Macron reinstated Lecornu late Friday, just four days after Lecornu's resignation and the collapse of his just-announced government.

The reappointment provoked outrage across the political spectrum and pledges to vote it down at the first chance.

In order to create a longer-lasting government, Lecornu pledged Saturday to work with all the mainstream political movements and that he would select cabinet members who are not "imprisoned by the parties."

His reappointment comes as France faces political deadlock and a parliamentary impasse over a cost-cutting budget against a backdrop of climbing public debt.

Lecornu, 39, must form a cabinet to present a 2026 draft budget on Monday. Outgoing Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau told members of his right-wing Republicans (LR) party that they should "not take part" in Lecornu's next government, though he did not call to vote it out of office.

Meanwhile the leftist Socialists, a swing group in parliament, said they had "no deal" with Lecornu and would oust his government if he did not agree to suspend a 2023 pensions reform that increased retirement age from 62 to 64.

The country faces EU pressure to curb its deficit and debt, and it was the fight over cost-cutting measures that toppled Lecornu's two predecessors.

Survival of bees, butterflies at risk in Europe: IUCN

AFP, Abu Dhabi

The survival of Europe's wild pollinators is increasingly at risk, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) said Saturday as it declared dozens of bee and butterfly species as threatened.

Almost all flowering plants in Europe depend on wild pollinators, particularly bees, but habitat loss and climate change were driving many vital species to the brink of extinction.

Nearly 100 additional types of wild bees have been classified as threatened in the most comprehensive evaluation of their status to date by the global authority on the state of the natural world.

At least 172 out of 1,928 assessed species of wild bees faced extinction in Europe compared to 77 in 2014, the latest update of the IUCN's authoritative "Red List of Threatened Species" showed.

"Wild bee populations are in drastic decline and cannot be easily replaced by managed colonies," said Denis Michez from the University of Mons, who led the wild bees research.

"If wild bees disappear, many wild plants might be at risk too - of which flower-rich meadows and beautiful orchid species are just a few examples."

The assessment also revealed that the number of threatened European butterfly species increased by 76 percent over the last decade.

More than 40 percent of butterfly species unique to the continent, and found nowhere else in the world, were classified as threatened or close to being so.

Up to 90 percent of flowering plants in Europe rely on insect pollination, including four out of five crop and wildflower species.

Habitat loss remains the primary threat to European wild bees and butterflies, with farming and forestry damaging the landscapes crucial to pollinator survival like flower-rich meadows, the IUCN said. The widespread use of fertilisers and pesticides was also reducing flower diversity and negatively impacting the viability of pollinating species, it added.

Climate change now affects just over half of all threatened species of butterflies in Europe.



Palestinians return to devastated Gaza City

FROM PAGE 1

as required by the plan, even if it steps aside from Gaza's government.

A part of Trump's deal was completed on Friday when Israel agreed a ceasefire and withdrew its forces from parts of Gaza, allowing displaced families to begin trekking back to their homes, many of them wrecked by Israeli bombardments.

According to Gaza's civil defence agency, a rescue service operating under Hamas authority, more than 500,000 people had returned to Gaza City by yesterday evening.

"We walked for hours, and every step was filled with fear and anxiety for my home," Raja Salmi, 52, told AFP.

When she reached the Al-Rimal neighbourhood, she found her house utterly destroyed.

"I stood before it and cried. All those memories are now just dust," she said.

Aerial footage of the city filmed by AFP showed whole city blocks reduced to a twisted mess of concrete and steel reinforcing wire,

the walls and windows of five-storey apartment blocks ripped off and left choking the roadsides as disconsolate residents returned.

The United Nations humanitarian office says Israel has allowed agencies to start transporting 170,000 tonnes of aid into Gaza if the ceasefire holds.

The top US officer in the Middle East, CENTCOM commander Admiral Brad Cooper, visited Gaza yesterday to discuss setting up what he described on social media as a "civil-military coordination centre" which will "support conflict stabilisation."

The US military will coordinate a multinational taskforce which will deploy in Gaza and is likely to include troops from Egypt, Qatar, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates - but no American boots on the ground inside the territory itself.

Under the ceasefire deal pushed by Trump, Hamas has until noon tomorrow to hand over 47 remaining Israeli hostages - living and dead - from the 251 abducted during its October 7 attack on Israel two years

ago.

The remains of one more hostage, held in Gaza since 2014, are also expected to be returned.

In exchange, Israel will release 250 prisoners, including some of those serving life sentences for deadly anti-Israeli attacks, and 1,700 Gazans detained by the military since the war broke out.

High profile inmate Marwan Barghouti - from Hamas's rival, the Fatah movement - is among those the group wanted to see released, according to Egyptian state-linked media.

However, Israel said Barghouti would not be part of the exchange.

The Israeli prison service said Saturday it had moved the 250 national security detainees to the prisons of Ofer, in the occupied West Bank, and Ketziot in southern Israel's Negev desert, ahead of the handover.

Many parts of the Trump proposal still have not been agreed upon, including its plans for post-war governance and its insistence that Hamas disarm.

Hamas political bureau member Hossam Badran yesterday said the group is ready to fight back if US Trump's peace deal unravels and hostilities with Israel resume in the Gaza Strip.

He said the negotiations over phase two of the plan will be complex and difficult. "The second phase of the Trump plan, as it is clear from the points themselves, contains many complexities and difficulties."

At Al-Rantisi hospital in Gaza City, a facility for children and cancer patients, AFP footage showed wards reduced to heaps of overturned metal beds, gaping ceilings and scattered medical equipment.

Men, women and children navigated streets filled with rubble, searching for homes amid collapsed concrete slabs, destroyed vehicles and debris.

Meanwhile, pro-Palestinian protesters marched in several cities in Europe yesterday, voicing cautious hope with a dose of scepticism as a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza entered its second day.

প্রেস ইনস্টিটিউট বাংলাদেশ (পিআইবি)

ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি গণমাধ্যম বিষয়ে ৩ মাসের সার্টিফিকেট কোর্স ২০২৫

ক্রমিক নম্বর	কোর্সের নাম	ক্লাস	সময়	মেয়াদ
a.	Basic Journalism in The Age of New Media			
b.	Fact Checking in The Age of Digital Media	তরুণ	বিকাল ৫টা থেকে রাত ৯টা	৩ মাস
c.	Media Content Creation: AI, VR & New Media Tools, Trends and Ethics			

ভর্তির যোগ্যতা: সরকার অনুমোদিত যেকোনো কলেজ/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে ন্যূনতম এইচএসসি/সমমান অথবা তদুর্ধ্ব/সমমান পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীরা ভর্তি হতে পারবেন। গণমাধ্যম/জনসংযোগ/বিজ্ঞাপনসংশ্লিষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠানে কর্মরতদের ক্ষেত্রে অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া হবে।

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মহাপরিচালক
প্রেস ইনস্টিটিউট বাংলাদেশ (পিআইবি)

০২১৯৬

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Violence against girls is wrecking our future

Authorities must ensure that systemic failures are addressed to ensure safety

Bangladesh has made major strides toward human development outcomes over the years, but beneath this narrative of progress lies a corrosive social and judicial failure: the systemic betrayal of girls. New data, detailing a sharp spike in violence against minors and chronic exposure to child marriage, suggests the country's development gains are being undermined by the culture of impunity.

The statistics are unforgiving. Police records for the first eight months of 2025 show 3,589 rape cases filed nationwide, with a staggering 1,172 involving minors. The official figure, however, is often viewed as the floor rather than the ceiling of a true crisis. Civil society groups report a frightening acceleration: the rape of girl children rose by 83 percent in the first nine months of the year, while attempted rapes soared by 163 percent. Alarmingly, 20 percent of child rape victims in the initial months of 2025 were aged six or younger, confirming that the most vulnerable ones are facing the highest risks.

This physical violence is compounded by a structural violence—that of early marriage. A recent Plan International report shines a stark light on the devastating economic and personal consequences of this detrimental practice worldwide, despite it being illegal. Of the young women married as children, nearly one in three are now divorced, facing stigma and acute financial hardship, the report reveals. When poverty forces a family to marry off a daughter at 14, as one young Bangladeshi woman testified, the immediate financial relief is dwarfed by the long-term cost of lost productivity, deteriorating health, reduced lifetime earnings, and the cycle of dependence. These girls, robbed of educational opportunities, become long-term dependents rather than economic contributors, locking families into the very poverty trap they sought to escape.

The link between social violence and economic exploitation is tragically symbiotic. Fear of sexual harassment and abduction often drives families to seek the perceived "protection" of early marriage, a coping mechanism that ultimately exposes girls to domestic violence and financial dependency. The government's response to both facets of this crisis—preventive and punitive—is clearly inadequate.

The authorities must ensure rapid, transparent, and robust investigation and prosecution of sexual violence cases, dismantling the culture of impunity that shields abusers. It's time to reform the Child Marriage Restraint Act to plug existing legal loopholes. There also need to be social protection schemes in place to help vulnerable families keep their daughters in school.

The annual observance of International Day of the Girl Child on October 11 underscores a persistent policy gap: the failure to protect and leverage female human capital. With this year's theme, "the girl I am, the change I lead," the focus shifts to recognising girls not as passive victims but as frontline agents of change, a position that requires immediate strategic investment. Bangladesh's economic future depends on the full engagement of its populace. Allowing violence and structural exploitation to sideline millions of women is an act of economic self-harm. We, all of us together, must commit to concrete action to protect our girls and secure our future.

Stop concretising Osmani Udyan

Constructing permanent structures inside any park is unacceptable

It is extremely disappointing to witness the never-ending construction work at Osmani Udyan, located near Gulistan under the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC). Known as the "lung of the capital", the park has been off-limits for nearly eight years now. During the Awami League regime, the DSCC undertook various development projects to modernise the park, and the work has dragged on indefinitely due to inefficiency and mismanagement. Now, as city dwellers eagerly await its reopening, the interim government has begun implementing another project—building a memorial monument to commemorate the July uprising. While honouring uprising martyrs is very important, does it make sense to build this monument inside a park, especially one already overburdened with concrete structures?

Reportedly, the local government ministry has undertaken the project at a cost of Tk 46 crore, and construction work has already begun. Urban planners, however, have said that before taking on any such projects within parks, the standard practice around the world is to first present the proposal to the public and finalise the design based on feedback before implementation begins. But in the case of this project and the others before it, we have not heard of any such initiatives taken by the government. While these unaccountable practices were rampant during the AL regime, they cannot be accepted in post-uprising Bangladesh.

Moreover, according to urban planners, architects, and environmentalists, our rules clearly state that concrete structures can occupy up to five percent of a park's area, and no structure taller than 16 feet can be built inside a park. But in Osmani Udyan, construction has already exceeded that limit, and the new monument is supposed to be 90-feet high. More worryingly, the site selected for the construction is the area designated as a children's play zone in the current development plan, according to sources at the local government ministry. All this highlights poor planning and negligence, to say the least.

Due to excessive concretisation, Osmani Udyan has already lost much of its original character, and the prolonged renovation has come at a heavy cost to the city residents. The government, therefore, should stop building additional concrete structures. Regarding the construction of the July memorial monument, it is essential that the decision is made through thorough consultation with all stakeholders. Experts have suggested that a museum preserving the memories of the uprising could be established inside an existing building there, while the monument could be built elsewhere. We hope the government will reconsider its decision and protect the park from further concretisation.

Girls must grow up in a safe environment to lead our future



Selim Jahan is a former director of the Human Development Report Office under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and lead author of the Human Development Report.

SELIM JAHAN

Today, children live in a world where they face increasing repression and violence, both in conflict zones and in otherwise peaceful regions. According to the United Nations, more than 22,000 children globally became victims of grave violations last year, with the highest number, unsurprisingly, reported in the occupied Palestinian territory. Compared to 2023, total violations rose by 25 percent, while rape and other forms of sexual violence increased by 34 percent. Across the world, girls face a greater risk of sexual violence than boys, not only in war zones but also in everyday life.

Even in the United States, one in every four girls is estimated to experience child sexual abuse, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Globally, about 15 million adolescent girls aged 15-19 have experienced forced sex in their lifetime. In Bangladesh too, violence against children has long been a worrying concern. Data compiled by Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP), as well as a concept note presented at a recent seminar on "Community-based Strategies for Protection of Children of Bangladeshi Garment Workers," paint a grim picture.

According to ASK, during the past nine months of this year (January-September), 359 girls were reported to have been raped—higher than the total number reported for the entire year of 2024. Of these cases, only 300 resulted in formal complaints, meaning at least 59 children were denied justice. The age breakdown of the victims underscores the gravity of the situation: 61 were below six years old, 116 were between seven and 12, and 116 were teenagers. The ages of the remaining victims could not be confirmed.

The BMP's survey, based on reports from 14 national dailies, found that in September alone, 92 girls were subjected to various forms of violence and repression across the country, including 28 who were raped. As for the concept note presented at the seminar, it revealed that nine out of every 10 children aged between 1 and 14 are being subjected to physical punishment or emotional abuse. It also indicated that repression against girls in 2025 increased by 75 percent compared to 2024. Moreover, over 23,000 child-related cases remain pending in juvenile courts across the country.

Although these organisations follow different methodologies, their findings converge on several alarming truths. First, violence against children takes multiple forms, ranging from physical punishment and emotional abuse to rape and sexual harassment. Second, it affects children of all ages, even toddlers. Third, children are not safer even in their homes, schools, or madrasas, as in many cases, the

misogyny and patriarchy, manifested through frequent displays of male dominance and aggression.

Repressed sexuality, stemming from the lack of healthy social interactions between young men and women, can also lead to such violence. BMP data show that 28 percent of rapists are aged between 11 and 30, and 24 percent of gang rapists are between 16 and 25. Easy access to pornography and obscene online content has in recent years further fuelled distorted attitudes towards women. BMP's findings also show that most reported cybercrimes targeting girls involve individuals aged between 16 and 30. Another factor may be the resentment some men feel as girls and women achieve greater success in education and employment. This insecurity, coupled with frustration and failure in life, can manifest as hatred and

the legal framework requires deadlines for investigation and case disposal, legal ambiguities, inconsistent case findings, and age-related thresholds that often obstruct proper actions. This must be fixed. Weak law enforcement and lack of accountability must also be addressed to end the prevailing culture of impunity.

At the social level, family guidance is key. Children should be taught early about personal boundaries, safe and unsafe touches, and how to seek help. Schools and madrasas must also have proper safeguarding systems, and teachers should be trained accordingly. Perpetrators, regardless of their position or relation to the victim, must face strict punishment and permanent bans from working with children. Setting up local child protection committees could help detect and prevent abuse. Protecting



FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

'Unless we ensure our girls' safety, we cannot expect them to lead the change or build a better world for all.'

perpetrators are either relatives or neighbours or teachers. Fourth, many crimes go unreported due to stigma, family pressure, safety concerns, and so on. Finally, the justice system has failed to address the culture of violence against children, with cases piling up in courts and often remaining unresolved.

These realities raise two critical questions: why is violence against children, especially girls, increasing, and what can be done to stop it? The first question defies easy answers. The fact that even infants are not being spared speaks of a deep moral and psychological rot. Who are these perpetrators, and what's driving them to commit such heinous crimes? Violence against girl children is generally a reflection of extreme

violence.

So, what can be done against this backdrop? Comprehensive measures—legal, social, and psychological—are clearly essential. Legally, delays in investigations and trials must end, and victim and witness protection laws must be properly enacted. Shame and stigma that often lead to non-reporting of sexual assaults, and eventually to justice being denied, must also be challenged through open discussion in families, schools, madrasas, and such social settings. Religious leaders, role models, and media influencers can play a crucial role in raising awareness in this regard.

Once cases are reported, there must be mechanisms in place to prevent political interference or pressure from the accused from derailing trials. While

children from pornography and harmful online content should also be a priority.

Finally, we need expert psychological insights to understand and rehabilitate potential offenders. Ultimately, families, communities, educational institutions, civil society, and the state must act together to eliminate violence against children, especially girls.

The theme for this year's International Day of the Girl Child (observed on Saturday)—"The girl I am, the change I lead: Girls on the frontlines of crisis"—carries a powerful message. But unless we ensure our girls' safety and protect them from violence, we cannot expect them to lead the change or build a better world for us all.

Why the Gaza 'peace treaty' is a victory for violence, not peace



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SABA EL KABIR

As smoke rises from the ruins of Gaza, world leaders are hailing a new "peace deal." But this treaty is another sleight of hand. Weapon of choice: language. Victims: the voiceless and those on the wrong side of power.

Words may not kill, but they shape how we perceive killing by controlling meaning and dulling empathy. They mute the moral register, turning human catastrophe into something sterile: "international affairs."

To label the carnage in Gaza a "war" rather than a "massacre" is not semantics; it is strategy. The term "war" somewhat normalises the violence. The word "massacre," by contrast, is a moral accusation that demands outrage and intervention.

By any objective criteria, this is no war. With Palestinian fatalities outnumbering Israeli ones by more than twenty to one, the grim ratio speaks for itself. Yet the official discourse resists the language of slaughter, preferring the sanitised symmetry of "war." This is how language is subjugated: dictate the terms, and you dictate the response.

Modern conflict comes wrapped in sterilised discourse that allows us to discuss horror without ever naming it. Innocent civilians killed by bombs and bullets become "collateral damage." A phrase like "surgical strike" implies precision, even when entire apartment blocks are levelled. Executing people on sight is described as "neutralising threats," while "human shields" shifts blame for civilian deaths onto the very population being bombed.

This jargon, repeated endlessly by anti-Palestine officials and echoed by Western media, creates emotional disconnect. A headline about "another day of war in Gaza" sounds tragic but routine. Imagine, instead, "another day of massacre in Gaza."

The official narrative—a "war on Hamas" fought through "security measures"—collapses when confronted with the reality on the ground. Officials speak of "precision strikes," yet the UN reports that 94 percent of Gaza's hospitals and over 90 percent of its schools have been damaged or destroyed. They speak of "necessary security measures,"

yet the world witnessed a "complete siege" that choked off food, water, and medicine, inducing famine for over half a million people.

The toll is staggering. Over 67,000 Palestinians—roughly 3 percent of Gaza's population—have been killed, the vast majority civilians. More than 1,700 health workers have been killed in what UN experts call the "targeted destruction of Gaza's health care system." This systematic demolition of civilian infrastructure, far exceeding any conceivable hunt for militants, reveals not a campaign hindered by "human shields," but a level of force that is fundamentally indiscriminate. The juxtaposition of the sanitised narrative and the physical ruins should be unbearable.

Now, the diplomatic narrative shifts to a "peace plan," presented as a vision of "a strong, durable, and everlasting peace." But the proposals championed by global powers reveal how the language of peace is used to codify control.

These plans consistently require one side to fully surrender in exchange for a halt to the offensive. Importantly, they exclude any mention of Palestinian political aspirations. There is no provision for ending the occupation, no commitment to self-determination, and, as multiple analyses confirm, "no path for eventual reunification" with the West Bank in a future Palestinian state. Instead, they envisage Gaza's two million residents being governed

like a protectorate under an interim authority intriguingly named the "Board of Peace."

Labelling such arrangements a "Peace Treaty" is the final act of linguistic subjugation. It allows the world to move on while the root causes—the blockade, the occupation, the denial of statehood—remain untouched. This is not peace; it is the pause between wars. And the twentieth century's partitions and protectorates that redrew the Middle East, not to mention South Asia, have shown that such patchworks never hold.

A peace treaty built on these terms is not just inaccurate—it is insidious. It gives the world order permission to sweep the Palestinian tragedy under the rug.

True peace cannot grow from distortion. Palestinians need the siege lifted, freedom of movement restored, and their right to self-determination recognised. A just resolution requires a mandate for de-occupation and genuine reconstruction, alongside guarantees for the safety of all civilians—Israeli and Palestinian alike.

And as Bangladeshis—a people whose own liberation finds itself on the frontlines of a battle of discourse—we know the price of silence too well. Our moral duty, then, is not only to speak, but to speak truthfully. We must call a massacre a massacre. We must call an occupation an occupation. Because peace built on lies is not peace at all—it is forever war.

Syed Manzoorul Islam: Teacher, taleweaver, torchbearer, trailblazer



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AZFAR HUSSAIN

Syed Manzoorul Islam—our foremost fiction writer, cultural critic, educationist, teacher, and professor emeritus of Dhaka University (DU)—died the day before yesterday (Friday, October 10). Died?

That word itself remains a question in more ways than one. Living outside the country, I first heard of his massive heart attack from my teacher, Professor Kaiser Haq, who generously kept me updated with news that swung between fragile progress and sudden decline. Each glimmer of progress offered hope, and I held onto that hope until the devastating news of his death arrived. “Progress is history’s dirty joke,” as Professor Islam’s favourite poet Derek Walcott would say on another register.

And I cannot resist recalling that class on metaphysical poetry where Professor Islam so memorably taught us John Donne’s provocatively ratiocinative sonnet “Death, be not proud.” How ironic that the very teacher who first introduced us, as second-year undergraduates, to Donne’s defiance of death is now “gone.” And yet, his words, his works, his world remain alive in our stories and memories. If death is but a “short sleep,” then Professor Islam has only entered another waking, while we carry his legacy. Truly, as Donne asserts, “Death, thou shalt die.” Syed Manzoorul Islam’s life is truer than his death.

I first heard of Professor Islam—before I ever met him—through my English teacher at Residential Model School, Mushtaq Ahmed, and through my high school classmate, my friend, Hafiz Sikander Tony, Professor Islam’s nephew. Tony once showed me a letter written by Professor Islam, and I was struck by the sheer beauty of its prose. At the time, already a legendary student of the English Department, Professor Islam was pursuing his doctorate at Queen’s University in Canada on the influence of the Swedish polymath Emanuel Swedenborg on W.B. Yeats, my all-time favourite poet. By the time I encountered Professor Islam as a second-year undergraduate at DU, he had already returned to his alma mater, ready to educate a new generation of students.

What struck me immediately was his range of knowledge and his eloquence in the classroom. He could dazzle without ever being distant. He was approachable,

generous, and willing to lend even his books (one of which, Plato’s *Phaedrus*, I regret never returning). I witnessed him support numerous students, often in more ways than one. Later, at the MA level, his lectures on T.S. Eliot—scholarly, probing, richly allusive, and theoretically rigorous—deepened my interest in both French Symbolist poetry and literary theory. His mind was first-rate; his sparkling wit, his vibrant humour, and his *joie de vivre* never flagged in *brio*.

That first impression endured across more than three decades of sustained connection. We taught side by side at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), shared stages from the Bangla Academy to Bogura and from the DU to ULAB and beyond, appeared together on television, cited each other more than once, and spent countless hours in *adda*. His brilliance never dimmed, nor did his humility and humanity. I could recount memories of epic amplitude, but one truth stands out above all: he was a kind human being and an excellent teacher whose presence will remain with me always.

But what are the qualities of an excellent teacher? I am often asked this question, and my answer—shaped by what I have hitherto learned from both my own teachers and my own students—has been categorical, if not adequate. First, a teacher must possess solid knowledge of the subject and the ability to inspire inquiry. Second, knowledge must be matched by clarity and eloquence, for if a teacher cannot articulate well, students quickly lose interest. Third, the teacher must be an effective storyteller, able to draw on the familiar and the unfamiliar alike to illuminate complex ideas and insights. Fourth, a sense of humour is essential, for *students should not only learn but learn with delight*. Fifth, a teacher must be ready to learn with and even from students rather than reducing them to passive recipients of knowledge. And sixth—above all—a teacher must embody commitment and compassion towards students, without which nothing else will matter.

The list I provided above is by no means exhaustive, but it defines a standard, and Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam exemplified for me nothing short of a paradigmatic combination of all those qualities. And although I have been fortunate to learn from

some extraordinary teachers in Bangladesh and the US and beyond, Professor Islam remains, by far, one of the very best.

But Syed Manzoorul Islam was far more than a teacher. He was an educationist and pedagogue who advanced a philosophy of education predicated on the principles of what he called “creativity and cultural training,” dedicated to broadening the horizon of our engagement with both the

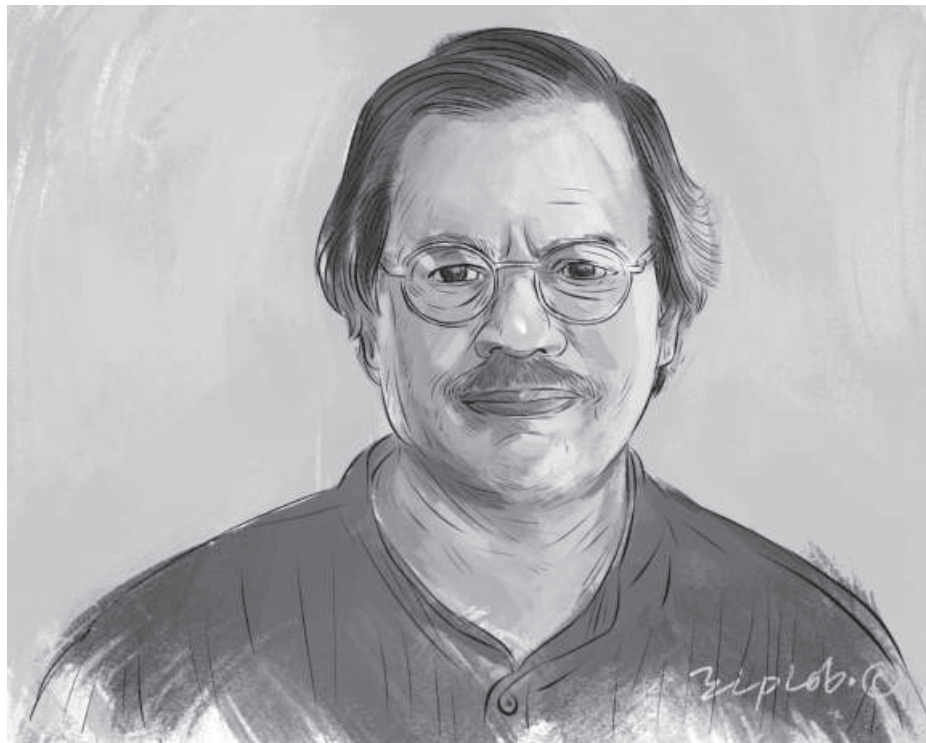
Bangla and English, publishing impressively at home and abroad, and earning numerous awards and accolades along the way. Further, he served on several national organisations with a remarkable reputation.

One could go on endlessly about Professor Islam’s accomplishments. But mere accomplishments—in the worldly sense—do not define him. Space does not allow me to capture the staggering range of

literature. I define interdisciplinarity as the intellectual and discursive practice of bringing together conceptual and methodological resources from multiple disciplines and synthesising them in the interest of producing new knowledge. I am inclined to characterise Professor Islam as one of Bangladesh’s foremost interdisciplinarily engaged cultural critics—one who wrote with equal brilliance on canonical figures such as Michael Madhusudan Dutta, Rabindranath Tagore, Jibanananda Das, and Buddhadeva Bose—to name but a few—as well as on non-canonical, experimental, and emerging authors. Moreover, his critical practice exemplified interdisciplinarity in the way he enacted rich, dialectical interplays between literature and the fine arts, with a particular focus on the visual arts. In this, he may rightly be regarded as a trailblazer.

Syed Manzoorul Islam’s first-rate work of fiction deserves extended discussion, but even briefly, one can say he introduced a new trend in Bangla fiction where the borderline between the real and the unreal dissolves, making ordinary events extraordinary with a touch of “magical realism”—though he was never a magic realist *stricto sensu*. His *Prem O Prarthana Galpo* (Stories of Love and Prayer), among his dozen celebrated works, stands as a case in point. In our conversation we often returned to James Joyce and Gabriel García Márquez, whom we both admire, and he concurred with my contention that to place García Márquez merely alongside the European modernists—Kafka or Joyce—was insufficient, since García Márquez mobilised storytelling, even story-weaving, in ways unprecedented, especially at a time when Eurocentric modernism was declaring the “death of storytelling” and the end of the Scheherazades of the world (as Walter Benjamin also observed in his readings of Proust and Kafka). Above all, Professor Islam was a stubborn, compulsive storyteller—in class, in *adda*, in life, and in fiction—whose brand of postmodernism challenged both Eurocentric modernism and Eurocentric postmodernism, while remaining deeply sympathetic to some Marxist and leftist perspectives (it’s no accident that he loved and used Raymond Williams, for instance).

In this brief and hurried tribute, I confess I have only scratched the surface of Professor Islam’s wide-ranging work. And yet, as I write—still devastated by his passing—I hear his voice in my head: telling stories without end, stories that breathe life, stories that dream of a new world, a world radiant with freedom and joy rather than shadowed by death. Syed Manzoorul Islam—my teacher, our teacher—gave us life, again and again, in ways too many to count, in meanings too deep to measure.



Syed Manzoorul Islam (1951 – 2025).

ILLUSTRATION: **BIPLOB CHAKROBARTY**

word and the world. His final lecture—delivered on September 27 as chief guest at the Abu Khaled Pathan Literary Award 2025 ceremony—made this vision unmistakably clear, with its provocations and its emphasis on primary education and on improving the lives of poor primary school teachers. I cannot emphasise enough his concern for the poor and the marginalised from a deeply humanist perspective, even as he developed his own distinctive brand of postmodernism (often considered “anti-humanist”)—a point I intend to return to later.

Indeed, throughout his life, Professor Islam remarkably ranged within a broad zodiac of academic, creative, and intellectual pursuits—a range few in the country could match. He was a short-story writer, novelist, essayist, cultural literary and art critic, aesthete, translator, columnist, editorial adviser, and even a television host who once ventured into writing television plays. And, of course, he was a rare bilingual writer, in both

Professor Islam’s pursuits, preoccupations, and performances, but I do want to make a few observations about his significance as both critic and fiction writer. It is customary to cite his early but important work on aesthetics, *Nandontotto*, as well as his popular column on “world literature,” “Alosh Diner Hawa.” These writings reflect the early Syed Manzoorul Islam’s preoccupations with aesthetic and literary issues that might seem somewhat impressionistic and formalist, yet he soon ranged beyond them, politicising and broadening his scope as he began to address culture in its fullest sense, taking cues and clues from his all-time favorite cultural theorist Raymond Williams: culture not only as art or ideas, but as the everyday, lived, and political reality of people. His later essays amply attest to this orientation, although it has not received the attention it deserves.

In many conversations I had with him, Professor Islam ardently accentuated the importance of interdisciplinarity in studying

Tarique Rahman and the question of political renewal



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H.M. NAZMUL ALAM

In the aftermath of the 2024 mass uprising that reshaped Bangladesh’s political landscape, Tarique Rahman has reemerged from years of silence to become both a symbol of revival and a subject of scrutiny. His recent interviews with BBC Bangla and the Financial Times mark perhaps the most comprehensive articulation of his thoughts and ambitions since his exile in 2008. For the first time in nearly two decades, Rahman, now BNP’s acting chairman, spoke with clarity about his plans to return home, lead his party into the upcoming elections, and reclaim the space vacated by Sheikh Hasina’s dramatic fall from power.

But the story of his return is not just about one man’s comeback. It is also about whether the country can move beyond its entrenched cycle of dynastic politics, partisan revenge, corruption, and other markers of Hasina’s authoritarianism to usher in a genuinely accountable and inclusive democracy.

While talking to the BBC, Rahman’s tone was measured and at times humble. “I am physically here [in the UK], but mentally I have always remained in Bangladesh,” he said. It was a statement not just of longing; it was a reminder to his supporters that absence had not equated to detachment. His insistence in both interviews—that he would “soon return” to contest elections, and that BNP would win “a sweeping majority”—reflected both confidence and calculation. For a man long portrayed as divisive, he sought to project reason, inclusivity, and stability.

Yet beneath that calm surface, contradictions endure.

Rahman’s interviews showcased a careful balancing act between vindication and reconciliation, reform and legacy,



BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman.

FILE PHOTO

and humility and ambition. He repeatedly distanced himself from the cult of personality that has long haunted our politics, saying, “The mastermind of the July movement was not any party or individual; it was the democracy-loving people of Bangladesh.” This framing, while noble, was also strategic. By attributing the revolution to collective will, Rahman positioned himself as a product of popular legitimacy rather than its architect, a useful image at a time when BNP seeks to rebuild credibility among the youth that led last year’s uprising.

At the same time, his refusal to fully acknowledge BNP’s share of failures or political toxicity has left a faint shadow over

his reformist narrative. When pressed about the party’s history of corruption during its 2001-2006 tenure, Rahman insisted to the BBC that Transparency International’s damning indices at the time were based more on the legacies of the previous Awami League government. “We may not have been able to fix it completely,” he admitted, “but we have to understand the reality. This [corruption] has become a social disorder.” In his Financial

of patronage and factionalism in the past. His assurance that the BNP expelled 7,000 members over allegations of extortion and abuse post-uprising indicates a willingness to enforce discipline. It also reveals the scale of internal decay that the party must confront before reclaiming the moral high ground.

In both tone and substance, Rahman sought to mirror a new brand of politics, one tempered by exile and experience. His references to digital transformation, economic diversification, and the need to “make people’s lives better tomorrow” hinted at a reformist economic vision. His proposal to make Bangladesh a “supply hub” for global online retailers like Amazon or Alibaba may sound ambitious, but it is also grounded in a recognition that the garment sector, long the country’s economic engine, is facing external pressures from tariffs and shifting global supply chains.

On political inclusion of rivals, Rahman remains both assertive and evasive. His proposition that Awami League leaders “convicted as criminals” cannot contest the elections leaves open the possibility of excluding the party from the democratic process. While he emphasised that “this is not a matter of revenge, but of justice,” his definition of justice, equating charges with conviction, risks being interpreted as political cleansing. It is here that his rhetoric of unity meets its limits. A genuine democracy cannot begin by disqualifying the defeated.

Rahman’s emotional reflections on his family’s suffering, his mother’s illness, his brother’s death, and his own torture, however, humanise him before an audience that has often seen him as privileged and untouchable. Bangladesh’s tragedy has long been that leaders once victimised in the past have often turned their grievances into repressive instruments of governance. Rahman’s challenge is to break that trend.

If his words are any indication, he seems aware of the weight of expectation. “Politics is not family-based,” he insisted. “It is based on support.” It was a subtle rebuttal to critics who accuse him of perpetuating dynastic succession. Yet his own political authority, inherited through the lineage of Ziaur

Rahman and Khaleda Zia, embodies precisely what he claims to transcend. The paradox of Bangladesh’s democracy is that both its major parties are trapped in familial legacies they publicly deny but privately depend upon.

There is also the matter of what to do with history. BNP’s last tenure ended amid allegations of corruption, militancy, and cronyism—issues that Rahman now pledges to eradicate. For many citizens, especially older ones, trust will not be restored by words alone. If he does return to power, his actions in the first 100 days, particularly how he handles political prisoners, media freedom, and administrative neutrality, can help define not just his credibility but also Bangladesh’s democratic future.

As regards the current interim government, his cautious endorsement reveals a pragmatic streak: support for a fair election process tempered by reminders that “warmth or coldness” in relations with the government will depend on how well it conducts its main tasks. It is an artful diplomacy of distance, neither confrontational nor complicit. His foreign policy remarks, particularly his call for a “Bangladesh before all” approach that promises a reset with India, tread an equally delicate line. While his insistence that “if they [India] displace the people of Bangladesh by sheltering dictatorship, there is nothing we can do”—and strong statements on border killings and water sharing—tap into popular sentiment after years of asymmetrical diplomacy under Sheikh Hasina, he also sought to project a vision of parity without hostility. This will be no easy task. His resolve will be amply tested if BNP does form the next government.

Overall, Tarique Rahman’s reemergence through the recent interviews represents both a promise and a paradox. And yet, amid all the uncertainties and contradictions, one thing is undeniable: Rahman has reintroduced a long-missing voice into Bangladesh’s political conversation. Citizens are once again hearing a leading political leader speak of elections, accountability, and economic renewal, however cautiously. Whether that voice matures into statesmanship or fades into familiar patterns remains to be seen.

Pantha Kanai fulfils 'lifelong dream' with 'Sei Ek Shomoy Chhilo'

Renowned singer Pantha Kanai has returned with a heartfelt new track, 'Sei Ek Shomoy Chhilo', evoking memories of the global lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. The song, written by Shahid Mahmud Jangi and composed by Pilu Khan, has been released on Ajab Records' YouTube channel.

The singer noted that the song holds deep emotional value, bringing back memories of a time when the world was forced into isolation. "The world has moved on, but many have started to forget those difficult days. This song will remind listeners of that period — of fear, reflection, and hope," he said. "For me, it's unforgettable, and I plan to include it in my upcoming concert performances."



Questionable videos presenting deceased famous individuals in various situations has sparked debate online.

The uncomfortable AI resurrection of dead celebrities

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

A new, and deeply unsettling, trend is flooding social media feeds. It is not a dance challenge or a recipe video. It is the digital resurrection of deceased celebrities, all generated by artificial intelligence. Albert Einstein as a UFC fighter. Tupac Shakur hanging out with Elvis Presley. A stand-up routine from Michael Jackson. This is the latest frontier of AI content, and it is raising urgent questions about consent, taste, and who gets to control a person's legacy after they are gone.

The source of this trend is OpenAI's new Sora 2 video generator. The company launched the tool with promises of safety, stating it would block depictions of public figures. However, it turns out this prohibition has a significant loophole: it only applies to the living. An OpenAI spokesperson confirmed to tech magazine PCMag that the company "allows the generation of historical figures". This policy has opened the floodgates for users to create videos featuring anyone from Albert Einstein to Kurt Cobain, without any permission from their families or estates.

For living individuals, Sora 2 offers a 'cameo' feature. This allows a person to scan their own face and voice,

giving them control over how their digital likeness is used. But this system completely fails the deceased. They cannot opt in. They cannot revoke consent. They are, in effect, digital props for anyone with an idea and an app.

The human impact of this is very real. Zelda Williams, daughter of the late Robin Williams, recently pleaded to stop sending her AI videos of her father. In an Instagram post, she called the recreations a "horrendous

OpenAI has shown it can change its policies when faced with backlash, as it recently did by shifting to an opt-in model for copyrighted characters.

Frankensteinian monster", stating emphatically that it is not what he would have wanted. Her distress highlights a core problem: these AI resurrections are not just a technical novelty; they can cause genuine pain to grieving families and fans who feel a beloved figure is being disrespected.

Legally, the situation is a minefield. According to a recent article by US-based news website Arcs Technica, in

the United States, laws governing the use of a deceased person's likeness vary from state to state. Some, like New York, have laws against using a "digital replica" in a way that could deceive the public. However, these can often be bypassed with a simple disclaimer. The result is a legal grey area where estates may soon be forced to launch lawsuits to protect their loved ones' images.

Perhaps the most ironic twist is seeing figures who warned about AI's dangers being used to promote it. Stephen Hawking famously expressed concern about super intelligent AI, yet he is now one of the most frequently simulated celebrities, often in violent or humiliating scenarios.

OpenAI has shown it can change its policies when faced with backlash, as it recently did by shifting to an opt-in model for copyrighted characters. But by explicitly allowing historical figures, the company is essentially endorsing this new form of digital grave robbing.

As these videos continue to spread, the countdown to the first major legal challenge begins. Until then, the digital afterlife of our most cherished figures remains in the hands of internet strangers, and the ethics feel deadlier than the celebrities they are reviving.

Lady Gaga to appear in 'The Devil Wears Prada 2'



Lady Gaga is set to appear in the highly anticipated sequel to *The Devil Wears Prada*, balancing the project alongside her ongoing Mayhem Ball Tour.

Following four consecutive sold-out shows at London's O2 arena, the Oscar- and Grammy-winning artiste was spotted in Milan, where production for the sequel to the 2006 blockbuster comedy — which originally starred Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Emily Blunt, and Stanley Tucci — is currently underway.

The Devil Wears Prada 2 marks Gaga's first major film role since *Joker: Folie à Deux*. Earlier this year, she also made a cameo appearance in Netflix's hit series *Wednesday*. Her brief stop on set comes just before her upcoming performance at Stockholm's Avicii Arena on Sunday.

Live2Web launches A K Ratul studio in honour of Owned frontman

A K Ratul, the late vocalist of the renowned Bangladeshi rock band Owned, was also celebrated in the industry as a gifted producer, having crafted numerous hit albums and singles for fellow rock bands.

His sudden passing on July 27 left music lovers and musicians across the country heartbroken. Recently, his brother A K Rahul announced that Live2Web has dedicated a studio in his memory, naming it the A K Ratul Studio. Sharing the news, he wrote: "Thank you, Live2Web. Thank you, Hasi. This means the world to our family."



NEWS

NHRC reforms hinge on bodies, not just law

FROM PAGE 12
"The most important of these are the High Court and the Parliamentary Committee. And along with this, we need to make some other accountable institutions stand strong, the most notable of which is the NHRC," he added.

In the existing law, the selection committee tasked with choosing the members of the NHRC mostly included bureaucrats.

The new draft law allows the inclusion of university professors as well as representatives from civil society with human rights experience, journalists, small ethnic groups and backward communities in the selection committee.

The new draft law says the chair of the selection committee must be a judge, said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, adviser to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the Ministry of Water Resources.

"If judges were always endowed with sound judgment, then incidents of extrajudicial killings would not have continued for years."

Although the judiciary has moved forward and issued directives against mass arrests, there has been helplessness in implementing judicial decisions and instructions, she said.

"What has been stated about the commission's functions — we must see how much capacity it will truly have to do that. Just seating a few people in chairs will not suffice."

There must also be an evaluation of the members' performance. Furthermore, it should be stated that the recommendations of the commission must be implemented, she added.

A judicial system must be built where people from any corner of the country can say that they have confidence in the judicial system and the courts, said Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury, head of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances.

The NHRC has always grappled with politicisation, said Adilur Rahman Khan, founder of Odhikar, a

human rights organisation.

A national human rights commission was formed during a military-supported regime and was staffed with political activists later on.

"There were efforts to take away the rights of people. Even when the struggle of July was going on, a director of the National Human Rights Commission wrote to the United Nations that terrorists were creating terrorism in Bangladesh," said Khan, adviser to the industries ministry.

Supreme Court lawyer Sara Hossain described the empowerment of the NHRC to investigate law enforcement agencies as a major achievement.

She praised the clause mandating that one-third of the commissioners be women — an improvement from the previous single female member — but emphasised the need for even greater female representation.

Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman commented that the definition of human rights should be specific in the new law.

Speakers included UNDP Bangladesh Resident Representative Stefan Liller, Deputy Head of Mission of Danish Embassy Anders K Carlsen, Swedish ambassador Ritu Sinfred Renggli, law secretary Hafiz Ahmed Chowdhury, Senior Legal Adviser of the Asia-Pacific National Human Rights Institutions Greg Hism, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman, Naripokkho founder Shireen Haque, Chakma Circle adviser Rani Yan Yan, Amar Desh editor Mahmudur Rahman, Consulting Editor of The Daily Star Kamal Ahmed and Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances member Nur Khan Liton, among others.

The session was moderated by Romana Schweiger, Senior Advisor on Rule of Law, Justice and Security at UNDP Bangladesh; Tasneem Siddiqui, president of Odhikar; Sanjida Islam, coordinator of Maayer Daak, and Supreme Court lawyers Ehsan Abdullah Siddiq and Saqeb Mahbub.

2 killed as Rab

FROM PAGE 2
Rab-8 Patuakhali Camp Commander Squadron Leader Rashed said, "About 15 to 20 of the injured are in critical condition."

The Rab personnel were travelling with their families from Barishal to Kuakata on a family picnic, he added.

Rescue teams from Rab, police, army, and the fire service carried out a joint operation.

Alim and Priyon died on the way to Patuakhali Medical College Hospital.

Doctor Tamanna Rahman Shanta of Patuakhali Medical College Hospital said, "The injured started arriving around 9:00am. Among them..."

Injured Rab members and their families were moved to the Lebukhali Combined Military Hospital (CMH) and Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal for better treatment, officials said.

Yunus leaves

FROM PAGE 2
(FAO) of the United Nations, where policymakers, researchers, and entrepreneurs from across the world exchange views on the future of food systems. This year's event is being held at the FAO headquarters in Rome from October 10 to 17.

The chief adviser's visit is being regarded as a significant reflection of Bangladesh's proactive diplomatic engagement on the international stage. He is scheduled to return to Bangladesh on October 15.

Trump slaps 100%

FROM PAGE 12
choosing to act now. "Some very strange things are happening in China! They are becoming very hostile," he said.

Trump said other countries had contacted the United States expressing anger over China's "great Trade hostility, which came out of nowhere."

He also accused Beijing of "lying in wait" despite what he characterised as six months of good relations, which have notably seen progress on bringing TikTok's US operations under American control as required by a law passed by Congress last year.

His outburst comes just weeks after he had spoken of the importance of meeting Xi at the APEC summit and said that he would travel to China next year.

TIB slams hasty approval of data protection

FROM PAGE 12
According to the TIB statement, subsection 15(4) of the draft creates scope for data controllers and processors to be exempted from their duties and responsibilities, while section 24 allows broad access to personal data in the name of "crime prevention".

"It is essential to clarify how provisions meant to protect data have instead been turned into tools for control and surveillance," said Iftekharuzzaman.

He further warned that allowing government agencies unrestricted access to data servers without judicial oversight poses serious risks of misuse.

"The draft fails to reflect the

constitutional commitment to ensuring the privacy of personal information, which is truly alarming," he said.

TIB also raised objections to the way the ordinance criminalises information misuse, saying it could have negative implications for business and commerce.

Criticising the absence of an independent data protection authority, Dr Iftekharuzzaman said the National Data Governance Ordinance 2025 had been abruptly approved to create a "so-called interoperability authority" that is inconsistent with global practices and based on unrealistic concepts.

"This approach reflects an

authoritarian mindset and risks being self-defeating," he said.

TIB stressed that while data governance legislation is necessary in today's digital world, addressing such a complex issue through one or two hastily prepared laws, without assessing the broader digital ecosystem or engaging relevant experts, would only deepen complications and increase the risk of rights violations through expanded government surveillance.

The organisation urged the government not to enforce the two ordinances in their current form and instead hold meaningful consultations with stakeholders and experts before implementation.

Justice key to protecting

FROM PAGE 12
The BNP said justice not only ensures punishment for past incidents but also provides assurance that such injustices are not repeated. Full respect for law and human rights can form the foundation of a peaceful and accountable state, it said.

A country should operate according to the law of the land, it said.

"Just as the actions of certain individuals should not be attributed to an institution, it is equally improper to question the integrity of that institution based on their misconduct," read the statement.

Throughout the entire period of fascism, the BNP, as the party that suffered the most from enforced disappearances, killings, and oppression, fully supports justice for all human rights violations.

People's emotions, trust, and respect for a patriotic force should have no connection with the isolated crimes of any individual, nor should it, the party said.

Every member of the armed forces is a proud child of this country and this land.

"Therefore, the vast majority of military personnel surely wish, from their hearts, that those who violate boundaries face justice, so that no government can ever again give the armed forces orders to commit injustices such as enforced disappearances or killings. BNP fully agrees with this universal aspiration," read the statement.

'Israeli forces tried to instil fear in us'

FROM PAGE 12
Shahidul noted they were held in one of Israel's most secure prisons, located deep in the desert. While there, a fellow detainee, who had been captured from another ship, told him that Israeli forces had accused him of being a Hamas agent and threatened to shoot him once inside the facility.

Shahidul said he and several other detainees went on a hunger strike during their imprisonment, adding that they were made to sleep on iron beds.

"The toilets were deplorable. But, something extraordinary happened. Those in cell seven composed a parody to the tune of Bella Ciao, the iconic Italian resistance anthem. Their version was called 'Working toilet, working toilet'."

"They sang it loud. Their toilet was broken, and despite their complaints, nothing was being done. Soon, others joined in and made sure their voices were heard."

"Even when guards stormed in with guns and ordered us to stop, we kept singing," recalled Shahidul, adding that for them, it was an act of resistance.

Describing his peers as extraordinary, Shahidul said despite being aware of the risks, they remained committed to justice for Palestinians.

When asked by a journalist about their next steps, Shahidul Alam replied, "Because some truly remarkable individuals came together, we've decided to build an international network. Since global leaders won't take action, we activists are preparing to fight for what must be done. We've already drafted a blueprint, and even before returning, we resolved to go back. Next time, a thousand ships will sail."

Shahidul thanked the people of Bangladesh and Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus for supporting the flotilla, unlike many other big countries.

"Free Palestine," he said before ending the press conference.

As part of the Freedom Flotilla Coalition, Shahidul's ship, the Conscience, along with eight other smaller vessels, was sailing toward war-ravaged Gaza to challenge Israel's blockade and deliver humanitarian aid to Palestinians in the besieged enclave when it was intercepted on Wednesday.

This was the second interception, after Israel the week before stopped about 40 vessels and detained more than 450 activists in an aid convoy, the Global Sumud Flotilla, that was also attempting to deliver supplies to Gaza.

Niaz Ahmed Chowdhury passes away

CITY DESK

Niaz Ahmed Chowdhury passed away at Evercare Hospital yesterday, at the age of 80, said a press release.

He had been suffering from old-age complications and pneumonia.

He left behind his widow, Ria Chowdhury, daughter Noushin Afzal, son Nihad Chowdhury, only brother Monsur Ahmed Chowdhury, six grandchildren, and a host of relatives, friends, and well-wishers to mourn his death.

The second son of late Mozir Uddin Chowdhury from Vaddeshwar in Sylhet, Niaz worked in the private sector until 2010.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held today, after the Asr prayers at Gulshan Azad Mosque. Later, he will be buried at the Banani Graveyard.



PHOTO: TITU DAS



A fisherman couple from the Manta community, living on a boat on the Kalabor, folds their nets together by the riverside. They are keeping the nets aside due to the government's ongoing ban on hilsa fishing from October 4 to 25. The photo was taken yesterday in the Bukhainagar area of Barishal Sadar upazila.

BNP calls PR party-centric

FROM PAGE 3
avoid electoral irregularities and ensure that "every vote counts."

"The first and foremost benefit of PR is that every voter can recognise that they are represented in parliament," he said.

Nagorik Oikya President Mahmudur Rahman Manna dismissed the debate, saying, "There is nothing to discuss about PR. The people of the country do not understand it, and they have no interest in it."

Biplobi Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Haque alleged that a

"motivated campaign" was being carried out to claim that 78 percent of people support PR.

Former Election Commission Secretary SM Jakoria warned that a party winning the most votes under PR might still be unable to form the government, creating a "mismatch between expectations and outcomes."

AB Party Chairman Mojibur Rahman Monju said, "If voting takes place at night, there will be no difference between an election under the PR system and the traditional first-past-the-post system."

Presenting the keynote paper, Prof Mamun Al Mostofa of Dhaka University's Political Science Department said forming an Upper House based on PR alone would not ensure accountability or strengthen democracy.

Gono Odhikar Parishad General Secretary Rashed Khan said discussions would continue to reach a consensus on the electoral system, while Ganosanghati Andolon's Executive Coordinator

Abul Hasan Rubel said PR could only be considered if people lose faith in the current one.

Hope rekindled as bone marrow unit resumes

FROM PAGE 3

A bone marrow transplant replaces damaged or diseased bone marrow – the soft tissue inside bones – with healthy stem cells. These can come from the patient (autologous transplant) or a donor (allogeneic transplant).

The treatment is used for several types of blood cancer, aplastic anaemia, thalassaemia, and other related disorders.

Bangladesh's first BMT unit was established in October 2013 at DMCH's new building, following the model of Harvard Medical School's Massachusetts General Hospital.

However, the procedure was suspended when the new building was turned into a dedicated Covid hospital in May 2020. Although briefly resumed in 2023, many essential machines were non-functional, and a high infection rate forced another suspension, doctors said.

So far, 60 bone marrow transplants have been carried out at the hospital – 55 autologous and five allogeneic – with only two unsuccessful cases, according to a doctor from the unit.

NEED AND TREATMENT COST
Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum inaugurated and visited the renovated unit yesterday, expressing hope that BMT services would

soon resume at a relatively low cost.

Director General of the Directorate General of Health Services Prof Abu Jalor said around 1,000 patients need bone marrow transplants annually in Bangladesh. However, public and private facilities together can handle only around 200 cases a year, he said, adding that priority would be given to children.

Dr Kamrul Hasan, head of the Haematology Department and the BMT unit, said preparations have begun, with the unit capable of performing 50 to 60 transplants annually across its five beds.

He said costs vary depending on the type of transplant and the patient's condition. Autologous transplants may cost Tk 5 lakh to Tk 7 lakh, while allogeneic ones may cost Tk 12 lakh to Tk 15 lakh. In private hospitals, the same procedure costs around Tk 15 lakh, compared to Tk 20 lakh to Tk 1 crore abroad.

Asked about challenges, Associate Professor Dr Mafruha Akter, who has been involved in 52 transplants, said apart from financial constraints, training doctors and nurses is crucial.

"A multidisciplinary approach is also important, as these patients need care for other complications. Standardising the unit will also be key," she said.

Currently, 16 trained

nurses work in the unit, said nurse-in-charge Sara Mukti Das.

Prof Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser for the health ministry, said trained doctors from Chittagong

Medical College Hospital and Mitford Hospital will be brought to the unit.

He said the government will establish a fund for the unit, covering part of the transplant cost, while the rest will be borne by patients.

Farewell to a beloved

FROM PAGE 3

Speaking on behalf of the family, his sister, Syeda Sattar Baby, said, "We spent the last eight day-nights at the hospital. The love I saw from his students and admirers made me feel that my brother was not only a great teacher but also a beloved soul to many. For that, I express my gratitude on behalf of our family."

Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Chowdhury, remembering his former student and colleague, said, "Manzoor was a brilliant student who began teaching early. His connection with literature was unique. He received several awards, all of which he truly deserved. He was a rare human being, completely free of arrogance."

Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan said, "Dhaka University has lost one of its finest teachers today. Manzoor bhai was not only a teacher and writer but also an extraordinary human being. He was respected for his wisdom, humility, and integrity. Many hoped for a miracle, but his time to leave had

come."

Law Adviser Asif Nazrul, who lived next door to him on Fuller Road, said, "He had a smile that could only come from a pure heart. It was his signature. Despite our political differences, I always admired his honesty and integrity. He was immensely knowledgeable and deeply loved. His death is an irreparable loss."

Photographer Shahidul Alam said, "In 2018, when the government exerted pressure on me, Pathshala, and Drik, he took the burden upon himself to shield us. Later, when the authorities tried to manipulate our governing body, he used his influence to free us from that difficult situation."

From the Shaheed Minar, his body was taken to Dhaka University Mosque, where his namaz-e-janaza was held after the Zohr prayers. Later in the afternoon, he was laid to rest at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur.

Manzoorul, 74, breathed his last while undergoing treatment at LabAid Hospital in Dhaka on Friday.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Superintending Engineer

MIS & Estates Circle

Roads and Highways Department

Sarak Bhaban, Tejgaon, Dhaka

E-mail: serhdmis.estate@gmail.com

Memo No. 35.01.0000.160.14.24.400

Date: 08/10/2025

Invitation for Tender (International)

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges, Road Transport and Highways Division
2	Agency/Department	Roads and Highways Department (RHD)
3	Purchaser Name	Superintending Engineer Roads and Highways Department, MIS & Estates Circle Address: Sarak Bhaban, Level-5, Block- B, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208, Bangladesh
4	Purchaser District	Dhaka
5	Invitation for	Supply, Installation, Operation and Maintenance of Plants & Equipment for Axle Load Control System under Roads and Highways Department.
6	Invitation Ref	Memo No.35.01.0000.160.14.24.400
7	Date	08 October 2025

KEY INFORMATION

8	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method, International (One Stage Two Envelope Tendering Method, OSTETM)
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FUNDING INFORMATION

9	Budget & Source of Funds	Development Budget (GOB)
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PARTICULAR INFORMATION

10	Tender Package No.	01/RHD/SE/MIS & ESTATES CIRCLE /2025-2026
11	Tender Publication Date	12 October 2025
12	Tender Last Selling Date	25 November 2025, Time: 17:00 hours (Bangladesh Standard Time)
13	Tender Closing Date and Time	26 November 2025, Time: 12.30 hours (Bangladesh Standard Time)
14	Tender Opening Date and Time	26 November 2025, Time: 15.00 hours (Bangladesh Standard Time)
15	Name and Address of the office (s)	Address

Selling Tender Document	Project Manager (Executive Engineer) Roads and Highways Department, Axle Load Control Stations Project Address: Sarak Bhaban, Block- B, Room No: 522, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208, Bangladesh
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1) Receiving Tender Document (Primary place)	Superintending Engineer Roads and Highways Department, MIS & Estates Circle Address: Sarak Bhaban, Level-5, Block- B, Room No: 526 Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208, Bangladesh
2) Receiving Tender Document (Secondary place)	1. Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Division, 1st 12 Storied Government Building, Segun Bagicha, Dhaka-1000 2. Additional Chief Engineer, RHD Dhaka Zone, Roads and Highways Department, Alenbari, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208.

Opening Tender Document	Office of the Superintending Engineer Roads and Highways Department, MIS & Estates Circle Address: Sarak Bhaban, Level-5, Block- B, Room No: 526 Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208, Bangladesh				
16	Place / Date / Time of Pre-Tender Meeting	30 October 2025 Time: 15.00 hours (Bangladesh Standard Time), Conference Room-306 ; Technical Services Wing, Roads and highways Department, Block- A, Sarak Bhaban, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208, Bangladesh			
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER					
17	Eligibility of Tenderer	Eligibility of Tenderer has been mentioned in the Section 2 of Tender Data Sheet (TDS).			
18	Brief Description of Goods or Works	Supply and Installation of plant/equipment for Axle Load Control Stations (ALCS) (17 stations situated all over Bangladesh and 01 Axle Main Control Center, AMCC at RHD Headquarter) comprising - Pre-selection Sub-System (HS-WIM) - Station Evasion Control Sub-System - Axle Load Control Station Computer Sub-System - In-Station Truck Traffic Management Sub-System, - Axle Load Measurement and Enforcement Sub-System (LS-WIM) - Axle Load Control Back Office Sub-System (in Dhaka) - CCTV Sub-System, IT Network Sub-System - Other necessary infrastructure works			
19	Identification of Lot	Location	Price of Tender Document	Tender Security Amount	Completion Time
	Supply, Installation, Operation and Maintenance of Plants & Equipment for Axle Load Control System under Roads and Highways Department	17 stations situated all over Bangladesh and 01 Axle Main Control Center (AMCC) at RHD Headquarter.	BDT 12,000	BDT 45 million or US\$ 375,000	24 (Twenty-Four) months
20	Name of Official Inviting Tender	K.M. Noor-E-Alam			
21	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Superintending Engineer			
22	Address of official Inviting Tender	Superintending Engineer Roads and Highways Department, MIS & Estates Circle Address: Sarak Bhaban, Level-5, Block- B, Room No-526, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208, Bangladesh			
23	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Mobile No.: 01711040772; 01730782512 e-mail address: serhdmis.estate@gmail.com			
24	Procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tender without assigning any reason whatsoever.				

Special Instructions:

- No tender will be received after the deadline of submission.
- If it is not possible to receive/open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstances, the same will be received/ opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
- The procuring Entity reserves the right to exclude or decrease the quantity of tender items for which no claim will be entertained.
- CD, VAT, Taxes and other charges/expenses have to be paid by the Contractor as per latest Rules of the Government of Bangladesh.

08/10/2025
K.M. Noor-E-Alam
Superintending Engineer, RHD
MIS & Estates Circle

GD-2189

Sarak Bhaban, Level-5, Block- B, Room No-526
Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208, Bangladesh



Global tobacco use declined, but the epidemic persisted

The World Health Organisation's (WHO) 2025 report revealed that global tobacco use had declined significantly, with the number of users dropping from 1.38 billion in 2000 to 1.2 billion in 2024—a 27% relative decrease since 2010. Despite this progress, one in five adults worldwide still used tobacco, contributing to millions of preventable deaths.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, stated that millions had quit or avoided tobacco use due to strong national control efforts. However, the tobacco industry responded by promoting new nicotine products, such as e-cigarettes, heated tobacco, and nicotine pouches, aggressively targeting young people. For the first time, WHO estimated that over 100 million people globally were vaping, including about 86 million adults and 15 million adolescents. Children were found to be nine times more likely than adults to use e-cigarettes.

Women had shown greater progress in quitting tobacco, achieving the 30% reduction target by 2020, while prevalence among men remained higher and was not expected to meet the goal until 2031. Regionally, South-East Asia had seen the steepest decline, while Europe had the highest prevalence, particularly among women. Africa had the lowest prevalence but continued to experience growth in user numbers due to population increase.

WHO urged governments to accelerate implementation of the MPOWER measures and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, strengthen regulations on new nicotine products, increase taxes, ban advertising, and expand cessation services to sustain global progress against the tobacco epidemic.

Source: World Health Organisation

Statin use in pregnancy: No increased risk of birth defects

A recent research published in the JAMA Watch has examined the safety of using statins—medications commonly prescribed to lower cholesterol—during pregnancy, particularly during the first trimester. Historically, statins have been contraindicated during pregnancy due to concerns about potential risks to foetal development.

A comprehensive study analysed data from over 700,000 pregnancies and found no significant association between statin use in early pregnancy and the occurrence of major congenital malformations. This suggests that, for most women, taking statins during the first trimester does not increase the risk of birth defects.

However, the study did observe that exposure to high-intensity statins was linked to a slightly higher risk of congenital malformations. Additionally, while the overall risk of neurodevelopmental disorders in children appeared unaffected, there was a noted increase in low birth weight among those exposed to statins during pregnancy.

These findings provide reassurance for women who have been prescribed statins and are planning a pregnancy. Nonetheless, it is crucial for expectant mothers to consult with their healthcare providers before making any changes to their medication regimen. Individual health factors and the specific type of statin prescribed should be considered to ensure the safety of both mother and child.

In summary, while statins may not pose a significant risk for birth defects when used during early pregnancy, medical guidance is essential to make informed decisions about their use.

The five sleep profiles that shape our mental health



In a major leap forward for sleep science, researchers have uncovered five distinct “sleep” profiles—patterns that reveal how our nightly rest is intertwined with mental health, cognition, and even the way our brains are wired.

For decades, scientists have known that poor sleep harms health—but most studies looked at one factor at a time, such as sleep duration or insomnia. To explore the other dimensions, the team analysed data from 770 adults who took part in the Human Connectome Project, a massive U.S. research initiative mapping how the brain connects and functions. The dataset included each person's sleep habits, brain scans, mental and physical health indicators, and cognitive test results.

Rather than isolating one variable, the researchers used multivariate analysis to find natural groupings—clusters of people with shared patterns across sleep, health, and brain activity. What emerged were five unique sleep-biopsychosocial profiles.

Five sleep profiles, five different stories:

- The first group, labelled “poor sleepers”, experienced low-quality rest and high levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. Their brain scans showed unusually strong connections between subcortical regions and attention networks—suggesting a hyper-alert state even at rest.

- The second group, called “sleep resilient”, showed an intriguing paradox. They faced greater psychological strain, including attention difficulties, but still reported sleeping well. Researchers believe these individuals may possess biological or behavioural buffers that protect them

from the usual effects of stress.

- The third profile centred on short sleep duration, which correlated with lower cognitive performance—particularly in attention and memory tasks. A fourth group showed frequent sleep disruptions, often linked with medication use and mixed health outcomes.

- Finally, the “healthy sleepers” enjoyed stable, adequate rest and performed best across mental health and cognitive measures.

Implications for mental health

Perhaps the most striking finding was how dominant mental health factors were across nearly all sleep types. “Sleep is one of the five key pillars of human functioning,” Dr Kebets noted. “It’s not surprising that mental well-being shows up so strongly.”

The discovery opens the door to more personalised approaches to sleep and mental health care. Instead of simply prescribing “more sleep”, clinicians could one day tailor interventions to an individual's specific sleep profile and brain pattern.

A wake-up call for better rest:

For the general public, the takeaway is clear: sleep is not one-size-fits-all. Duration, quality, and resilience all matter—and together, they shape who we are.

Experts recommend maintaining consistent sleep schedules, limiting screen time before bed, and managing stress through relaxation or mindfulness. Small steps, they say, can make a big difference.

As this study reveals, how we sleep may be just as unique as how we think—and understanding that connection could be the key to unlocking healthier minds and stronger brains.

Source: PLOS Biology

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY 2025

Protecting minds in humanitarian crises

STAR HEALTH DESK

As wars, disasters, and epidemics continue to upend lives across the world, the World Health Organisation (WHO) marked world mental health day 2025 with a clear message—mental health must be protected in humanitarian emergencies. This year's theme highlights that psychological care is as vital as food, water, and shelter when communities face crisis. The campaign reaffirmed WHO's long-standing principle: there is no health without mental health.

Humanitarian emergencies can take a devastating psychological toll. Fear, grief, displacement, and uncertainty affect nearly everyone caught in crisis. WHO estimates that one in five people living in conflict-affected areas suffer from a mental health condition, while many more experience distress that can persist for years. By the end of 2024, well over 123 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide, the majority in low- and middle-income countries where health systems are already under immense pressure.



Core messages of the campaign
The WHO campaign outlined several core priorities for protecting mental health during emergencies:

- Mental health is central to recovery. Meeting basic physical needs is essential, but survivors also need emotional care, safety, and social connection to heal and rebuild their lives.

- Integration into humanitarian response. Mental health and psychosocial support must be included in all emergency plans—from hospitals and refugee camps to schools and community centres. Every setting should have trained staff ready to provide psychological first aid.

- Investment builds resilience. Evidence shows that investing in mental health reduces long-term suffering, helps people return to school or work, and strengthens social recovery after crises.

- Leave no one behind. Special attention is needed for those most at risk—children, older individuals, people with disabilities, refugees, and individuals with pre-existing mental health conditions. Barriers such as stigma, discrimination, cost, and language must be actively removed.

- Support for humanitarian workers. Responders themselves face trauma, exhaustion, and

burnout. Providing supervision, rest, and counselling ensures they can continue to deliver compassionate care.

WHO's campaign reinforces that effective emergency response is incomplete without addressing mental health. Healing the mind is essential to rebuilding communities.

How to protect mental health

At the individual and community level, WHO recommends practical steps to safeguard mental well-being during crises:

- Stay connected. Keep in touch with family, friends, and neighbours. Social support is one of the strongest buffers against distress.

- Maintain routines. Consistent sleeping, eating, and activity patterns create stability in uncertain times.

- Engage in positive activities. Exercise, prayer, creativity, or volunteering can restore a sense of control and purpose.

- Avoid harmful coping behaviours. Reducing alcohol and substance use helps protect both body and mind.

- Seek help early. Talking to a trusted friend, counsellor, or health professional can prevent prolonged suffering.

- Support others. Offering empathy and listening can help communities heal collectively.

On world mental health day 2025, WHO urged countries and humanitarian partners to make mental health a universal priority—especially for people living through conflict, displacement, and disaster. The organisation's message was simple yet powerful: to rebuild lives, we must care for minds. By integrating mental health into every emergency response, societies can foster resilience, recovery, and hope for a healthier, more humane future.

Source: World Health Organisation

MICROGREENS

Tiny greens with powerful health benefits

ABEDA SULTANA

In a world drowning in junk food, a tiny leaf barely an inch tall is emerging as a silent warrior for health—the microgreen. These young seedlings of vegetables and herbs are becoming a global health trend, adding a burst of colour, texture, and flavour to salads and dishes.

Typically 1–3 inches (2.5–7.5 cm) tall, microgreens are harvested within 7–21 days of germination, after the first true leaves appear. In Bangladesh, they are mostly used in restaurants, but to enjoy their full health benefits, they should be included regularly in the diet.



Microgreens are packed with vitamins (C, E, and K), minerals (copper, zinc, iron, and magnesium), antioxidants (glucosinolates, carotenoids, and phenolic compounds), and nutrients like fibre and omega-3 fatty acids. They contain 4 to 40 times more nutrients than mature plants. Research suggests microgreens can help reduce

inflammation, lower cancer risk, and support diabetes management. Fenugreek microgreens, for example, can improve sugar absorption by up to 44%. Their antioxidants may lower chronic disease risk and slow ageing.

Microgreens support heart health by reducing bad cholesterol and triglycerides. Polyphenol-rich varieties such as basil, broccoli, peas, and radish improve memory and may reduce Alzheimer's risk. Broccoli, cabbage, mustard, and radish microgreens contain sulforaphane, which may slow cancer growth and protect against colon cancer. Spinach and broccoli microgreens, rich in lutein, support eye health, while bean, pea, and lentil microgreens enhance digestion and nutrient absorption.

Microgreens are easy to grow at home—just a tray, soil, water, and seeds. Within 7–21 days, they are ready to harvest and add freshness and nutrition to daily meals.

The writer is a dietician.
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Expanding WASH access through local innovation

The Daily Star (TDS): How have RFL's low-cost sanitation innovations improved hygiene outcomes in rural communities, and what evidence supports these improvements?

R N Paul (RNP): RFL began its ‘Shine’ brand to make hygiene affordable and accessible for all. Partnering with iDE introduced innovation, leading to designs like low-commode toilets with a self-closing cover that reduces fly-borne diseases. Combining RFL's manufacturing capacity with iDE's design expertise turned such ideas into practical, market-ready solutions. Together, they developed several affordable sanitation products improving rural hygiene. Recognising the link between sanitation and running water, RFL created a low-cost system integrating a water tank, pump, and plumbing set to support handwashing. The 300-litre recyclable tank, offered with a buy-back scheme covering up to 70% of its value, ensured both affordability and sustainability. These initiatives have transformed hygiene and health outcomes in rural Bangladesh by making proper sanitation and access to running water a practical reality for low-income households.

TDS: What models have proven most successful in building and sustaining rural entrepreneur networks for WASH product distribution?

RNP: RFL's distribution model is built on scale, affordability, and reach. As demand for low-cost sanitation and water solutions grew, the company expanded its production capacity and logistics network. Currently, RFL's products reach almost every village in Bangladesh through distributors, small retailers, and around 400 sales staff, including 500 exclusive dealers who earn their livelihoods from WASH product sales. Affordable, high-quality products have earned lasting customer

trust, turning Shine goods into sustainable household solutions. The model also promotes a circular economy, as RFL repurchases old recyclable materials, reducing waste and costs for both customers and distributors.

TDS: How do you ensure your solutions are tailored to the environmental, cultural, and logistical realities of remote and underserved communities?

RNP: RFL's extensive distribution network spans 5,000 distributors

base for cost efficiency, as local infrastructure supports large-scale production. The designs, optimised for shipping and stacking, highlight how local innovation can achieve global impact through strong partnerships.

TDS: How do you monitor the long-term sustainability and behaviour change associated with your WASH interventions?

RNP: Sustainability drives every aspect of RFL's operations, reflected through product quality, affordability, and recyclability. RFL Plastics also partners with NGOs such as iDE, UNICEF, and



R N Paul
Managing Director,
RFL Group

BRAC to support awareness and behaviour change initiatives. Since 2013, SATO and RFL have improved sanitation for over 22 million people, contributing significantly to Bangladesh's national coverage. To further its sustainability efforts, RFL has established a robust recycling network, with major facilities in Habiganj and smaller units in eight to ten other regions. Collected waste is washed, processed, and converted into granules under strict no-child-labour standards.

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

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

SPORT

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
 India vs West Indies
 2nd Test, Day 3
 Live from 10:00 am
 NCL T20 final
 Live from 5:00 pm
TEN CRICKET AND WILLOW TV

Pakistan vs South Africa
 First Test, Day 1
 Live from 11:00 am
STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
 ICC Women's World Cup
 India vs Australia
 Live from 3:30 pm



Australia (CA) has 10 directors while England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has 11 – two of whom are full-time salaried officials, the CEO and CFO. Excluding them, there are only nine in leadership roles.

All in all, the so-called big three in cricket combined have 27 policymakers, just two more than Bangladesh.

New Zealand Cricket (NZC) operates with eight board members; Cricket South Africa (CSA) has 13, excluding two executives. Cricket West Indies (CWI), which represents multiple nations, is run by a group of 10.

Even the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), boards that are often in the news for political reasons like the BCB, have 11 and seven directors respectively.

Zimbabwe Cricket has 12, Cricket Ireland 14, and Afghanistan Cricket Board eight.

An all boy's club, almost
 Throughout BCB's history, women's representation in policymaking has never been a real priority.

There has been only one female director in its history—former women's cricketer Monowara Anis Minu, who served during the 2007–08 term. There are talks that the current board might

entitlements are clearly defined and transparent.

That's not the case in the BCB. According to the constitution, directors are not salaried, yet some even leave their jobs to take up this unpaid position.

In the latest polls, one former national team cricketer, who had been a selector earning a handsome honorarium, resigned to become a director without pay.

Much ado, little done
 The BCB outnumbers all major boards in the number of policymakers, but that has hardly translated into on-field success.

Take the men's national team for example: ranked 9th in Tests, 10th in ODIs, and 9th in T20s, despite being the central focus of the board.

The BCB could not arrange international matches for the women's team for almost five months before sending them off for the ongoing ICC Women's World Cup.

Domestic cricket has been on the decline for years, the Bangladesh Premier League has been marred with allegations of corruptions, the game's decentralisation remains a pipe dream, and cricketers everywhere are crying out for more facilities.



PHOTO: ACB

Rashid Khan weaved a web of spin with five wickets for 17 runs in 8.3 overs to bundle out Bangladesh for 109 runs in 28.3 overs in reply to Afghanistan's 190 in the second ODI at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium yesterday. The rot started, though, with a triple-wicket spell from Azmatullah Omarzai as Afghanistan took an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. The third and final match takes place on Tuesday.

Squad finalised for Hockey Junior World Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) has finalised a 20-member squad for next month's FIH Hockey Junior World Cup in India, leaving out six players from the squad that led them to the final round.

Goalkeeper Nayan, Shumonto Chakma, Shahidul Islam, Tyeb Ali, Saddam Hossain and Shimul Islam are the players who have been left out. Among these six, midfielder Tyeb had played in the recent Asia Cup in India.

While members of the coaching staff declined to comment on the issue, BHF's general secretary Riazul Hasan said that the omissions have been made by the coaching staff and selection panel based on performances in the recent Malaysia tour as well as the three-month-long camp.

"The decisions were based on their performances, both in the camp and the Malaysia tour. All of those who have been left out were omitted due to lack of form," Riazul told The Daily Star.

The BHF spokesman informed that the team would leave for Europe on October 28 to play two matches each against their Swiss and Austrian counterparts. The team would then leave for India on November 18 and play two practice matches against Switzerland and Chile ahead of the Junior World Cup.

Two out of the 20 players will be kept as standbys for the tournament, which runs from November 28 to December 10.

Bangladesh are in Pool F of the 24-team competition alongside heavyweights Australia, France and South Korea.

Bangladesh squad:

Mahmud Hasan, Ashraf Haque, Mehrab Hossain Samin, Ramin Hossain, Enam Sharif, Munna Islam, Rahid Hasan, Aziz Rahman, Sabbir Hossain Konok, Din Islam, Ashraf Islam, Mehedi Hasan, Ismail Hossain, Amirul Islam, Hozaila Hossain, Obaidul Hossain, Tanvir Rahman, Rakibul Islam, Mohammad Abdullah, Shahidur Rahman.

Too many cooks for BCB broth?

EKUSH TAPADER

Ten – that's how many directors the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had when Faruque Ahmed took over as its president in last year's August.

Just days earlier, the Awami League government had fallen in the face of an uprising, and several directors resigned from the board in the new political reality.

Time and again, Faruque spoke about the difficulties of running the board with only two fifth of the usual 25 directors.

Ironically, however, even with only 40 percent of the board intact, the BCB under him still had more people in policymaking roles than the boards in Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Afghanistan and even the cricketing powerhouse India.

BCCI+ECB+CA = BCB

Faruque was eventually ousted from the board but made a dramatic comeback in the latest BCB polls, which took place on October 6, and is now one of the two vice-presidents of the newly elected board president Aminul Islam Bulbul.

Bulbul does not have to deal with a depleted board like Faruque, as 23 directors were elected in the latest polls. The National Sports Council (NSC) nominated the remaining two directors, and although there is some controversy over one of them – Ishfaq Ahsan – he is expected to be replaced soon.

With 25 members, Bulbul heads the largest board of directors among all Test-playing nations—more than twice the size of most, and in some cases, more than thrice.

The world's richest cricket board, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), operates with just eight members. Cricket



include one woman as the NSC might nominate a woman to replace Ishfaq.

In contrast, major cricketing nations have significant female representation. NZC leads the way: both its presidency and executive chair is held by women, and five of its eight directors are also women. South African and Irish boards also have a female president.

Five out of nine ECB directors are women. CA has three female directors and the Australian government has mandated that national and state sporting bodies must achieve a 50-50 gender split on their boards by mid-2027.

In BCCI, one of the two representatives from the Indian Cricketers' Association must be a woman.

No transparency in financial benefits
 In most major cricket boards, the financial benefits and honorariums of elected or appointed directors are not a secret. For instance, Australia's directors receive annual honorariums, and the exact amounts are publicly available. Salaries of paid executives such as CEOs and CFOs are also listed on their websites.

Although the BCCI's policymakers are honorary, their benefits and

Too many cooks in the kitchen?

Soon after getting elected as president, Bulbul, half-jokingly, said that they were overwhelmed with work and that things would be easier if a day had 33 hours instead of 24.

The reality is that even with 24-hour days and fewer than half of the policymakers, world's leading cricket boards are operating much more efficiently. So, the question is: does BCB really need such a large board?

"I don't think such a large board is necessary," former BCB general secretary Syed Ashraf Haque, who worked as CEO of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC), told The Daily Star. "The board of directors should only decide the direction of cricket – the professionals are supposed to execute those decisions. In every other country, boards are small... Why BCB needs 25 directors, I don't know. I think that's too many."

Hasim targets BPL after standout NCL run

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Left-arm spinner Abu Hasim has turned heads with his disciplined bowling in the ongoing National Cricket League (NCL) T20, which concludes today with holders Rangpur Division facing Khulna Division in the final at Sylhet International Cricket Stadium.

In a tournament dominated by familiar names, Hasim has emerged as a rare fresh find. Alongside unheralded performers like Mohammad Rubel (10 wickets in eight matches) of Chattogram and Khulna's Sheikh Parvez Jibon (10 in six), the 28-year-old has taken 11 wickets in eight matches – the second-highest tally so far behind Chattogram's Hasan Murad (14 in eight) – while maintaining an economy of just 4.74 despite bowling mostly in batter-dominated Powerplay overs.

Hasim's rise has been far from easy. Hailing from Thakurgaon, outside Bangladesh's mainstream cricket hubs, he never featured in age-level cricket. His career took shape only after a fellow Thakurgaon cricketer Ehsanul Haque Lipu spotted his talent during a practice session and brought him to Dhaka for a trial to play in the First Division Cricket League in 2015.

"It is extremely challenging for a player from Thakurgaon to reach this level," Hasim told The Daily Star yesterday.

"I started out as an economical bowler, but over the years I worked on my variations and began taking wickets consistently. After eight years in the First Division, I finally got picked by Ruppangj Tigers in the Dhaka Premier League (DPL) two years ago," added Hasim, whose bowling has been a key factor behind Rangpur's second consecutive appearance in the competition's final. His current NCL form continues his steady rise. In the last Dhaka Premier League (DPL) season, he took 18 wickets in 14 matches for Gazi Group Cricketers at a miserly economy of 4.26. "After my DPL performance, I set a goal to do well here so I could get a chance in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL)... and hopefully, that effort will pay off."



'Time to plan wisely'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Nigar Sultana Joty's poor form in the ICC Women's World Cup has emerged as a key concern for the Tigresses, as their batting remains inconsistent despite strong performances with the ball.

A mainstay of the side in recent years, Joty has scored only 27 runs in three innings. She began with a promising 23 off 44 against Pakistan, forging a 62-run stand with Rubya Haider Jhelik in a seven-wicket win in Colombo. But a promotion up the order has since misfired.

Usually effective at number four, where she averages over 31, Joty was pushed to number three after Farzana Hoque Pinky was dropped – managing a two-ball duck against England and four off 28 against New Zealand, where Bangladesh were bowled out for 178 and 127 respectively.

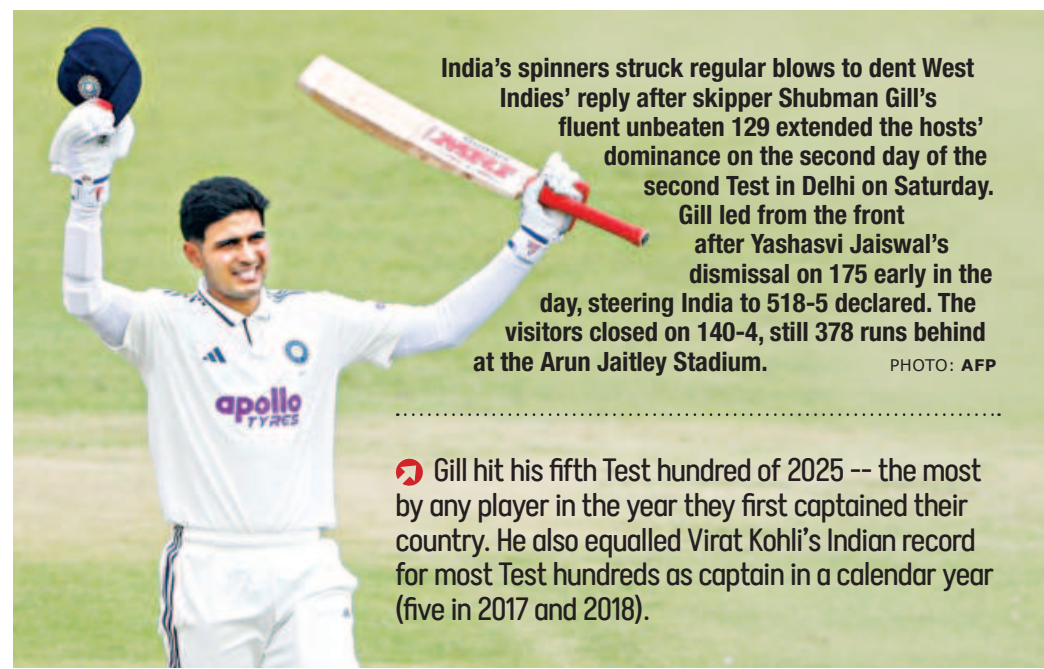
Former captain Rumana Ahmed criticised the reshuffle. "It's time to plan our top order wisely. Our batting is relatively weak, and success in a World Cup demands a solid order," Rumana wrote on social media, adding that Sharmin Akhter Supta has been in form at three, Joty is



best suited to four, and Pinky remains reliable despite being a slow starter.

All-rounder Rabeya Khan defended her skipper but admitted that "when the top order doesn't score, whatever the lower order does becomes meaningless". She added that Joty remains a "confident" batter who is "trying hard" despite the lack of runs.

As Bangladesh head to Visakhapatnam for their next two matches against South Africa and Australia on October 13 and 16, they will hope their captain can rediscover her touch to keep their World Cup campaign alive.



India's spinners struck regular blows to dent West Indies' reply after skipper Shubman Gill's fluent unbeaten 129 extended the hosts' dominance on the second day of the second Test in Delhi on Saturday. Gill led from the front after Yashasvi Jaiswal's dismissal on 175 early in the day, steering India to 518-5 declared. The visitors closed on 140-4, still 378 runs behind at the Arun Jaitley Stadium. PHOTO: AFP

Gill hit his fifth Test hundred of 2025 – the most by any player in the year they first captained their country. He also equalled Virat Kohli's Indian record for most Test hundreds as captain in a calendar year (five in 2017 and 2018).

France striker Kylian Mbappe celebrates with teammate Hugo Ekitike after scoring the opener in a 3-0 win over Azerbaijan in a FIFA World Cup Qualifier at home yesterday. At the stroke of half-time, Mbappe collected Ekitike's pass, stormed through the defence, and slotted home into the far corner. Mbappe, however, injured his ankle in the 83rd minute and will be missing Monday's qualifier against Iceland. PHOTO: AFP





Justice key to protecting armed forces' honour: BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fair and impartial adjudication of crimes is extremely important for protecting the country's democracy, human rights, and the professionalism of the armed forces, the BNP has said.

The party stated that accountability for an individual's actions, particularly in cases of serious crime, must rest solely with the person concerned, and that it would be improper to question an institution because of their misconducts.

Signed by Ruhul Kabir Rizvi Ahmed, senior joint secretary general, made the statement after the prosecution of the International Crimes Tribunal on Thursday formally charged 28 people, including ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 25 top and mid-ranking current and former army officers, in three cases of enforced disappearances, secret detention, and torture.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



Homeless people, including children, sit in a line on a footpath to have lunch from the "Bhalo Kajer Hotel" in the capital's Tejjagoan area yesterday afternoon. The "Bhalo Kajer Hotel" is a mobile eatery that provides free meals to the poor and homeless in exchange for performing one good deed a day.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

NHRC reforms hinge on bodies, not just law

Say speakers at consultation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The independence and effectiveness of the National Human Rights Commission will depend not only on the quality of the law but on the strength of institutions and the sincerity of political commitment, said experts yesterday.

"We have seen that even when excellent laws are made, the institutions for which they are intended often fail to function," said Asif Nazrul, the law adviser, at a national consultation on the draft National Human Rights Commission Ordinance 2025.

The consultation meeting on the draft was organised jointly by the law ministry, UNDP and the embassy of Switzerland at the InterContinental Dhaka.

The new draft law allows the NHRC to investigate all state and government agencies, which is not the case in the existing law.

"While we have no history of failure in making law, our failures in institution-building have been limitless. After coming into the government, I realised everything is person-centric, institution-centric."

Emphasising institutional reform as the path out of the current dysfunctional system, Nazrul said that several key bodies need to be reinforced.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

'Israeli forces tried to instil fear in us' Says Shahidul on return to Dhaka

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Photographer-activist Shahidul Alam yesterday said he was subjected to psychological abuse during his detention by Israeli authorities.

Israeli forces had detained Shahidul and over a hundred other journalists, medics, and human rights activists from a Gaza-bound aid flotilla that was intercepted in international waters approximately 120 nautical miles off the coast of Gaza.

After being released, Shahidul arrived in Dhaka, via Turkey, yesterday morning.

"While in prison, the Israeli authorities deliberately tried to instil fear in us. They would suddenly storm into our cell with machine guns, making loud noises and shouting random commands," Shahidul said during a press conference at DrikPath Bhubon in Dhaka yesterday afternoon.

He recalled how their hands were tied behind their backs and they were forced to kneel in a spot where Israeli forces had supposedly urinated beforehand.

"The authorities threw my passport to the ground, and each time I tried to pick it up, they threatened me with physical assault."

He said two of his fellow detainees were struck with the barrel of a machine gun simply for speaking to each other.



SEE PAGE 8 COL 5

Trump slaps 100% more tariff on China

Threatens to scrap Xi talks as trade war escalates

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump announced an additional 10 percent tariff on China Friday and threatened to cancel a summit with Xi Jinping, reigniting his trade war with Beijing in a row over export curbs on rare earth minerals.

Trump said the extra levies, plus US export controls on "any and all critical software," would come into effect from November 1 in retaliation for what he called Beijing's "extraordinarily aggressive" moves.

"It is impossible to believe that China would have taken such an action, but they have, and the rest is History," he said on Truth Social.

Stock markets fell as the simmering trade war between the United States and China reignited, with the Nasdaq down 3.6 percent and the S&P 500 down 2.7 percent.

Chinese goods currently face US tariffs of 30 percent under tariffs that Trump brought in while accusing Beijing of aiding in the

fentanyl trade, and over alleged unfair practices.

China's retaliatory tariffs are currently at 10 percent.

Trump had threatened the tariffs' hours earlier in a lengthy surprise post on his Truth Social network



that said China had sent letters to countries around the world detailing export controls on rare earth minerals.

Rare earth elements are critical to manufacturing everything from smartphones and electric vehicles to military hardware and renewable energy technology. China dominates global production

and processing of these materials.

"There is no way that China should be allowed to hold the World 'captive,'" Trump wrote, describing China's stance as "very hostile".

The US president then called into question his plans to meet Chinese president Xi at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit later this month.

It was to be the first encounter between the leaders of the world's two largest economies since Trump returned to power in January.

"I was to meet President Xi in two weeks, at APEC, in South Korea, but now there seems to be no reason to do so," he wrote.

Trump later told reporters in the Oval Office that he hadn't cancelled the meeting.

"I haven't cancelled, but I don't know that we're going to have it. But I'm going to be there regardless, so I would assume we might have it," he said.

The US president said he did not understand why China was

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

July Charter signing moved to October 17

Consensus commission proposes repeal of article 4a

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Consensus Commission has proposed to repeal article 4a of the constitution, which makes it mandatory to display the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in government and semi-government offices

Parties such as the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and the National Citizen Party have supported the move, while left-leaning parties including the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (Basod), and Bangladesh Jasod termed it unnecessary and abrupt, saying the issue was never raised in earlier rounds of dialogue.

Meanwhile, the signing ceremony of the July Charter prepared by the commission has been rescheduled to October 17 from October 15 to ensure greater public participation.

The commission made the decision yesterday at a meeting at the state guesthouse Jamuna, chaired by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, also the chair of the commission.

Commission's Vice-President Prof Ali Riaz said the ceremony will now be held on Friday afternoon as "the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A labourer carrying syringes and other medical supplies from the Civil Surgeon's Office to a hospital in Chattogram city yesterday. The government launches its first-ever and month-long typhoid vaccination campaign today, aiming to immunise around 5 crore children aged 9 months to 15 years across the country.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

TIB slams hasty approval of data protection ordinances

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has expressed deep concern and disappointment over the government's hurried approval of the Personal Data Protection Ordinance 2025 and the National Data Governance Ordinance 2025 without adequate expert consultation or stakeholder engagement.

In a statement issued yesterday, TIB called on the government to suspend both ordinances and proceed only after ensuring meaningful participation from stakeholders and incorporating expert opinions.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said the draft data protection law had long been a matter of contention between stakeholders and the former authoritarian government before its fall. "After assuming office, the interim government initially took an inclusive and participatory approach that led to several positive changes. However, it is reprehensible that the government has ignored stakeholders' recommendations on critical weaknesses and risks and approved the latest draft in secrecy," he said.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman noted that the approved draft excluded key international data protection principles such as lawfulness, fairness, transparency, purpose limitation, data minimisation, accuracy, integrity, confidentiality, and accountability, making the ordinance "crippled and ineffective from the outset."

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Expression of Interest (EOI) Franchise Ownership Rights
Bangladesh Premier League T20 (BPL T20)

Bangladesh Cricket Board

Ref No: BCB/Franchise Ownership Rights/BPL T20/2025/719 Date: 12th October 2025

FRANCHISE OWNERSHIP RIGHTS

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) invites Expressions of Interest (EOI) from reputed business houses, entities and companies for acquiring the Franchise Ownership Rights of the Bangladesh Premier League T20 (BPL T20) for a period of five (05) consecutive editions/seasons, namely the 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th Edition/Season of the BPL T20, covering the following ten (10) probable franchise regions (in alphabetical order):

i) Barishal ii) Chattogram iii) Cumilla iv) Dhaka v) Khulna vi) Mymensingh vii) Noakhali viii) Rajshahi ix) Rangpur x) Sylhet.

Note: A minimum of five (05) eligible business houses, entities and companies demonstrating satisfactory financial capability will be shortlisted for the 12th Edition of BPL T20-2026.

Non-Eligibility :

- 1) Companies involved in Tobacco, Alcohol (both surrogate and non-surrogate), Betting, or Online betting and its surrogate shall not be eligible to participate in this EOI process.
- 2) Any person or entity having an existing unresolved dispute with the BCB or ICC on a point of law or fact shall be deemed ineligible to acquire the aforementioned rights or to participate in the EOI process.

EOI Submission Procedure:

A detailed document (EOI Guideline) containing the submission requirements, franchise model and financial structure will be available from **Tuesday, 14th October 2025** at:

BPL Office, Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216
Official Websites: www.tigercricket.com.bd & www.bplt20.com.bd

Interested parties must submit their EOI applications in a sealed envelope addressed to the Member Secretary, BPL Governing Council, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) at the BCB Management Office, Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216, by the close of business hours on **Tuesday, 28th October 2025**.

Documents to be Submitted with EOI:

- a) Company Profile and Profiles of Individual Directors/Owners.
- b) Latest Auditor's Report on Financial Statements (each consortium member must submit separately).
- c) Bank Solvency Certificate along with Bank Statement.
- d) Certified copy of Memorandum & Articles of Association with Certificate of Incorporation or similar constitutional documents.
- e) Updated VAT Registration, Trade License and Tax Identification Number (TIN).
- f) In case of consortium/ Joint Venture (JV) - a Notarized Consortium/ JV Agreement.

BCB reserves the unconditional rights to accept or reject any or all EOIs at its sole discretion at any time without assigning any reason whatsoever during the EOI process. BCB also reserves the right to amend, postpone or cancel the entire EOI process and / or modify, add or alter the terms of the document and/ or the conditions for EOI process by issuing further addendum(s) at any time prior to the commencement of the EOI selection process.

Member Secretary
BPL Governing Council
Bangladesh Cricket Board

Management Office: Sher-E-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216