



"This autumn, the Russians use every single day to strike at our energy infrastructure." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky

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NCP won't sign July charter at this moment

Says signing would be meaningless without clarity on implementation, notes of dissent, referendum question

SAJJAD HOSSAIN and MAMUNUR RASHID

The National Citizen Party has decided not to attend today's much-awaited July National Charter signing ceremony, let alone sign the document containing reforms agreed upon after months of intense talks.

The BNP and eight like minded parties have said they are ready to sign the charter, which is the outcome of three rounds of talks between the National Consensus Commission and 30 political parties.

The Jamaat-e-Islami is yet to officially disclose its decision regarding the signing. Party insiders, however, said there is a strong chance that it will sign the charter.

The NCP says backing the charter at this moment will be meaningless without ironing out key issues regarding its full implementation, such as the fate of reform proposals with notes of dissent and the question of referendum to ensure public endorsement for the reforms.

The party's Senior Joint Convener and Head of Political Liaison Ariful Islam Adeb and Joint Convener Javed Rasin confirmed the decision to The Daily Star at about 1:30am today.

"The process to implement the July charter hasn't been clearly outlined. And what decision will be taken regarding dissenting notes, or what the referendum question will be?" Rasin said.

"We also don't know the wording of the constitutional order. Without knowing any of these, we are not signing the charter."

Minutes later, Adeb announced the decision in a statement on the party's Facebook page.

"Since this signing ceremony will not achieve any legal basis, this is only a formality. We have spoken about this legal basis many times. Therefore, before a legal basis is established, such a formality will turn into another one-sided document like the 'July Declaration'."

"However, since the consensus commission's tenure has been extended, we will participate in its next process and present our position. If our demands are met, NCP will sign later."

Earlier in the day, NCP Convener Nahid Islam, at a press conference, said they would not sign the charter unless their conditions were met.

"Without a legal basis and assurance of a constitutional order, signing the July charter would be meaningless. For this reason, the NCP will not participate in tomorrow's July charter signing event," he said at a press conference at their party

office.

Nahid also demanded that the text of the proposed July Charter Implementation Order and the wording of the question for the referendum must be finalised and made public.

And the order must be issued by the chief adviser to ensure that it "expresses the sovereign will of the people".

He added that all 84 reform provisions

READY TO SIGN

BNP, Islami Andolan
Bangladesh, Nagorik Oikya,
Biplobi Workers Party, Rashtra
Sanskriti Andolan, Nationalist
Democratic Movement,
Labour Party, Gono Odhikar
Parishad, 12-Party Alliance,
Jatiyatabadi Samonoma Jote,
and Khelafat Majlis

YET TO DISCLOSE DECISION

Jamaat and JSD (Rob)

SET CONDITIONS TO SIGN

Gono Forum

WILL NOT SIGN

NCP, CPB, Basod, Bangladesh
JSD, and Basod (Marxist)



outlined in the charter must also be put to the public in the referendum. "In that referendum, any 'note of dissent' will carry no separate legal effect."

If the public approves the charter through the referendum, the next parliament will be bound to reform the constitution in line with the charter, he added.

"Until these issues are resolved, signing the charter remains a mere formality. Proceeding with the ceremony without

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PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Flames and thick black smoke billow from the top two floors of a seven-storey building at the Chattogram EPZ in the district's South

Halishahar, after a massive fire broke out around 2:00pm yesterday. By 7:00pm, the fire spread throughout the entire building.

Hasina should be sentenced to death 1,400 times: Tajul

ICT prosecution closes arguments

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday sought the death penalty for deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, calling her the "nucleus" behind the crimes committed during the July Uprising and the "lifeblood" of all perpetrators.

Hasina's directives and actions were central to a chain of crimes that left more than 1,400 dead and between 25,000 and 35,000 wounded, said Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam before the International Crimes Tribunal-1.

"The highest punishment under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act is death -- Hasina deserves the highest punishment," he told the tribunal, concluding his five-day argument in the crimes against humanity

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Lowest HSC pass rate in 21 years

GPA-5 count halves; zero-pass schools triple; poor show in math, English to blame

DIPAN NANDY

The pass rate for Higher Secondary Certificate examinations has suffered a steep fall to 57.12 percent, the lowest in 21 years.

The number of students who secured GPA-5, the highest grade point average, has also more than halved to 63,219 from last year's count, according to the results published yesterday.

Institutions with zero pass rate more than tripled to 202, while only 345 had a 100 percent success rate compared to last year's 1,388.

Education board officials pointed out that students performed dimly in English and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), along with mathematics, leading to the poor showing.

They said this year's results reflect the actual state of the country's education system, while in the past, teachers had been asked to take a sympathetic approach to marking to inflate success rates.

Prof Khondoker Ehsanul Kabir, chairman of Dhaka Education Board and president of the Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee, said the board did not issue any instructions this year to award marks in a particular way or to overmark to

increase the pass rate.

"We heard that teachers in the past might have been soft in examining the answer papers," he told a press conference while announcing the results at the Dhaka Education Board office.

During last year's HSC exams, the

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Blaze rages thru 7-storey CEPZ factory

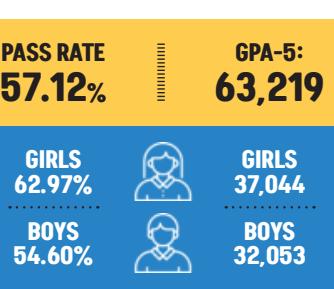
STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A massive fire that erupted yesterday afternoon in a seven-storey factory in Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) in Chattogram's South Halishahar was still blazing 12 hours on at 2:00am today.

The fire originated on the seventh floor of the building, which housed the warehouse of Adam Caps & Textiles, a towel manufacturer. The sixth floor contained the warehouse of Jeihong Medical Products BD Co Ltd, while the rest of the building comprised other sections of both companies.

By 7:00pm, the flames had engulfed the entire building, while small explosions were occurring inside the factory intermittently. The intense heat forced the firefighters to battle the blaze from afar as it spread to an adjacent three-storey building around 9:00pm.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Rucsu election ends peacefully, tallying underway

NUR AHSAN MRIDUL, RU

After 35 years, the Rajshahi University Central Students' Union (Rucsu) and hall union elections were held yesterday amid student panels' allegations of irregularities against each other.

The university's observer team said the polls were largely peaceful, but some instances of mismanagement were noticed.

At a press briefing at the administration building around 6:00pm, Prof Rafiqul Islam, who led the 10-member observer committee, said, "We monitored the voting across centres and submitted a report to the registrar. In our observation, the Rucsu election was conducted fairly and peacefully."

Chief Election Commissioner Prof F Nazrul Islam said voter turnout was 69.83 percent.

A total of 28,901 registered students were eligible to vote for 902 candidates contesting for 23 Rucsu, five senate, and 15 hall union posts. Polling took place from 9:00am to 4:00pm across 990 booths in 17 centres located in nine academic buildings.

By 5:30pm, all ballot boxes were transported to the Kazi Nazrul Islam Auditorium, but the counting, which was slated for 6:00pm, started around 8:30pm.

The vice-president and the assistant general secretary nominees of the Shibir-backed panel were leading race in Mannujan, Rokeya, Taposi Rabeya, and Khaleda Zia centres as of 12:40am today.

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Shibir dominates Cucsu and hall union elections

MD ABBAS and SM MAHFUZ AHMED

Along with winning the seventh Chittagong University Central Students' Union (Cucsu) election, the Islami Chhatra Shibir-backed panel Shompritir Shikkharthi Jote also bagged most votes in the hall union polls.

Among the Chhatra Dal-backed candidates, only one secured a position in the Cucsu election -- assistant general secretary -- while one candidate from the Binirman Shikkharthi Jote won the post of assistant sports and games secretary.

An analysis of Wednesday's Cucsu and hall union poll results shows that the Shibir-backed panel clinched 24 of the 26 Cucsu posts, including vice president and general secretary.

Among the elected representatives in the hall unions, Shibir-backed candidates secured 18 of the top three positions -- vice president, general secretary, and assistant general secretary. Seventeen independents won posts in these categories, while the Chhatra Dal-backed panel and indigenous student panel bagged five such posts each.

The Cucsu election results were announced by Chief Election Commissioner Prof Monir Uddin at the BBA Faculty auditorium around 5:00am yesterday. Earlier, returning officers from the five faculties declared the hall union results.

Shibir-backed Ibrahim Roni was elected Cucsu VP with 7,983 votes, while his nearest rival, Chhatra Dal-backed Sajjad Hossain, received 4,374 votes.

For the GS post, Shibir panel's Sayed bin Habib won with 8,031



Shibir-backed panel won 24 of 26 Cucsu posts, including VP and GS



Coordinated support needed to reduce poverty

B1



Moscow hits more gas facilities in Kyiv

P5



Four JnU buildings risky, yet in use

P3

Clarification on Recent Media Reports Concerning the Chief Financial Officer of Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited

Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited wishes to address recent media reports concerning its Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Sazzad Rahim Chowdhury, in relation to a loan default case involving a financial institution.

We would like to clarify that the matter in question pertains to a period when Mr. Chowdhury held a leadership position at a separate organization in the telecom sector about 12 years ago. Importantly, Mr. Chowdhury is not implicated in a personal capacity, and this case has no connection whatsoever to Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited.

Berger Paints Bangladesh remains steadfast in its commitment to the highest standards of governance, financial integrity, transparency, and ethical conduct. There are no allegations or concerns regarding any financial irregularities within our organization.

We urge all stakeholders and members of the public to rely on verified information and refrain from speculation. Berger continues to operate with full accountability and trust, and we appreciate the continued support of the shareholders, customers, partners, and employees of Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited.





MY DHAKA



PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka's art of waiting

ASHIF AHMED RUDRO

With its never-ending traffic and overflowing population, Dhaka has certain unique characteristics. From calling everyone "mama", to shouting "Oi Khal, Jaba?", there is something very "Dhakaesque" about these traits, and the art of waiting is definitely one of them.

JUST WAIT FOR IT

Everywhere you go in Dhaka, you have to wait. Whether it is standing at a bus stop or at the metro, the food court or even the hospital; if you are in Dhaka, you just have to wait for it, regardless of whatever "it" is. Your turn will come...

eventually. It may be five minutes or five hours, that we cannot say with certainty, but "eventually" you will get your turn.

KEEP WAITING

The average Dhaka resident has long ago realised that waiting is just another regular part of their day and they have slowly become masters of the art.

Most people resort to sticking their earbuds in and playing some sort of song or audiobook. Take me for example: I find that the wait for a bus becomes a little less tedious if I play 90s grunge music. Once inside, it is another round of waiting for the traffic signal to pass or the congestion to clear out before I can reach my destination. So once again, I turn to music.

Sometimes, people are seen reading books, which is a good habit, but quite a rare sight in Dhaka.

Most turn to their phones. A card game, some arcade or puzzle, maybe a turn-based strategy game or even a

football simulator will do the trick. Some people even refuse to do anything else and pull out some good old YouTube shorts.

Then there are some people who truly belong to this city, and you can just tell by how casually they wait. They do not seem to care much that the bus is late, or that the line is long at the counter. These people have mastered the art of waiting so much that they can get many of their chores done remotely over the phone.

Not only that, they even get the munchies. From Jhalmuri or Halim to peanuts (which takes a lot of effort to eat and I still cannot comprehend why anyone chooses that for a snack), these people will basically have afternoon tea while standing in the queue. And some of the peanut popping ones will blow the

peanut skins everywhere.

WAIT YOUR TURN (PLEASE)

Dull as it is, sometimes the waiting will become even more annoying because of certain entitled people. You wait in line at the metro or at a counter for a long period of time, and when it's your turn, some people decide that they cannot wait any longer and try to cut in line.

It's an interesting sight to see so many people so worked up over something so silly. People will wait for hours because of traffic jam, but it's the queuing that really bothers them. Perhaps it is one of the defining characteristics of a city that there will be some rude people who just cannot wait their turn.

Don't be one of those people. Wait your turn. After all, this is Dhaka. All you can do here is wait.

NCP won't sign July charter at this moment

FROM PAGE 1
clarifying these matters amounts to political farce."

The NCP decided not to sign the charter after the government and the consensus commission made hectic unofficial efforts to persuade the party into signing the charter for several days, sources in the government, the commission and the party said.

On Tuesday night, the NCP held an informal meeting with the commission, during which its leaders made it clear that it would not sign the charter unless the reform process is advanced through the issuance of a constitutional order.

The following day, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus met Nahid, who had served as an adviser before resigning to form the party.

Yesterday, two advisers also sat with Nahid.

A key member of the commission held a three-hour long discussion, starting at 10:00pm with the NCP convener and other party representatives.

Meanwhile, the chief adviser in a message last night called on all TV and online media to broadcast the July charter signing ceremony live.

Yunus, who also chairs the consensus commission, will attend as chief guest at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad complex at 4:00pm.

"To every Bangladeshi – wherever you are, at home or on the move, in your shops, factories, crop fields, or playgrounds – tune in and be part of this historic moment!" he said in the message.

"Despite our political, religious, or ethnic differences, we stand together as ONE UNITED NATION," he added, according to the Chief Adviser's Press Wing.

Commission Vice-President Prof Ali Riaz yesterday said the charter is grounded in consensus on 84 issues, some with notes of dissent.

He hoped that party leaders who had been involved in the dialogue would attend the signing ceremony.

Any party that participated in the talks but is unable to sign today will still be allowed to do so later.

He described the NCP's announcement that it would not sign the document before reviewing the draft of a proposed July National Charter Implementation Order as "unfortunate".

"We understand that this reflects their political position," he said. "However, we remain hopeful that, considering the overall situation, they will eventually sign the charter."

Riaz reiterated that the commission would submit the implementation

ISSUES AGREED UPON

Inclusion of "equality, human dignity, social justice, democracy, and religious freedom and harmony" as basic principles

Lifetime cap of 10 years as PM

Permission for MPs to vote against party lines, except on no-confidence motions, finance bills

Opposition MPs to chair 4 key standing committees

Establishment of permanent HC benches in every division

Regulation of presidential clemency powers through legislation

Selection process for the CA of the caretaker government

PR system for a 100-member upper house

Bar on party chiefs from serving as prime minister

Appointment of the senior-most SC judge as CJ

Representation of women in parliament

proposal only after the charter is signed.

The interim government in a gazette yesterday extended the consensus commission's tenure to October 31 after a one-month extension on September 15.

Riaz said the commission would present a clear and comprehensive implementation recommendation to the interim government by October 31.

"We would continue to make our best efforts to ensure the charter's implementation," he added.

Badiul Alam Majumdar, a member of the consensus commission, and Monir Haidar, special assistant to the chief adviser on consensus building, delivered invitation letters for the signing ceremony to top leaders of the BNP, Jamaat and NCP.

They handed over the letter to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at Evercare Hospitals, where the former prime minister is undergoing treatment.

The letter for BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman was given to Khaleda's personal secretary.

They also handed over invitations to Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman, and NCP Convener Nahid Islam.

Formed in mid-February, the consensus commission was tasked with reviewing proposals from six major reform bodies covering the constitution, judiciary, electoral system, Anti-Corruption Commission, and public administration.

It drafted the 84 proposals after two rounds of talks. Half of these issues were constitutional reforms.

BNP and its allies submitted notes of dissent on at least nine issues.

The final draft of the charter was sent to parties on September 10, and a third round of talks on its implementation began the next day.

During these discussions, parties agreed that non-constitutional reforms would be enacted through ordinances and executive orders, while constitutional changes would go to referendum.

Although parties accepted the idea of a referendum, they failed to agree on its timing, procedures and framework.

BNP's top leaders, at an unofficial virtual meeting joined by Tarique Rahman yesterday night, decided that it will sign the charter today.

Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed will sign the charter on behalf of the party.

"Our party's position is in favour of signing the July charter. We will sign it. It will be a historic moment," said Salahuddin.

"We will keep the promises we'll make on behalf of the party," he added.

Salahuddin briefed the meeting about the charter in detail, including notes of dissent.

However, several leaders expressed dissatisfaction over no mention of the anti-autocracy movement against HM Ershad in the 1980s in the preamble of the charter despite the party's demand.

"We, however, decided not to make it an issue since the signing ceremony is tomorrow and everything is already finalised," said a Standing Committee member.

Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar said several of their key concerns remained unresolved.

If they see any scope for resolving these issues through dialogue, they will have no objection to attending the signing ceremony, he said at a programme at the Institution of Diploma Engineers in Dhaka.

"We have received the invitation, but we are still thinking about what role we will play tomorrow," he added.

Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair told The

Daily Star that talks on implementation of the charter will continue even after the signing.

The seven political parties demonstrating simultaneously for a proportional representation system and other demands, including Jamaat and Islami Andolan Bangladesh, also sat last night.

They decided that each party would make its own decision regarding the signing, multiple sources confirmed after the meeting.

Four of these parties had taken part in the commission talks.

After the meeting, leaders of Islami Andolan and Khelafat Majlis confirmed that they would sign the charter.

Islami Andolan Secretary General Maulana Yunus Ahmed said, "We are going to attend the signing ceremony. We also want the signing process to be completed."

"However, our protests will continue to press for the legal recognition of the July Charter, protection of the July activists, and a referendum before the next national election," he added.

Nagorik Oikya President Mahmudur Rahman Manna, 12 Party Alliance Spokesman Shahadat Hossain Selim, Jatiyatabadi Samonoma Jote Coordinator Fariduzzaman Farhad, Biplobi Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Haque, Bangladesh Rashtra Sanskar Andolan President Hasnat Quiyum, Nationalist Democratic Movement Secretary General Moniul Amin, Bangladesh Labour Party Chairman Mostafizur Rahman and Gono Odhikar Parishad General Secretary Rashed Khan confirmed their parties would sign.

However, four leftist parties – the Communist Party of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (Basod), Bangladesh JSD and Basod (Marxist) – announced at a joint press conference they would not sign the charter.

Basod General Secretary Buzlur Rashid Firoz said, "We cannot sign any charter, even with a note of dissent, that requires commitment to change the four existing fundamental principles of the constitution – democracy, socialism, secularism, and nationalism."

He criticised a move to obstruct anyone from challenging the charter in a court in future.

The leftist parties are also against the proposal to drop the Declaration of Independence issued by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 26, 1971, and the Mujibnagar Government's Proclamation of Independence on April 10, 1971, from the sixth and seventh schedules of the constitution.

He conveyed Hasina's orders to the IGP, deployed police personnel and acted as the commander on the ground.

"Given his central role and active involvement, he deserves no sympathy. Therefore, we have appealed for the highest punishment for him," Tajul said.

Hasina deserves

FROM PAGE 1

case against Hasina, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and ex-inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdull Al Mamun.

She should face the maximum punishment for every life lost.

"Hasina killed at least 1,400 people – she deserves to be sentenced to death 1,400 times. Though that is legally impossible, justice will only be served if she is handed the highest punishment."

The chief prosecutor also appealed for the highest punishment for Kamal, leaving the tribunal to decide on Mamun since he has turned approver.

Police members, Chhatra League and Jubo League activists, cabinet members and lawmakers committed the crimes under Hasina's direction, he said.

"They believed that by pleasing Sheikh Hasina, their future would be safe. That made her the centre point of all crimes."

Leaked phone conversations circulating on social media showed Hasina issuing one directive after another to take revenge, Tajul said.

Describing Hasina as a hardened criminal, Tajul said: "After so many killings, injuries and the discovery of numerous Aynaghars where dissidents were confined and killed extrajudicially, she has shown no remorse."

Instead, she repeatedly called for killings, vandalising and torching homes.

"If justice is to be ensured in Bangladesh and such crimes prevented in the future, this nucleus must be dismantled through the legal process. The lifeblood of these atrocities must face punishment," he told the court.

As the supervisory authority over police and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), Kamal played a key role in planning and directing the crimes, Tajul said.

He was part of the "gang of four" – along with Salman F Rahman, Anisul Huq and Obaidul Quader – and held meetings at his residence to plan the suppression and killing of demonstrators.

He conveyed Hasina's orders to the IGP, deployed police personnel and acted as the commander on the ground.

"Given his central role and active involvement, he deserves no sympathy. Therefore, we have appealed for the highest punishment for him," Tajul said.

Blaze rages thru

FROM PAGE 1

By midnight, at least 25 firefighting units, including two from Sitakunda upazila's Kumira, were still struggling to bring the situation under control.

Witnesses said the firefighters faced difficulty sourcing water nearby and were relying on reservoirs at adjacent factories.

Meanwhile, workers of a nearby factory refused to share water and reportedly chased the firefighters away around 10:00pm. At the same time, rain started pouring and continued till the filing of this report around 2:00am.

Speaking to The Daily Star around 8:00pm, Shahidur Rahman, fire consultant of Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority in Chattogram, said, "The fire has engulfed the whole building. There's nothing we can do until the building collapses, which might occur at any moment, or the fire burns out on its own."

Jasim Uddin, deputy director of Chattogram Fire Service and Civil Defence, told this correspondent, "The fire spread rapidly because of the highly flammable materials stored inside. Firefighters are struggling to bring the blaze under control. We have modern equipment and are trying our best, but low water pressure has made it more challenging."

Anwar Hossen, assistant director of the fire service, said, "The fire is completely out of control. Due to the intense heat, windows and walls have collapsed on several floors. Chemicals stored inside the building are making the blaze even stronger."

Rifat Hasan, financial manager of Adam Caps & Textiles, said, "The fire broke out shortly after lunch around 2:00pm. Our cutting and sewing sections are on the third and fourth floors. As soon as the fire started, we evacuated every worker safely. The fire originated in the storage area, where raw materials and fabrics were kept."

Borhan Uddin, senior executive at Jeihong Medical, said most of their raw materials and export-ready products stored on the sixth and seventh floors were completely gutted.

Yasin, a worker of Jeihong, said, "After lunch, one of my female co-workers told me about a burning smell coming from the third floor. We traced it and upon reaching the seventh floor, we saw thick black smoke and flames. We immediately rushed downstairs and alerted the others."

While hurrying down the stairs, several female workers fell and were injured. They were later taken to the BEPZA medical centre."

French PM survives two confidence votes days after reappointment

AFP, Paris

French Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu survived two confidence motions Thursday, just days after appointing his new government and making



SM Ali's 32nd anniversary of death today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today marks the 32nd death anniversary of Syed Mohammad Ali, founder editor-publisher of The Daily Star and a luminary in journalism of Bangladesh.

In a career spanning 44 years, SM Ali made his way up from a cub reporter to becoming one of the country's most brilliant editors. He also led the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) as its chairman.

Educated in Kolkata, Dhaka and London, he was one of the few Asian journalists who stood out in regional journalism.

Ali was born in a well-SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Teachers from non-government MPO-listed institutions hold a meeting at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka yesterday, demanding nationalisation of their jobs and a 20 percent house rent allowance based on their basic salary. They later announced plans to go on a hunger strike today.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

HSC RESULTS

Madrasa board fares better than technical

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid an overall fall in this year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent exam results, the Madrasa Education Board has performed far better than the Technical Education Board, topping all education boards with a strong pass rate.

The Madrasa Board recorded a 75.61 percent pass rate, leading the national charts. Female students performed slightly better than their male counterparts, with 77.01 percent passing compared to 74.43 percent of males.

A total of 4,268 students under the board achieved GPA-5, including 2,295 males and 1,673 females.

In stark contrast, the Technical Education Board saw a steep decline in performance.

Its pass rate fell to 62.67 percent from last year's 88.09 percent, while the number of GPA 5 achievers dropped sharply to 1,610 from 4,922.

Of the GPA-5 holders this year, 1,213 are female and 397 are male.

A total of 12,51,111 students -- 6,18,015 were male and 6,33,096 female -- registered for the exams under 11 education boards. However, nearly 27,000 students did not appear in the exams.

A day of flowers 2-day Annual Orchid Show starts



CITY DESK

As the year draws to a close, flower lovers across Bangladesh have a reason to rejoice. The Bangladesh Orchid Society is hosting its Annual Orchid Show today and tomorrow; a two-day event that will showcase the beauty of orchids.

The Bangladesh Orchid Society, founded in 1989, has established itself as a key player in the horticultural landscape of the country. Starting small, it has now grown into a vibrant community, united by a shared passion for orchids.

This year the society expects to showcase some 7 to 8 varieties of orchids including Dendrobium, Cattleya, Phalaenopsis and Vanda.

According to the organisers, from the bold and vibrant to the subtle and understated, the orchids on display will enchant visitors with their range of colours, shapes, and sizes. Each bloom tells its own story, offering a visual feast for those with an eye for detail and a love for nature's wonders.

The show will be held from 10:00am to 6:00pm at House No. CEN-C2, Road- 95, Gulshan. The show is open to all orchid lovers and enthusiasts.

Women still struggle to break through in judiciary

Says chief justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed yesterday said women are still now underrepresented in legal and judicial arena as gender-balanced recruitment faces certain systemic challenge.

"In short, while classrooms have opened, the profession has not, women are comparatively visible in universities yet remain under-selected, under-promoted, and underrepresented in litigation leadership, bar governance, and senior judicial roles," he said.

He was speaking at a conference titled "Shift Underway- Advancing Gender on the Bench for Sustainable Development" on regional Convening on Judicial Leadership for Women Judges in Asia, organised by UNDP in Bangkok, Thailand.



Dhaka University students celebrate 'Sharat Utshob' (Autumn Festival) at Bakultala on the campus yesterday. The event was organised by the Faculty of Fine Arts with support from the university's music and dance departments and the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducsu).

Amid jubilation, one father wept in silence

PALASH KHAN

Celebration echoed through the corridors of Notre Dame College yesterday as students basked in the glory of their success.

Yet, in one quiet corner, a different emotion unfolded.

Morshedul Amin stood alone, phone in hand, eyes filled with tears. His voice trembled as he kept on whispering, "My son Junaid got GPA-5..."

Just 20 days earlier, on September 27, Junaid Amin Sardar Dalim had gone to visit his uncle's house. A boat ride with friends turned tragic when he fell into the river. Despite desperate efforts, he could not be saved. His lifeless body was recovered that evening.

Yesterday, the results of the Higher Secondary Certificate exams were published. Junaid had earned a perfect GPA-5 from the humanities division. His father came to collect the

result, holding in his hands the proof of his son's brilliance -- his last academic triumph.

"My son had so many dreams," said Morshedul.

Sitting in a classroom, he added softly, "May no one's



child face such an untimely death. May no father ever have to carry his child's body." He was supposed to study, get a scholarship, and go abroad for higher education. He was keen to work for people, for society," he said.

Morshedul, a banker, said their home is in Chikundia. SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

No foreign link behind one-point demand Adviser Asif Mahmud tells tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain yesterday told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 that there had been no foreign instigation behind the one-point demand that ultimately led to the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government last year.

He made the remark during cross-examination by the defence in a case filed against then Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Habibur Rahman and seven of his subordinates over the killings of six people at Chankharpul on August 5 last year.

Asif, a former key leader of the Students Against Discrimination movement, concluded his testimony before the tribunal yesterday, after which the defence began cross-examining him.

During questioning, Asif said, "There was no instigation from any foreign forces behind the one-point demand."

He further told the tribunal that primarily 58 coordinators and assistant coordinators had initiated the movement after the High Court verdict on the quota system and that no political party was involved in organising it.

Regarding funding to organise the movement, Asif said the organisers collected money from people who expressed solidarity with the movement.

"There was no mastermind; all coordinators were equal," he added, noting that they used Facebook and WhatsApp for communication.

He told the tribunal that he was present near the scene at Chankharpul on August 5 when SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



MA Samad's death anniv today

CITY DESK

Today is the 20th death anniversary of MA Samad, founder of Bangladesh General Insurance Company PLC (BGIC), said a press release.

After his retirement as managing director of Jibon Bima Corporation, he established BGIC.

Moreover, he was the founder director of Bangladesh Insurance Academy and former chairman of Bangladesh Insurance Association.

MA Samad wrote two books in Bengali – on life insurance and another on general insurance. He also wrote two text books in English on life insurance.

He was an enlisted international expert in the Technical Assistance Program on Trade and Development of the United Nations. MA Samad was born at Kulaura in Moulvibazar on January 1, 1923.



Demanding immediate implementation of the Teesta masterplan, people living along the river brought out a torch procession in Lalmonirhat yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Implement Teesta masterplan now

Demand people living along the river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

People living along the Teesta River have demanded that the government begin implementing the Teesta Master Plan with its own funding before the announcement of the national election schedule.

To press home the demand, residents of the northern districts organised a torchlight procession along both banks of the Teesta River at 6:00pm yesterday.

Hundreds of people from five northern districts -- Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Rangpur, and Gaibandha -- joined the programme under the banner of "Teesta Nodi Rokkha Andolon" (Save the Teesta River Movement).

Teesta shoal dwellers said people in the basin have long been suffering from frequent flooding during the monsoon, devastating river erosion afterwards, and acute water shortages in the dry season

that hinder crop cultivation. Nearly two crore people in the five northern districts depend directly or indirectly on the Teesta River for their livelihoods.

Chief coordinator of Teesta Nodi Rokkha Andolon Asadul Habib Dul, said, "If the government does not start the Teesta Master Plan with its own funding before the election schedule is announced, the people of Teesta's riverbanks will wage a greater movement."

No foreign link

FROM PAGE 3

police opened fire on protesters, though he was around 200 metres away.

The defence suggested that it was not possible to see the shooting from that distance and accused Asif of giving false testimony, which the tribunal recorded.

Meanwhile, tribunal Chairman Justice Md Golam Mortuza cautioned state-appointed defence counsel Qutub Uddin Ahmed -- representing four absconding accused, including former DMP commissioner Habibur Rahman and ex-DMP

joint commissioner Sudip Kumar Chakraborty -- for lack of preparation.

The chair warned that his appointment could be cancelled if he failed to perform his duties properly.

Qutub later cross-examined in favour of his clients, claiming that they had no involvement in the killing of six protesters at Chankharpul.

Two defence counsels for three arrested accused also cross-examined the witness, while the defence lawyer for another accused in custody declined to cross-examine.

Amid jubilation

FROM PAGE 3
village under Palong Police Station in Shariatpur.

Among his three children, Junae was the eldest. Junae's sister is in fifth grade, and his younger brother is in third.

Notre Dame College Principal Father Hemanto Pius Rozario expressed his condolences over the student's death. "We were already informed of his passing and have been in contact with the family," he said.

"He was polite, talented, and responsible. He was actively involved in various college clubs and social activities. Our deepest sympathies go out to his family," he added.

Four JnU buildings

FROM PAGE 3
buildings. Renovation of the science faculty building has been completed."

"Some repair work has also been carried out on other buildings, and further renovations will take place in the next fiscal year," he added.

Asked about Rajuk's evacuation order, he said, "That was a long time ago. I'm not entirely sure about the specifics. We'll consult our engineers and consider alternative measures."

Urban safety experts warned that continuing academic activities in unsafe buildings endangers

lives and undermines the university's credibility.

"These buildings may collapse even without an earthquake, causing a huge tragedy. Who will take responsibility if disaster strikes?" said Adil Mohammed Khan, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners.

He stressed the need for updated assessments and clear action plans. "Follow-up from both the university and Rajuk is essential. Rajuk must enforce building codes and act under the Town Improvement Act," he added.

SM Ali's 32nd

FROM PAGE 3
known family in Sylhet, in 1928. He was the eldest son of the late Syed Mustafa Ali, an official of the Assam Civil Service, and nephew of famous litterateur Syed Mujtaba Ali.

Ali started off as a

reporter with the Pakistan Observer while he was a student at Dhaka University. He went on to hold important positions in various publications in Pakistan, Hong Kong, Thailand and Singapore. He was the managing director of The Hong Kong Standard and The Bangkok Post.

He joined the Press Foundation of Asia as its executive director in the 1970s. In the mid 1980s, he became Unesco's regional communications adviser for Asia and the Pacific based in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur.

Ali returned home in 1989 and had a brief stint with the Bangladesh Observer as editor.

He launched The Daily Star in 1991 and worked tirelessly to establish it as a leading national daily. He injected a new life in the English language journalism of the period. He died in 1993 at a Bangkok hospital at the age of 65.

1 more dies of dengue, 755 get hospitalised

STAR REPORT

At least one dengue patient died while 755 others were hospitalised in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), the death was reported from Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) areas.

With the new deaths and cases, the total number of deaths rose to 243, while total cases rose to 57,770 this year.

Among the total cases, a total of 54,834 dengue patients have been released so far after treatment. Currently, 2,693 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country, 1,736 of whom are from outside Dhaka.



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- Associate/Assistant Professor, VLSI Design and Microelectronics

School of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

Department of Media and Communication

- Assistant Professor
- Lecturer A/B

Department of Social Sciences and Humanities

- Associate Professor, Sociology and Development Studies
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Department of International Business

- Associate Professor/Assistant Professor
- Lecturer B

Department of Management

- Associate Professor/Assistant Professor

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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer

Khulna PWD Division-2, Khulna

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Memo No. 2252

Date: 16-10-2025

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e-Tender Notice (Open Tendering Method)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the

Sl No	Tender/ proposal ID	Name of work	Last selling date & time	Tender closing date & time	Tender opening date & time
01	1161618	Construction of Khanjahan Ali, KMP Thana Bhaban (Metro Type-4) under the project "Construction of administrative and barracks buildings of Bangladesh Police stations in various places of the country"	10/11/2025 at 12:00pm	10/11/2025 at 13:00pm	10/11/2025 at 13:00pm

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy is accept. To submit e-Tender please register in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to 10/11/2025 at 12:00pm. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System and from e-GP help desk (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

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Protect our vulnerable workers

Seven teenage lives lost at garment factory blaze reveals policy negligence

The tragic fire at the Arian Fashion factory in Dhaka's Rupnagar stands as a reminder of the regulatory failures that continue to plague the margins of Bangladesh's industrial sector. The deaths of at least seven workers—aged between 13 and 18, many of them recent school dropouts earning poverty wages—reveal how profoundly we have failed to protect the most vulnerable workers.

Under the Bangladesh Labour Act of 2006, employing anyone under the age of 14 is strictly prohibited, while adolescents, aged 14 to 18, may only engage in non-hazardous work for a maximum of five hours per day. Yet, the victims were working full shifts, often with overtime, in a building where hazardous chemicals fuelled the fatal blaze. To compound this, they were paid sub-minimum wages—around Tk 7,500 a month—a clear indication that the factory operated outside the legal framework, preying on the desperation of impoverished families to secure exploitable labour.

Since the Rana Plaza disaster in 2013, the nation has earned global recognition for improving safety standards within factories affiliated with the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association. However, Arian Fashion was not a member of this association. The fire—and its horrific aftermath, including locked exits and volatile chemicals—occurred within the vast, unregulated sector that lies beyond formal oversight. The immediate failure rests with regulators that routinely ignore such non-compliant operations, many of which function as murky subcontractors or serve domestic markets.

The lethality of the Rupnagar fire—with toxic gas responsible for instant fatalities—reveals a parallel failure at the highest levels of governance. For more than a decade, successive administrations have pledged to relocate hazardous chemical warehouses and factories from densely populated areas, following the devastating Nimtoli (2010) and Churihattia (2019) fires. Industrial units handling hazardous materials are explicitly banned in residential zones under the 1997 Environment Conservation Rules. But relocation to designated industrial zones like Munshiganj remain stalled for years amid bureaucratic inertia and commercial resistance.

This failure of prevention contributes to a massive, yet often ignored, public health crisis: government reports indicate that roughly 1,500 people die from burn injuries every year and a staggering 12.9 lakh suffer injuries annually. This vast number highlights the critical scarcity of burn treatment facilities and trained personnel outside the capital. The tragic confluence of underpaid, often child, labour and explosive chemicals in a residential area is the inevitable, lethal outcome of an institutional indifference. A swift and impartial investigation is now imperative, alongside criminal accountability for the owners and negligent officials, but lasting change demands a systemic response. The successes achieved in monitored factories must not obscure the dangers festering in the unmonitored periphery. The government must expand the regulatory net through a robust, well-funded inspection system capable of identifying and shutting down non-compliant factories. Equally vital is the establishment of comprehensive supply chain transparency, ensuring that no tier of the industry can profit from illegal, underpaid labour.

Ensure proper access to nutritious food

Universal rationing, expansion of safety nets urgently needed

This year's World Food Day came at a time when the nation remains plagued by high food prices. Although food production in Bangladesh has increased nearly five times since independence, millions of people still struggle to afford even one nutritious meal a day. The long queues in front of open market sales (OMS) trucks clearly show that proper access to nutritious food has now become a luxury for the poor.

According to agricultural economists, food insecurity affects nearly one-third of the population. The World Bank estimates that poverty has risen to 21.2 percent in FY25, up from 18.7 percent three years ago, while extreme poverty has climbed to 9.35 percent. Inflation, which reached 10 percent in FY25, continues to erode people's purchasing power, especially for low-income workers whose real wages fell by two percent during the same period. Meanwhile, the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) has warned that 18 percent of households just above the poverty line are now at risk of falling below it. And for the poorest 40 percent of households, survival increasingly depends on borrowing, with household debts rising by seven percent over the past six months.

An estimated loss of 20 lakh jobs between 2023 and 2024, particularly in the service sector, has deepened the crisis. For instance, while talking to this daily, Rosy, who lost her job after the buying house where she worked closed, says she now relies on OMS trucks for food. And day labourers like Delwar survive on lentils and vegetables, often borrowing to feed their families. Across major cities, such stories are increasingly common.

While the government's OMS programme provides temporary relief, its limited reach and inadequate supply expose the weakness of our food distribution system. A recent report by the Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID) found that although cities host a growing number of low-income earners, 64 percent of extremely poor urban households remain excluded from state assistance. This imbalance, with policies still largely focused on rural areas in an increasingly urban economy, has left millions of city dwellers severely exposed to hunger.

The government, therefore, must act urgently to control high food inflation and adopt a comprehensive, rights-based national food policy. As experts have suggested, expanding OMS coverage, introducing a universal rationing system, increasing focus on urban areas, and investing in storage and cold-chain logistics—which can reduce food waste—should be immediate priorities. We have made significant progress in agricultural production, but true development will only come when every citizen will have access to safe and nutritious food.

EDITORIAL

July National Charter: A consensus in name only?



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

KAMAL AHMED

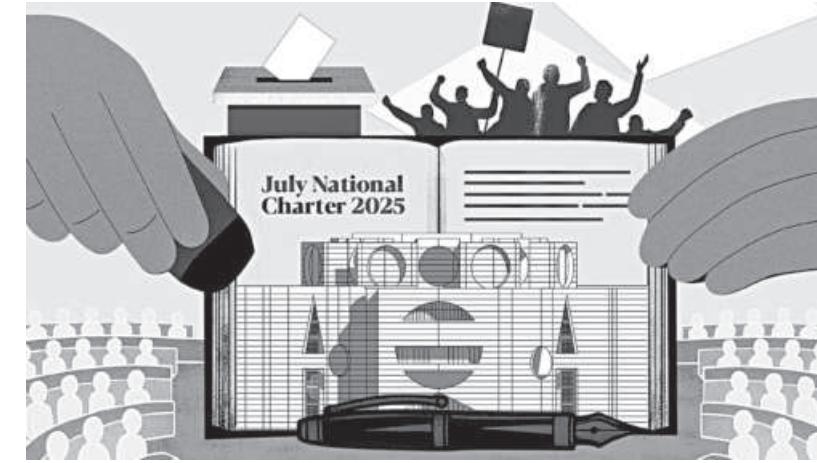
As the nation waits for the final draft of the much-discussed July National Charter 2025 to be signed by the representatives of various political parties at a grand ceremony on Friday, it has become clear that what many had hoped for—a genuine national consensus on the path to democratic renewal—has fallen short of expectations. Uncertainty surrounding its implementation has left several parties hesitant to sign, despite an eleventh-hour intervention by Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus.

As of writing this column, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) remains the only major party to confirm its readiness to sign the charter, although it has added a caveat that its support has limits, and that it opposes any attempt to hold a referendum before the general election. In contrast, Jamaat-e-Islami has insisted that a referendum should precede the election, while the National Citizen Party (NCP) has said that they will not endorse it until the charter's legal foundation is ensured.

The National Consensus Commission, which produced this landmark document after nearly eight months of extensive consultations, deserves recognition for bringing together diverse and often opposing political forces. It is particularly commendable that the commission has managed to engage parties traditionally seen as adversaries—Islamist groups and secular left-wing parties alike—in respectful and patient dialogue under its guidance.

Yet these encouraging efforts now appear to be at risk. The unity once observed among democratic forces, and the shared aspiration to rebuild a truly representative political order,

have largely faltered. Many parties have shown themselves to be unable to bridge their differences over the nation's future direction. Since the circulation of the final draft, some have questioned whether the exercise produced any meaningful consensus. Hasnat Quaiyum, president of the left-leaning Bangladesh Rastro Songskar Andolon, described the draft as



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

"weaker" than the accord reached among the three alliances during the 1990s uprising against the late military ruler General HM Ershad. Several other parties have already announced that they will not endorse the charter.

According to the final version of the July Charter, when the consensus commission began its rounds of dialogue, representatives from 33 parties participated. However, only 30 are reflected in the final document. Of the 84 reform pledges included, only about one-third were unanimously agreed upon. Even among these, one or two parties abstained from

Disagreements persist over the powers of the proposed second chamber in parliament, eligibility criteria for its members, provisions for amending or suspending the constitution, appointments to key constitutional and regulatory bodies, the president's impeachment process, nominating a deputy speaker from the opposition, and parliamentary ratification of international treaties. Several major parties have appended notes of dissent to these and other proposals.

Interestingly, although the charter's introduction notes that the spreadsheet the commission shared with parties after the first phase

of consultations did not include proposals for police reform, the final 84-point agenda now features a clause calling for the establishment of an independent Police Commission, complete with a detailed formation process. This proposed body would oversee internal disciplinary matters and public complaints. While 30 parties supported this single policing reform, the fate of other recommendations from the Police Reform Commission remains uncertain.

In an effort to curb the concentration of power in the Prime Minister's Office, the consensus commission proposed granting the president independent authority to appoint the heads and members of six regulatory bodies. Yet, it seems questionable that the Bangladesh Press Council was included among these, given the Media Reform Commission (MRC)'s findings that the press council has long failed in its mandate due to partisanship and limited scope.

Originally established to safeguard press freedom and regulate newspapers, the press council has become obsolete amid the evolution of technology and the rise of digital and broadcast media. The MRC recommended replacing it with a permanent media commission to ensure comprehensive oversight. By retaining the outdated press council, the July Charter not only disregards the MRC's recommendations but also risks obstructing essential reforms in the media sector.

Overall, the outcome suggests that the consensus commission may have overreached. Its decision to bypass specialised reform commissions while unilaterally advancing measures misaligned with broader democratic priorities has made the charter less convincing. Propositions on women's representation in parliament have been included in the charter without listening to their voices. How can we build an inclusive democracy without formulating any roadmap for overhauling our local government system? A more measured, consultative, and inclusive approach might have yielded a more enduring and meaningful national consensus.

Proportional representation and the politics behind it



WINKERS AWEIGH!

Tanim Ahmed is digital editor at The Daily Star.

TANIM AHMED

While there have been sporadic demands in recent months for implementing the proportional representation (PR) system in the next election, it has never quite seemed to be the deal-breaker that Jamaat-e-Islami and its allies are now making it out to be. On Monday, during a meeting with the top officials of the Election Commission, Jamaat leaders insisted that the election (to the lower house) should be held under PR.

This was not part of the July National Charter either. The proposal for a bicameral legislature was premised on the assumption that the lower house, with 300 MPs, would retain the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system, while the upper house would comprise 100 members based on the proportional representation of votes received in the election. The Islamist parties accepted this arrangement. BNP and four other parties put in a note of dissent, but we will come to that later. But first, it should be pointed out that the Islamist parties now demanding proportional representation in the lower house had already consented to the charter proposal, and their acceptance of the prevailing electoral system was therefore implicit.

Of late, however, they have mounted a campaign portraying the PR system as a panacea as if it would resolve all our problems, from vote rigging to abuse of office to corruption. It will not.

There have been extensive discussions about the pros and cons of the PR system. This article will not reiterate those points, but it should be apparent that under PR, the choice

of MPs would largely depend on the central leadership of respective parties since voters would be casting their ballots for a party symbol rather than an individual. Given the general lack of transparency among parties in selecting their nominees, the PR system would concentrate even more power in the hands of a few leaders at the top. Aspiring MPs, for their part, would then shift their focus from pleasing voters to gratifying party leadership, even more than they now do. It can be argued that a prerequisite for an effective PR system is internal democracy within political parties, so as long as the parties themselves remain undemocratic, this new system would hardly bear any fruit.

Jamaat and its allies are presumably championing PR because it would give them an electoral advantage as smaller parties often lack sufficient votes to win in individual constituencies, but collectively they might have enough to secure some seats in parliament under PR. However, pressing for PR now is like insisting on changing the rules of the game after the date of the match has been finalised, the teams have chosen their squads, and some have already decided not to compete.

Understandably, proportional representation benefits smaller parties; it could also help fringe groups—environmentalists, animal rights activists, women's groups, ethnic minorities, etc—who might have decided to float their own platforms and registered with the Election Commission. They have not. Moreover, PR would preclude the possibility of independent MPs, potentially forcing many to join existing parties simply to remain relevant in electoral politics.

existing parties simply to remain relevant in electoral politics.

Although the Islamist parties make it out to be a simple, straightforward system, PR would require considerable time just to agree on the rules and regulations. For example, let us assume that one party wins 0.5 percent of votes and another 1.5 percent—how would their

Understandably, proportional representation benefits smaller parties; it could also help fringe groups—environmentalists, animal rights activists, women's groups, ethnic minorities, etc—who might have decided to float their own platforms and registered with the Election Commission. They have not. Moreover, PR would preclude the possibility of independent MPs, potentially forcing many to join existing parties simply to remain relevant in electoral politics.

seats be distributed? One cannot have half a seat in parliament. In that case, would there be a minimum threshold to qualify for parliamentary representation? What would that threshold be? And what happens to the fractions? How would those be resolved?

These matters will have to be discussed at length among the parties before the Election Commission could find a workable solution and draft appropriate regulations. That would

require time—presumably more than the few months remaining before the election.

While the idea of an upper house in parliament was largely accepted as a means of ensuring greater checks and balances in parliamentary proceedings, the July Charter proposes proportional representation for its formation as a guiding principle. If the seats of the upper house are distributed according to the proportion of votes received in the national election, it would almost certainly produce a different composition in which the ruling party could not wield as much influence as it does in the lower house. Consequently, bills from the lower house would likely face more vibrant debate and perhaps stronger criticism, if not outright opposition.

However, BNP has dissented, advocating an unusual interpretation of proportional representation. Instead of basing it on the proportion of votes received, it has proposed that the upper house be constituted according to the proportion of seats parties win in the lower house. That would essentially make it a mirror image of the lower chamber and thus render it superfluous. Of course, provisions could be introduced to make it a more balanced deliberative body, with a designated number of non-partisan nominees sitting in the upper house. But without such measures, there would be little point in having an upper chamber that merely replicates the lower one. In that scenario, the ruling party would retain the same level of influence, and in practice, the upper house would fail to fulfil its intended purpose. Not that the proposed system guarantees a dramatic improvement, but it is at least a modest step towards restraining majoritarian dominance in parliament.

So, Jamaat's insistence on PR can be seen, at best, as a tactic to pressure BNP to relent from its stance about the upper house. At worst, it is a ploy to delay the polls.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

Reducing poverty demands fairer wealth distribution



Dr Selim Raihan is professor in the Department of Economics at Dhaka University, and executive director at the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM). He can be reached at selim.raihan@gmail.com.

SELIM RAIHAN

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is observed every year on October 17. It reminds us that, despite significant progress over the years, many people still live in poverty. For Bangladesh, the day resonates deeply. This is a country that once symbolised the triumph of human resilience over adversity, where poverty rates fell sharply and growth stories dazzled. But today, a sobering truth has come to light: poverty is not just persisting, it is reversing.

Recent data and analyses show that more than one in four Bangladeshis now live below the national poverty line. This is not a statistical hiccup but a signal that millions who had once climbed out of poverty are slipping back in. What used to be a story of weak progress. In fact, the progress in reducing poverty has slowed down over the past decade. Recent data also suggest a risk of a rise in poverty. To put it another way, the gains that once seemed secure are now in danger.

It is time we acknowledged that poverty in Bangladesh has changed its face. It is no longer confined only to rural isolation or food scarcity. It now hides in the urban slums of Dhaka and Chattogram, in underpaid service work, and in the vulnerabilities of the climate frontier.

The fragility of progress

Bangladesh's success in reducing poverty since the 1990s was a global case study. The combination of a booming garment industry, remittance flows, microfinance, rural infrastructural development, and rural nonfarm growth lifted millions from destitution. Evidently, this success was built on shaky ground.

The decade-long phase of "jobless growth," weak structural transformation, dominance



FILE VISUAL: SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON

of crony capitalism, widening inequality, the pandemic, inflationary shocks, and climate change exposed the fragility of Bangladesh's success. Many households that managed to rise above the poverty line did so only slightly. One illness, flood, or job loss could easily push them back into hardship, implying that Bangladesh's challenge today is not simply about reducing poverty but preventing its return. Growth has not been inclusive enough, wages have not kept pace with prices, and new forms of vulnerability—especially urban and climate-induced—are reshaping the map of deprivation.

The ready-made garment industry is the backbone of the economy. It hires more than four million people, most of whom are women. But, even after the most recent pay raises, many workers' monthly income is barely enough to stay above the poverty line in an economy with high inflation. This shows that there is a bigger problem with the economy's structure: it creates jobs but not necessarily ways to make a living. From this perspective, Bangladesh's poverty reversal is

without income: they are also those without protection, digital access, and a voice. This necessitates a comprehensive understanding of poverty. Income alone cannot fully reflect deprivation in education, health, sanitation, housing, and resilience. Using a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) at the district or subdistrict level could help figure out who the poor are and what is keeping them from getting ahead. A woman could have a job but not have childcare or social insurance. A family could at least manage food, but not have safe water or proper education, or healthcare. Policies will stay blind to the new face of poverty until they take these differences into account.

Empowerment through social protection
Bangladesh spends less than 2.5 percent of its GDP on social protection, excluding pensions—one of the lowest in South Asia. That number must be increased, but efficiency also needs to be ensured by streamlining overlapping programmes, digitising databases, and linking funds to

measurable results.

Over the years, Bangladesh's social protection system has expanded to include cash transfers, food-for-work programmes, and old-age allowances, preventing a good number of people from becoming impoverished and helping them weather shocks. The next generation of social protection must move beyond handouts to empowerment.

This means introducing universal social insurance systems, so that workers, even in informal sectors, are protected from job loss, illness, or workplace injury. The pilot programme for Employment Injury Insurance (EII) in the garment industry is a good start. If expanded nationwide, such schemes could redefine resilience in Bangladesh's labour market. In short, social protection should not only help poor people get by; it should also help them get out of poverty permanently.

Revitalising rural transformation

Agriculture has long been the backbone of Bangladesh's poverty reduction. But small farmers now face a triple threat: climate stress, shrinking landholdings, and market volatility. Subsidies and short-term relief can't solve these problems. Small farmers need effective access to land through land reform and a climate smart rural transformation, a strategy that integrates technology, green finance, and rural industrialisation.

Solar powered irrigation, digital extension services, and e-commerce platforms that connect farms to markets can help the environment while increasing farm productivity. At the same time, processing plants and storage systems in villages can add more value, creating jobs that keep young people from having to leave. In other words, the economy in rural areas needs to change from survival farming to opportunity farming.

Addressing the urban blind spot

Urban poverty is the silent crisis of Bangladesh's development story. Millions live in informal settlements without secure tenure, health coverage, or social services. Yet, policy remains overwhelmingly rural-focused. Cities need a dedicated poverty strategy with affordable housing, health insurance for informal workers, public childcare for working women, and skill-linked employment programmes.

Upgrading slums is not just a matter of infrastructure; it's about restoring dignity and belonging. Secure land rights, participatory urban planning, and better access to municipal services can transform these settlements from zones of exclusion into hubs of opportunity.

Lessons from global models

Around the world, countries have experimented with various models to reduce poverty, all of which were adapted to the national political economy and institutional capacity. Three key models have emerged. The first is growth-led industrialisation and export expansion, which pulled hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, as illustrated by China in the 1980s and early 1990s. The second model is the redistribution of wealth through welfare, for example, in the form of conditional cash transfers. The model has been used in Latin America, such as Bolsa Familia in Brazil or Prospera in Mexico. The third model, now receiving more attention, is shared growth—fast economic development fuelled by significant investment in health, education, and social protection and skills.

Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia are among the countries that have implemented this method. For instance, Vietnam's success wasn't just because of growth. It was also because of agricultural reform, industrialisation in rural areas, universal education, and a strong commitment to fairness.

For Bangladesh, the lesson is clear: growth alone is not enough. It needs policies that support equitable access to education, healthcare, and technology, as well as policies that create more decent jobs and strengthen social insurance. Additionally, addressing serious governance failures that exacerbate crony capitalism and perpetuate inequality is crucial. In other words, the next phase of poverty reduction must focus not only on how fast the economy grows but also on how fairly its benefits are shared.

A moral and political calling

Ending poverty isn't just an economic goal; it's also a moral and political one. Justice and dignity were the founding ideals of Bangladesh. From this perspective, the fight against poverty is a fight to keep that promise.

The recent rise in poverty is both a warning and a chance. It reminds us that progress can go wrong if it's not fair, long-lasting, and open to everyone. It asks politicians, businesses, and regular people to look beyond quick fixes and work toward long-term change.

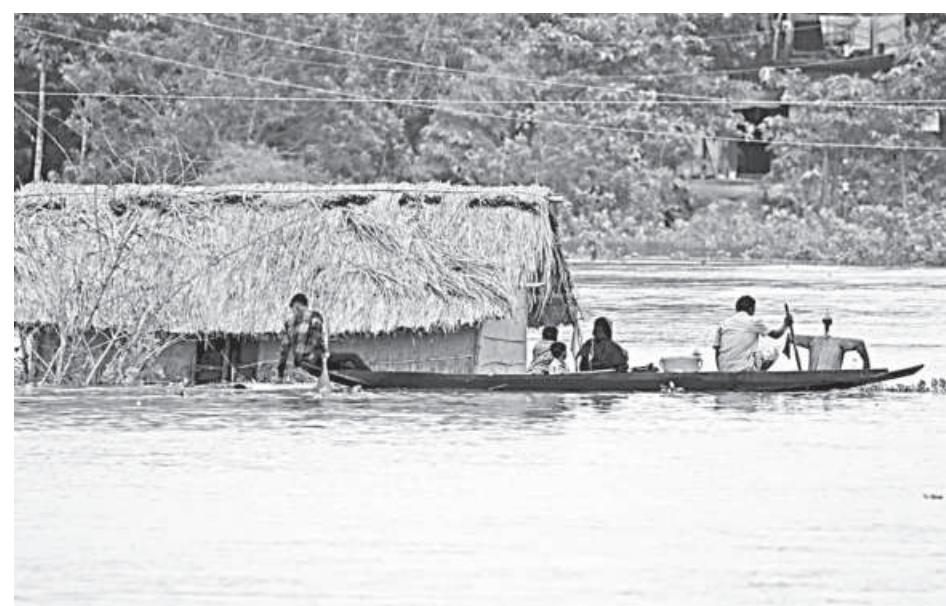
Bangladesh must face an uncomfortable truth on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty: old strategies are no longer enough. The next frontier of poverty reduction lies not in charity, but in creativity; not in slogans, but in systems that protect, empower, and include. Bangladesh can only turn things around again if this is done. Poverty will then be not just rarer, but impossible to return to.

Gaps in Bangladesh's latest Nationally Determined Contribution



Dr Haseeb Md. Irfanullah is an independent environment and climate change consultant and visiting research fellow at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB). He can be reached at hmirfanullah@outlook.com.

HASEEB MD. IRFANULLAH



climate change. This approach of playing the victim card is, however, tricky, because many of the NDC's priority adaptation interventions—for example, migration, insurance, health, safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and protective infrastructure—are the same as the NDC's loss and damage actions. Also, the NDC does not clarify the link between "adaptation" and "loss and damage;" the latter can occur after failed adaptation attempts or in situations where adaptation is not possible. Thus, the inclusion of loss and damage in the NDC seems weak.

The fourth issue is related to financing, a crucial part of implementing NDC 3.0. A staggering 89 percent funding gap exists against an annual need of \$9 billion for mitigation. But the new NDC is not only about mitigation; it also underscores adaptation. The new NDC prioritises 65 such interventions for adaptation, belonging to sectors such as water, disaster management, agriculture, biodiversity, and urban development. These were extracted from 113 interventions originally proposed in the NAP (2022-2050). Of these 65 interventions, 22 either have direct or indirect reference to nature-based solutions (NBS). Despite that, the new NDC overlooked global and national conservation funding opportunities. On the one hand, it does not consider the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund to invest in conservation actions with direct climate benefits. On the other hand, it fails to capitalise on conservation funds provisioned in Bangladesh's "Ecologically Critical Area Management Rules, 2016;" "Protected Area Management Rules, 2017;" and "Bangladesh Biodiversity Act, 2017."

Bangladesh should now prepare the NDC 3.0 Implementation Plan, considering the gaps and realities mentioned above. Speaking of reality, the new NDC covers a period (2026-2035) when the world transitions from the SDG era to the post-SDG era. The NDC implementation, therefore, carries an additional responsibility.

By recently endorsing Bangladesh's Third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0) on time, the interim government continues the country's climate commitments. The NDCs are periodically prepared by the countries that are parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to declare their carbon/greenhouse gas emission reduction plans. Previously, Bangladesh submitted its Intended NDC in 2015, and the updated NDC (NDC 2.0) in 2021.

The latest NDC expects that, by 2035, Bangladesh's carbon emissions will be 418.40 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent, which is 1.66 times more than 2022's emissions. Based on this projection, by 2035, Bangladesh aims to reduce its emissions—from the energy, industry, agriculture, forestry, and waste sectors—by 6.39 percent, spending its own \$25.95 billion. If it receives another \$90.23 billion internationally, an additional 13.92 percent of emissions will be reduced. Despite the commendable climate commitments during this current political transition, four opportunities were missed in NDC 3.0.

First, evidence of participation of youth and other communities was not apparent in the preparation of the latest NDC, although it specifically recognises children's and youths' participation in its implementation. "Planning processes" is a critical aspect of the Information to Facilitate Clarity, Transparency, and Understanding (ICTU) section of an NDC. Here, a government needs to declare the "Domestic institutional

arrangements, public participation and engagement with local communities and indigenous peoples, in a gender-responsive manner" during NDC development.

In response to this requirement, Bangladesh mentions that consultations were held with relevant ministries, divisions and agencies, representatives from academia, the private sector, civil society organisations, and development partners. As with NDC 2.0 (2021), there is no clear evidence in NDC

As with NDC 2.0 (2021), there is no clear evidence in NDC 3.0 that youth and other communities, such as professionals and workers in the energy and industrial sectors, and farmers—who will be significantly affected by the mitigation measures—were consulted. It is disappointing that the latest NDC failed to continue the legacy of participatory planning of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP, 2022-2050), which, despite the Covid pandemic, managed to consult 5,000 people in 2021-2022.

3.0 that youth and other communities, such as professionals and workers in the energy and industrial sectors, and farmers—

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The second issue is about the "Just Transition" chapter. It is an exciting addition to NDC 3.0 because just transition ensures that, when we take climate actions or make our economy greener, we "create decent work, reduce poverty, protect vulnerable groups, and leave no communities behind." In the Cross-Cutting Issues chapter, the NDC elaborately describes how gender equality, disability, and social inclusion in all major carbon-emitting sectors will be ensured. So, a separate section on "Just Transition" may seem redundant. Nevertheless, this chapter appears useful since it describes, albeit

in bullet points, the transition measures different sectors should take and the support to be provided to workers and communities. The biggest gap in the Just Transition discussion is probably the overlooking of Bangladesh's climate prosperity plan (2022-2041), which elaborated how just transition, as its second key priority area, would take place in Bangladesh by 2030. It would have been more logical and effective to build on this plan while describing just transition in the new NDC.

The third issue is regarding loss and damage. Climate change-induced "loss and damage" has, for the first time, found its way into NDC 3.0. A list of 43 short, medium, and long-term activities arranged under nine strategic pillars is apparently the first "loss and damage action plan" by Bangladesh. It is, however, mentioned that these will only be implemented with "grant-based finance" from the "polluter countries" responsible for

No ceremony can contain FAKIR LALON SHAH -yet it is crucial



DOWEL BISWAS

In the heart of Bengal, where rivers meander like untamed verses and wind hums through fields of ash and mustard, the name Lalon drifts like incense — faint, eternal, ungraspable. On this autumn day, as Kushtia gathers beneath a honeyed October sky to mark the 135th death anniversary of Fakir Lalon Shah, one feels that the unseen bird of his song still flutters between us — restless, undying.

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs has turned this remembrance into a national homage — a three-day festival from October 17 to 19 at Lalon's resting ground in Cheuriya. There will be music, discourse, and a fair that carries the rhythm of his spirit.

In Dhaka, too, Suhrawardy Udyan will echo with the same songs on October 18. The celebration begins today at

Lalon's Mazar in Kushtia, with the scent of marigolds, the hum of ekstras, and a gathering of minds — among them Professor Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the eminent scholar who will deliver the keynote address.

The ceremony, presided over by poet Farhad Mazhar, Professor A Al Mamun, and others, will close with a musical soiree in memory of the late Farida Parveen — the voice that once carried Lalon's spirit to the world.

Yet no ceremony, no grand podium, can truly contain the man who lived outside all boundaries. Born in 1774, Lalon's life began like any other, until illness — smallpox — cast him adrift. His companions abandoned him by the Kaliganga River, and there he was found by a Muslim couple, Malam Shah and Matijan.

They nursed him, gave him land, and unknowingly midwifed a spiritual

revolution. From that modest akhra in Cheuriya rose one of Bengal's greatest humanists — a man who sang not of heaven, but of the body as its own temple.

In his akhra, Hindus and Muslims ate together, women sang alongside men, and all hierarchies dissolved. The ekstra and dhol became tools of liberation, their rhythms echoing his dream of a society without caste or creed. His songs, carried orally across generations, speak of human oneness and rebellion against division — a philosophy that found its way into the works of Tagore, Nazrul, and even Allen Ginsberg.

Today, as the festival lights flicker across Kushtia's fields, and Professor Spivak's words rise under the open sky, one can almost imagine Lalon himself among the crowd — barefoot, smiling, the unseen bird fluttering on his shoulder. The ekstra hums softly in the dusk, and his voice seems to return once more:

*Dhonna
d h o n n o
boli tare,*

bendhechhe emon ghor...

Blessed is he who built such a house upon the void, where a mad one sits — alone with the One.

In a world still divided by faith and flag, perhaps this madman of Kushtia was the sanest of us all — still teaching, even now, that the divine begins where humanity does.

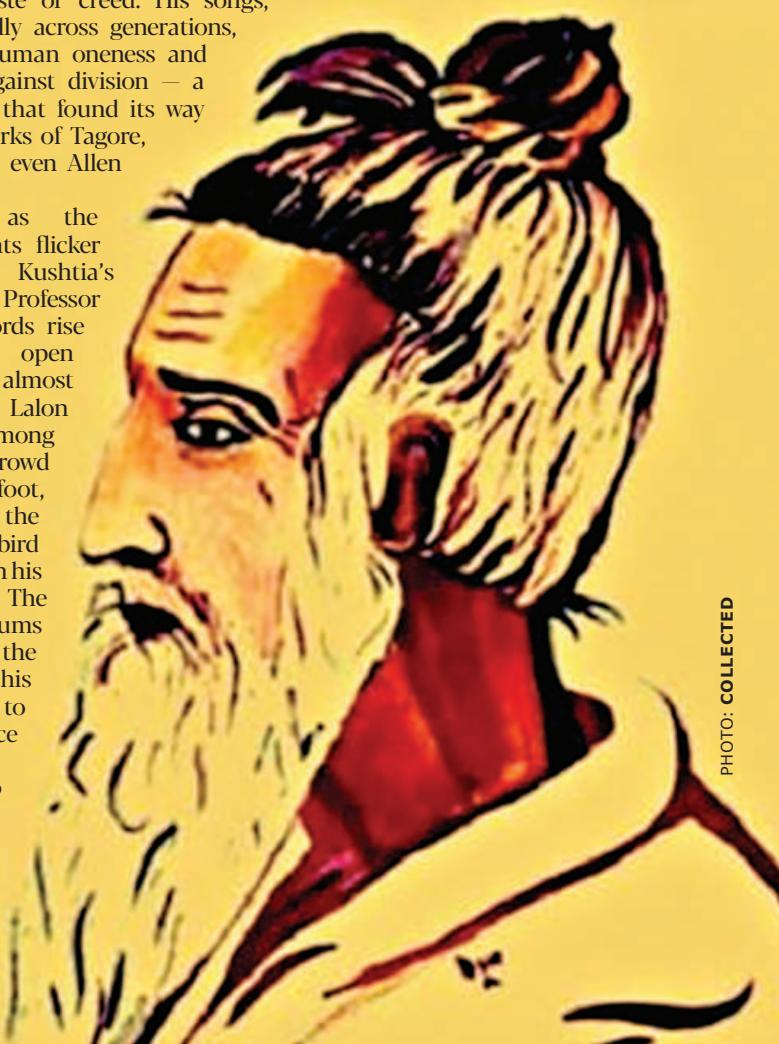


PHOTO: COLLECTED



Ityadi celebrates Bhawaiya heritage in Kurigram

Ityadi, the country's longest-running television show, has filmed its latest episode in Kurigram, the heartland of Bhawaiya music.

Shot at the 150-year-old Ulipur Maharan Swarnamayee School and College, the episode blends folk rhythm, local history, and human stories.

Creator Hanif Sanket said the special pays tribute to a region "where music flows like its rivers." The show features over 50 local dancers, new renditions of classics like O ki gariyai bhai, and performances by the Bangladesh Bhawaiya Academy.

The program also includes reports on Kurigram's heritage sites, river island communities, and social initiatives.

Written, directed, and hosted by Sanket, the Fagun Audio Vision production will air on BTV on October 31 at 8 pm, sponsored by Keya Cosmetics.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Biday Hyena Express'



Popular rock band Sonar Bangla Circus is set to conclude their solo concert series *Biday Hyena Express* with a grand finale. The three-hour conceptual show will blend music, poetry, and performance art, featuring tracks from their acclaimed debut, *Hyena Express*, and their upcoming album, *Mahashmoshan*.

Date: Today (Friday) | Oct 17, 2025

Time: 5 pm-9 pm

Venue: Russian House, Dhanmondi

NEWS

Ensure fair trial, victim protection

FROM PAGE 12

the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, as well as former officials of the Rab.

On Saturday, Bangladesh Army announced that it had detained over a dozen of its officers accused of serious crimes committed under the previous administration.

"It is crucial that the army promptly produces these detained officers to a competent civilian court, for fair and transparent criminal proceedings," read the

statement.

"I urge full respect for the most scrupulous standards of due process and fair trial, as guaranteed in international law. The protection of victims and witnesses in these sensitive and significant cases must be ensured," the high commissioner said.

He also urged the Bangladesh authorities to prioritise the handling of the large number of other pending cases, with some dating back to the previous administration and others

since then.

"Beyond ensuring individual accountability, the best way forward for Bangladesh is a comprehensive process of truth-telling, reparation, healing and justice. Such a process must address the legacy of serious human rights violations and ensure that these abuses can never happen again," he added.

"I also call on the interim government to deal with ongoing concerns promptly in line with international law," Türk said.

FROM PAGE 12
whether to leave and brave dangerous boat journeys in search of a better life," Save the Children said in a statement on Wednesday.

Rahim, 20, who lives in one of the camps in Cox's Bazar, said he has contemplated fleeing.

"Life in the camp is getting harder every day. There's no proper work, no chance to study," he said.

"I believe that if I could cross the sea and go abroad, I could support my family financially. Many of my friends talk about going to Malaysia; they think it's the only way to build a future and support their families.

"I also thought about it once, but after hearing how some people were caught, beaten, or never came back, I'm scared. Still, when you see no hope here,

it's difficult not to dream of leaving."

Reduced funding, which has led to cuts in essential services such as education and healthcare, has made this a particularly difficult year for children living in the world's largest refugee camp, said Save the Children.

Traditionally, Rohingyas looking to leave Bangladesh have taken to the sea in October, at the end of the region's rainy season, on journeys often fraught with danger — including for children who risk abuse at sea and sometimes travel unaccompanied without their parents or guardians.

Abeda Sultana, senior project officer for child poverty at Save the Children, said limited livelihood options and growing insecurity in the camps are major reasons why many Rohingya youth take the risk of

migrating irregularly.

"Economic pressure and the need to support their families also push youth to take such high risks. Hearing success stories from peers who migrated successfully continues to encourage others to follow the same unsafe routes," she said.

Save the Children has called on donors to urgently increase funding for education, livelihoods, and improved security in the camps to address the desperation driving dangerous sea journeys.

It also urged regional governments to allow boats to safely disembark and to provide assistance and protection to refugees. Regional cooperation and responsibility-sharing are essential to prevent further loss of life and protect vulnerable children and families.

MPO teachers threaten hunger strike

FROM PAGE 12

Later, the teachers postponed the "March to Jamuna" programme and announced that they would begin a hunger strike.

On Wednesday, the teachers blocked Shahbagh intersection for hours before returning to the Shaheed Minar to continue their sit-in over their three-point demands.

Their three demands are: 20 percent house rent allowance based on their basic salary, a 75 percent festival allowance, and a Tk 1,500

medical allowance.

Teachers across the country joined the protest in front of the Jatiya Press Club on Sunday and police dispersed their rally, using water cannons, batons, and sound grenades.

They then moved to the Shaheed Minar, where they protested the police action and announced a countrywide work abstention from the following day.

At the entry level, an MPO-listed teacher receives a monthly salary of

Tk 12,500, including Tk 1,000 house rent, Tk 500 as medical allowance, and 50 percent of their basic pay as festival bonus.

Recently, the finance ministry approved a Tk 500 increase in house rent, which the teachers rejected, calling it "insufficient."

Currently, there are over 26,000 MPO-listed non-government institutions across the country, employing around 3.8 lakh teachers and 1.7 lakh staffers.

'Will go in and kill Hamas if Gaza killings continue'

FROM PAGE 12

Hamas has been tightening its grip on ruined cities, launching a crackdown and executing alleged collaborators in the street.

The top US commander in the Middle East, Admiral Brad Cooper, had demanded on Wednesday that Hamas stop shooting Palestinian civilians and adhere to Trump's plan.

But Trump himself has until now been relaxed about the killings.

"That didn't bother me much to be honest with you. That's OK. It's a couple of very bad gangs. It's very different than other countries," he said in a cabinet meeting at the White House on Tuesday.

Trump added during his trip to Israel and Egypt on Monday to celebrate the Gaza truce that Hamas had been "open" about wanting to "stop the problems" in the devastated territory.

No Cucusu election was held in the next 35 years.

Rohingya boat departures triple

FROM PAGE 12

whether to leave and brave dangerous boat journeys in search of a better life," Save the Children said in a statement on Wednesday.

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It also urged regional governments to allow boats to safely disembark and to provide assistance and protection to refugees. Regional cooperation and responsibility-sharing are essential to prevent further loss of life and protect vulnerable children and families.

He highlighted regional disparities as another reason behind the poor results, highlighting that urban areas performed much better than rural ones with a shortage of teachers and educational facilities.

"Nearly half of the students who sat for the exams failed. We don't want anyone to fail. However, these results have exposed the weaknesses in our education system. Now it is our collective responsibility to address them."

As per the board-wise results, Dhaka secured the highest pass rate -- 64.62 percent. It was 59.40 percent in Rajshahi, 48.86 percent in Cumilla, 50.20 percent in Jashore, 52.57 percent in Chattogram, 62.57 percent in Barishal, 51.86 percent in Sylhet, 57.49 percent in Dinajpur, and 51.54 percent in Mymensingh.

Dhaka also has the highest number of GPA-5 achievers -- 26,063, followed by Rajshahi with 10,137. Dinajpur had 6,260 GPA-5 achievers, while Chattogram had 6,097, Jashore 5,995, Madrasah Board 4,268, Cumilla 2,707, Mymensingh 2,684, Barishal 1,674, Sylhet 1,602, and Technical Board 1,610.

Lowest HSC pass

FROM PAGE 1

board had only reminded examiners of the rules for evaluating answer sheets, he said, adding, "Extra time was also provided this year for proper evaluation."

In that sense, he said, they consider the results "not bad".

Speaking to The Daily Star, Prof Runa Nasrin, exam controller of Comilla Education Board, of which the pass rate was the lowest, said the authorities this year were strict in every step of the exam process.

The board changed 162 centres after sensing possibilities of irregularities. "Answer sheets were evaluated without any political influence. Therefore, the published results are completely accurate and correct."

The pass rate for the HSC and equivalent exams was 47.74 percent in 2004. Since then, the rate never dropped to the current level.

This year's pass rate was 18.95 percentage points lower than last year's 77.78 percent across nine general education, madrasa and technical education boards.

Education Adviser CR Abrar said the results were an eye-opener, but "as the ministry, we cannot avoid responsibility for the results".

"We have chosen honesty over satisfaction -- giving fair marks instead of inflated ones. We had built

a culture where numbers themselves had become the truth," he said at a press conference at the Secretariat.

Overall, girls have outperformed boys in terms of pass rates for the fifth straight year.

BOARD | PASS RATE | GPA-5

BOARD	PASS RATE	GPA-5
Dhaka	64.62%	26,063
Rajshahi	59.40%	10,137
Cumilla	48.86%	2,707
Jashore	50.20%	5,995
Chattogram	52.57%	6,097
Barishal	62.57%	1,674
Sylhet	51.86%	1,602
Dinajpur	57.49%	6,260

KU takes action against 19 students

They were expelled, suspended over ragging, assault

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna University has taken action against 19 students for ragging, assault, blasphemy, and drug-related offences.

The decisions were approved at the university's 27th disciplinary board meeting held on October 9, according to the Office of the Director of Students' Affairs.

Mobarak Hossain Noman of the Bangla discipline was expelled and banned from entering the campus for life for allegedly assaulting a teacher. For drug use, purchase, and sale, Hasan Hawlader of Economics and Aminul Islam of Journalism were expelled. In a separate case of physical violence, Md Zahidul Islam of Law was also expelled. Meheraf Hossain Rabbi and Aminul Ehsan were warned and required to submit written undertakings with their guardians.

For ragging, KM Rauful Alam Ornob of Mathematics was suspended for six months, while Md Rimon Mia, Ahsan Habib, and Md Salman Hossain were fined Tk 5,000 each and ordered to submit undertakings.

Md Umar Faruk and Sadman Uddoula of Education were suspended for the current term for fighting on campus, while Moniruzzaman Riad of Business Administration and Ziad Al Sams of Education were fined Tk 5,000 each.

Three Mathematics students -- Babul Akter Durjoy, Rashed Khan Menon, and Bandhan Roy -- were suspended for six months for using abusive language and issuing death threats to teachers.

Tk 27 lakh for constructing a tinshed room!

WDB faces graft allegations over office renovation in Kurigram

S DILIP ROY, *LaMonirhat*

Allegations of corruption have surfaced against officials of the Water Development Board over the renovation of its branch office in Nageshwari upazila of Kurigram.

A total of Tk 27 lakh was allocated for renovating the office building. However, instead of carrying out the renovation, WDB authorities reportedly constructed a 30-square-foot tinshed room through a contractor and claimed the entire bill.

The work was executed by contractor Belal Hossain.



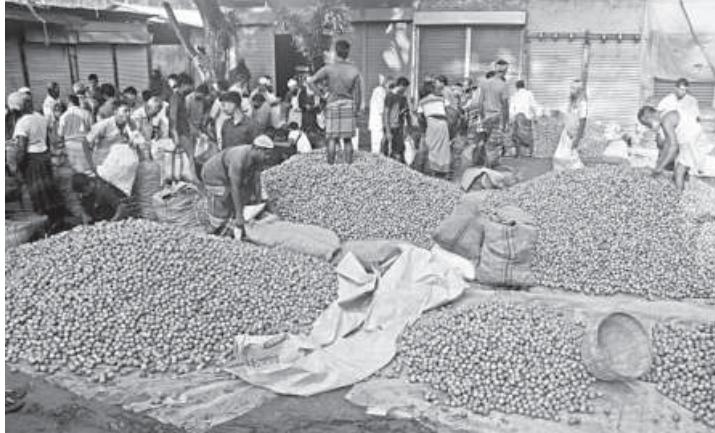
Sources at the WDB office said the Nageshwari branch office building had been in a dilapidated state for years and was unsuitable for occupancy. Although Tk 27 lakh was allocated for renovation, the authorities claimed that the amount was insufficient for proper repairs -- hence, a tinshed room was built beside the building.

During a site visit, it was observed that the old building remains in a ramshackle condition, while the newly constructed tinshed room stands beside it. The structure of the shed combines wood and iron angles. Local carpenters and masons said the maximum cost of constructing the tinshed room would not exceed Tk 5 lakh.

Contacted, contractor Belal Hossain declined to comment on the matter.

Sub-divisional engineer of Kurigram WDB, Munna Haque, said, "The branch office building was not suitable for renovation. Due to insufficient allocation for a new building, the tinshed room was constructed. Apart from the shed, a washroom and kitchen were also included in the construction." However, Kurigram WDB's executive engineer Rakibul Hasan said, "I was not aware of this issue. I can provide information after a detailed inquiry."

Betel nut prices drop in Pirojpur despite bumper yield

KM HABIBUR RAHMAN, *Pirojpur*

Farmers in Pirojpur are delighted with this year's bumper betel nut harvest but frustrated over the sharp fall in prices.

Despite good yields, profits have dropped as buyers are paying far less than last year.

The price of 210 betel nuts -- locally known as a kuri -- now ranges between Tk 250 and Tk 500 depending on quality and size, down from Tk 350 to Tk 650 last year.

"Last year, we sold at Tk 600 per kuri, but this year the price has fallen by at least Tk 100 to Tk 150," said Md Alam Khan of Pattiash village in Indurkani upazila.

Another farmer, Alamgir Sheikh, said production nearly doubled this season but prices fell short of expectations.

Traditionally, wholesale buyers from Rangpur, Chattogram, and Dinajpur visit Pirojpur to buy betel nuts in bulk, but their presence is missing this year, he added.

Betel nut orchards now cover around 4,669 hectares in Pirojpur Sadar and Mathbaria upazilas. Harvesting began two months ago and will continue for the next two months.

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Md Abdullah Al Mamun, additional deputy director of the Department of Agricultural Extension, said Pirojpur's weather is suitable for betel nut production. "We provide farmers with technical support to ensure better yields," he added.

Some buyers usually store betel nuts by drying or keeping them wet in water, but their interest is low this year as well. "The big buyers didn't come due to political uncertainty. They fear not getting

good returns," said farmer Mizanur Rahman Howlader.

"Betel nut has limited local demand -- we mostly rely on traders from other regions," said Abdul Kader, a small trader. "Their absence has hit our sales badly."

Despite the slump, farmers remain interested in betel nut cultivation, as the crop requires little care and yields for many years once the trees mature -- typically five years after planting.

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A farmer collects jute spinach (pat shak) from a field in Tetla, Paba upazila, Rajshahi. Having harvested jute from the same field a few days ago, farmers are now using the jute plants as a leafy vegetable, which they can sell in the market at a good price. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AZAHR UDDIN



As winter approaches, Md Liton Hawlader spends his days making cotton-filled quilts. Working from morning till evening, he earns around Tk 1,000-1,500 per day. The photo was taken at Pirtala Bazar in Dumki upazila of Patuakhali yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

3-day Lalon Utshab begins today

BSS, *Kushtia*

The Lalon Smaraton Utshab (Lalon Memorial Festival) will be celebrated nationally for the first time, marking the 135th death anniversary of mystic saint Lalon Shah.

The three-day festival begins today with the slogan "Manush Bhojle Sonar Manush Hobi" (If you love people, you will become a worthy person).

The event will unite devotees, bauls, and musicians from across the country for a celebration of Lalon's life, music, and philosophy.



In Cheuria, Kumarkhali, Kushtia -- home to the revered Lalon Akhra -- the festival will transform the shrine into a vibrant gathering of faith, music, and reflection, as it has since the Bengali year 1297 following the death of Lalon.

From dawn to dusk, the grounds will resonate with bhaav geeti, soulful baul performances, and philosophical discussions celebrating Lalon's vision of spiritual freedom and human unity.

The government on September 4 announced that October 17 would be observed every year as the death anniversary of Lalon Shah under the "Ka" category national day, directing all ministries, divisions, and relevant agencies to take necessary measures in this regard.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Export Promotion Bureau
TCB Building, 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215

Invitation for Tender

1	Ministry	Ministry of Commerce
2	Procuring entity name	Export Promotion Bureau (EPB)
3	Invitation for	Construction of Underground Fire Water Reservoir (Civil and Electro Mechanical works) in Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre (BCFEC) at Purbachal, Rupganj, Narayanganj
4	Procuring entity code	N/A
5	Procuring entity district	Dhaka
6	Invitation Ref No.	26.02.0000.006.26.748 (Part-4).23-1903
7	Date	October 16, 2025
KEY INFORMATION		
8	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
FUNDING INFORMATION		
9	Budget and source of funds	Own fund
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
10	Tender package name	Construction of Underground Fire Water Reservoir (Civil and Electro Mechanical works) in Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre (BCFEC) at Purbachal, Rupganj, Narayanganj
11	Tender publication date	October 17, 2025
12	Tender last selling date and time	October 29, 2025, up to 05:00pm
13	Tender closing date and time	October 30, 2025, Time: 12:00pm
14	Tender opening date and time	October 30, 2025, Time: 12:30pm
15	Place of selling/receiving/opening tender documents	Export Promotion Bureau Attention: Secretary, Export Promotion Bureau. Address: Export Promotion Bureau Telephone: +88-02-55013420 E-mail address: secy@epb.gov.bd
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT		
16	Brief eligibility and qualification of tenderer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The minimum number of years of general experience of the Tenderer in the construction works shall be 5 years. The minimum specific experience in construction works of at least 01(one) contract of similar nature (Construction of Underground Fire Water Reservoir (Civil and Electro Mechanical works)) successfully completed within last 05 (five) years value minimum amount BDT 75,00,000.00 (seventy-five lac). The tenderer shall have updated trade license, updated income tax clearance certificate, VAT registration certificate, and TIN certificate. Must have an audit report of the last 03 years. The required average annual construction turnover shall be greater than Tk 1,50,00,000.00 (one crore fifty lac) over the last 5 (five) years The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the Tenderer shall be Tk 74,00,000.00 (seventy-four lac). Other eligibility and qualification criteria outlined in the tender documents.
17	Brief description of services	The Works consist of Construction, Site preparation work, Steel Sheet Pile, Centering & Shuttering, Reinforce Cement Concrete Works, Plastering, Sand filling, Earth cutting and filling, Bailing out Water, Steel, Chemical Admixure, Pump disconnect and reconnect, Dismantling Pump house room and remaking, pump installation, Cable connect, Water pipe disconnect and reconnect Water in and out Connect from pump, Painting Works, Fitting, Fixing, Fabrication Works, Epoxy Primer Works and Finally functional of underground Fire Water Reservoir etc.
18	Price of tender document	BDT 1000.00 (one thousand Taka) non-refundable
19	Tender security	The amount of the Tender Security shall be Tk. 4 lakh (four lac) only in the form of a Pay Order in favor of the "Export Promotion Bureau".
PROCUREMENT ENTITY DETAILS		
20	Designation of the official inviting tender	Secretary, Export Promotion Bureau.
21	Contact address of the official inviting tender	Export Promotion Bureau TCB Building, 1, Kawran Bazar, 4th Floor, Dhaka, Phone: +88-02-55013420, Email: secy@epb.gov.bd

The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any of the tenders or annul the tender proceedings.

16.10.2025
Tarfdar Sohel Rahman
Secretary (Deputy Secretary)
Export Promotion Bureau
Phone: +88-02-55013420
Email: secy@epb.gov.bd

GD-2208

YOUTH ANXIETIES

Living up to BEAUTY STANDARDS



ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

Looking back at the whimsical, witty, and wonderful world of Roald Dahl

Amidst my hazy childhood memories, one terrifying phase stands out vividly: the time I was on the lookout for witches. Whenever I went out with my family, I would scan the room for these sinister beings — women with bald heads wearing wigs to hide their baldness and gloves to conceal their claws. They'd have blue spit and extraordinarily large nostrils. This was how Roald Dahl described witches in his book *The Witches*, and taught his readers to identify and stay safe from them. Since common sense often escaped my nine-year-old self, the practicality of women wearing gloves in Dhaka city did not occur to me. After all, how could Mr Dahl be wrong?

SIWAT QUADER

Roald Dahl's master storytelling captivated every child across the world. With his work selling over a million copies, being translated into 60 languages, and adapted into hundreds of movie and theatre productions, Dahl's contribution to children's literature is nothing short of legendary. He originally wrote most of his stories as bedtime tales for his children before they eventually made their way into the hearts of millions as published books.

Dahl's stories create a world of their own. His writings are whimsical, heart-warming, and easy to picture, which makes the reader feel like they are part of the storyteller's universe. Hidden in the simplicity is a message that is as meaningful as it is timeless, one that he never failed to relay to his young readers.

Through his storytelling, he reminds us that we are not just confined to any space but one that is brimming with opportunities, where anything can happen at any time. You might find a giant magical peach growing in your garden, come across a big friendly dream catcher giant, or even a wicked Grand High Witch.

Coming across such interesting characters and ideas as a child was fascinating. It seemed well within the bounds of reality, especially with Dahl's creative stroke, through which he drew parallels between fantastical characters and real people.

In his books, Dahl introduces quirky characters like Willy Wonka in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and Miss Trunchbull in *Matilda*. Willy Wonka, though an atypical genius, innovator, and owner of an otherworldly chocolate factory, was a self-absorbed man who did not bode well with criticism. The evil headmistress — Miss Trunchbull — enjoyed scaring and punishing her students.

Through such characters, Dahl conveys to his young audience that the world is filled with people of varying temperaments — some admirable, others flawed, and a few downright villainous. He presents the darker aspects of human nature in a way that is both accessible and understandable to children. In contrast, Dahl, through his protagonists, also influenced young readers to believe in their own abilities and feel empowered in their skin.

My first encounter with Dahl was through *Matilda*. At the time, the 200 something pages seemed never ending and were overwhelming for my younger self. However, the scrawny cartoon image of a girl standing on a pile of books in a dark pink coloured book cover was what intrigued me. The illustration of Matilda made me eager to

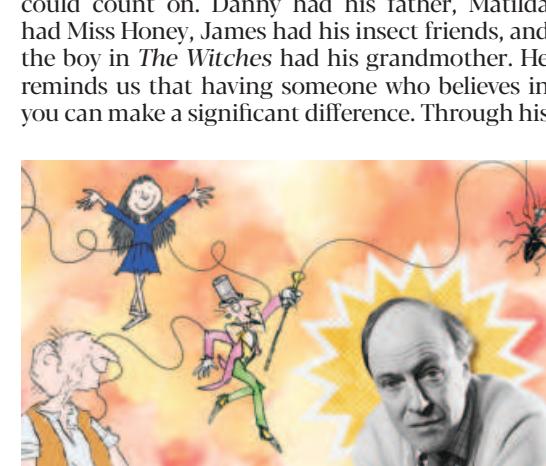


ILLUSTRATION: SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM

find out the story behind it. The loosely sketched illustration that I am referring to was, of course, the work of Quentin Blake. It would be an injustice to talk about Roald Dahl without also mentioning the brilliant illustrator of his books. Blake's illustrations gave life to Dahl's characters and made sure that his books left a lasting first impression on the readers.

One other thing that resonated with me was how the protagonists had someone with whom they shared a special bond, a companion they could count on. Danny had his father, Matilda had Miss Honey, James had his insect friends, and the boy in *The Witches* had his grandmother. He reminds us that having someone who believes in you can make a significant difference. Through his

stories, he highlights the importance of love, trust, and friendship over the course of one's life.

Although many of us have now become mechanical adults trying to decode Kafka and Dostoevsky, a wave of nostalgia resonates with Roald Dahl's works. Whenever I catch sight of Dahl's vibrant coloured volumes with loosely sketched humorous figures peeking out among my monochrome novels, I am transported back to afternoons spent with my *nani*. She was lost in the trance of the cassette playing *Lalon Geeti*, and I wandered in Mr Willy Wonka's chocolate factory.

Like many things I wish to experience for the first time again, reading Roald Dahl's books is one of them. His books are reminders for shy, quiet kids such as myself that a vast world of imagination exists, where magic is real and there are no limits. His books are a reminder that there is more to life than societal norms, expectations, and the eternal longing for more.

Silwat Quader is a first-year economics student at NSU. Reach her at silwatquader@gmail.com

TINATH ZAEBA

If you've been on social media recently, you've most likely heard about the different aesthetics people are now making tutorials for. One moment, it's the clean girl aesthetic — dewy skin, slick bun, and gold hoops, because for some reason that's supposed to be the standard for hygiene. Next, it's old money energy — highlights, glossy hair, and striped sweaters. Then comes the doe-eyed look, with eyeliner tricks promising bigger, softer, more innocent eyes. You don't even ask yourself if you're pretty. You ask yourself, "Am I deer pretty?" or "Am I Hailey Bieber Strawberry Dewy pretty?"

It might sound like satire, but all of these trends are quite popular on TikTok and Instagram now. I will never forget how my ten-year-old student said she

requires a lot of effort to maintain. The "I woke up like this" glow usually comes after three serums, two concealers, and a bit of editing dressed up as natural. That's the trick: what looks spontaneous is really curated, and what's sold as minimalism ends up demanding maximum effort.

The aesthetics blur into values. "Old money energy" isn't just about beige cords; it hints at class, superiority, and restraint. The "clean girl" appearance suggests that looking unkempt is somehow unclean, that a single hair out of place is a character flaw, so you must use a spray or gel and also carry them with you in your bag when going out.

These standards aren't only about appearance. They sneak into one's identity, teaching young people that their worth is tied to whether they can pull off a look.

Moreover, in the 1950s, you knew when you were looking at an advert. Today, on TikTok or Instagram, the ad doesn't even look like an ad. Instead, it looks like your favourite influencer sharing their 12-step morning routine. Basically, instead of looking like advertising, it looks like advice from someone like you.

What makes this all the more complicated is how beauty standards themselves don't just pop out of nowhere. They have a history, often tied to power and money.

Back in the colonial era, pale skin was prized because it meant you weren't out in the sun working the fields. It was a sign of wealth, leisure, and superiority. Fast forward to now, and suddenly tanning is what screams luxury, because if you can afford long holidays or spray tans, you must be doing well.

The rules have flipped completely, but the game stayed the same: beauty is never just about aesthetics; it's about status. This is probably why it feels so absurd. One year, it's all about snatched eyebrows, and the next, it's about micro needling. One decade pale and powdered, the next bronzed and glowing. Even a year back, slicked buns were the craze, and now, it's a bouncy blowout.

None of it is fixed. It's a moving target designed to keep people chasing, because if trends don't change, industries don't profit. When you realise that the rules themselves make no sense, the anxiety hits harder.

And then there's the constant comparison. Social media doesn't just

show you a trend. It shows you thousands of faces doing it better. It's not just that the standard is impossible, because most influencers and celebrities can afford the expensive maintenance, but it's that you're reminded of it every few seconds.

But the fatigue doesn't end with comparison. Rather, it seeps into consumption. Every aesthetic comes with its own shopping list: gloss for one look, a serum for another, and the exact shade of blush that will make you "caramel latte" cute (yes, these are actual terms).

The pressure isn't only to look a certain way but to constantly prove you're investing in yourself through purchases. Comparison makes you anxious about how you look; consumption makes you anxious about what you own.

So what does this mean for young people? The *Barbie* movie monologue is true. Beauty feels like both armour and target at the same time. Conforming can feel safe but expensive; resisting can feel bold but isolating. Either way, the anxiety simmers. It's not just about whether eyeliner wings are foxy or deer; it's about whether you fit in, whether you'll be noticed, and whether you're enough.

That's why the backlash matters. You can see it in acne positivity TikToks, bare-faced selfies, and people openly joking about how ridiculous these reinventions are. These small acts of rebellion chip away at the illusion that beauty is a test you can pass or fail. They remind us that not everyone is buying in, and not every face has to look like it belongs to a trend. But even so, it takes courage to go bare-faced when everyone else seems filtered.

In the end, beauty standards today leave many young people in a constant performance loop: act effortless but work for it, look natural but curate it, be unique but also trendy. While it has always existed to a certain extent, it is a lot more prevalent now thanks to the influencer and social media revolution.

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wasn't "fox pretty", and she had bought the perfect liner to change that.

Trends arrive like waves, faster than ever, handing out new "looks" like fast fashion — trendy one week, cringe the next.

The cost of keeping up isn't only money; it's the constant worry of falling behind. If you don't match the latest vibe, don't worry; let's fix it. There's foundation for "glass skin", lip liner for "quiet luxury", and serums that promise the perfect glow. Suddenly, your makeup bag just doesn't seem enough. Industries are making money not just off insecurity, but off how fast one craze gets ditched for another.

And the irony is just there. Take the "clean girl" aesthetic — it's meant to be simple, natural, and effortless. Yet, it

Animals you should not keep as pets and why

TARANNUM KHONDKAR

Pets have become increasingly common across Bangladeshi households. With that, a fixation on owning a "foreign" or exotic pet has also taken over the population. People now pay hundreds, if not thousands, of taka to own an animal whose physical and emotional needs they cannot possibly meet.

As the trend of keeping exotic pets becomes normalised, pet owners have forgotten a simple truth — these animals were never meant for captivity, nor are they suited for Bangladesh's tropical climate.

But where do we draw the line? Once you start uncovering the pain and exploitation these poor animals endure, that line starts becoming painfully apparent.

Do not keep foreign cats or dogs
Cats and dogs are the most common pets in this country. Yet, an abundance of strays are still on the streets, starving and unwanted. This can be attributed to the fixation on high-end breeds, on which people spend a fortune. Not only does it do a disservice to the equally lovable local animals, but the foreign breeds, too, are not suited to live in the hot and humid climate of Bangladesh. They struggle silently, constantly sick or dehydrated, while their unwanted local counterparts go on begging for a home.

The exploitation is taken a step further with these animals being mercilessly bred through unethical practices. Breeders, with little to no knowledge regarding their needs, often force them to reproduce repeatedly until they pass

away. This practice persists due to the lack of regulation by authorities and the ever-increasing demand from people.

If you take away anything from this article, let it be this: stop buying foreign breeds.

Do not keep birds

Socially accepted to be a regular pet, but is a life bound in a cage all that they deserve? One glance outside your window — birds gliding freely without bounds — should give you the answer.

Most of the birds you see being showcased in pet shops are stolen from their habitats; their wings are clipped so that they cannot fly away to freedom. This scenario is not just the norm in the torturous streets of Katabon but also the local pet shops, where these animals are kept in disastrous conditions — cramped in cages. They soon fall victim to stress and anxiety, and pluck out their own feathers as a coping mechanism. Through our selfish desires of "owning" them, they are robbed of their innate natural gift — the right to fly.

Do not keep pets labelled "exotic"

The list for what can be considered "exotic" is far from exhaustive. Naturally, it includes tigers, monkeys, and snakes, but it also includes the small tortoises that people keep cramped in a fish bowl or the common hill mynas illegally poached from the hills to be sold as domestic pets.

Let us also not forget the "cute" rabbits and hamsters that are sold on the streets in too-small cages. Bought for a measly BDT 500, they are soon discarded once people realise how much effort is needed to raise them properly.

Being able to

afford an exotic animal does not mean that one should purchase it. A large number of them are illegally poached, causing them to slowly become extinct. They also carry dangerous diseases, such as salmonella in tortoises, risking the health of multiple lives, including children. These animals deserve the freedom to thrive in their natural habitat and should not be confined in the living rooms of humans.

The best way to enjoy the companionship of a pet while conserving wildlife is to adopt strays or rescue at-risk animals. Cats and dogs have evolved to live alongside humans; they are the perfect domestic companions and actually thrive with their human counterparts.

If you are looking for a more unique pet, pigeons are also an excellent choice. The only species of bird that mankind domesticated on a huge scale, pigeons thrive in a well-made house, which allows them to be free and your loveable pet at the same time.

As humans, we have a moral responsibility to let these animals live in their ecosystem, and not just as showpieces we call pets. Remember that every time you buy a wild or foreign animal, you snatch away a life they can thrive in, perpetuating the cycle of abuse that is inflicted upon them. Love for animals should not come at the cost of their own freedom or health. Instead of owning, taking a step back and simply admiring them goes a long way in protecting them from a world full of pain.

Tarannum Khondkar is a struggling student, a fur mom, and a contributor at the Daily Star.



PHOTO: UNSPLASH



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

West Indies head coach Darren Sammy spent a long time in discussion with Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium's head curator Tony Hemming after arriving in Mirpur for training yesterday. Sammy observed the wicket keenly for an extended period, appearing intrigued -- even surprised -- by its dark appearance. So much so that he took several photos from different angles, seemingly trying to gauge how it might behave come game time tomorrow. The surface will also serve as a litmus test for Hemming, who recently replaced long-serving curator Gamini de Silva as part of the Bangladesh Cricket Board's effort to move away from Mirpur's traditionally low-and-slow pitches. Yet, it remains to be seen how the wicket ultimately turns out, especially given the Tigers' preference for tricky home surfaces that have often acted as banana peels for visiting sides.

Will Ankon join the ODI merry-go-round?

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

The lack of depth in the player's pipeline is an oft-repeated cliché in Bangladesh cricket and was on display yet again by Thursday's squad announcement for the upcoming ODI series against West Indies, starting on October 18.

Following a disastrous 3-0 ODI series defeat in the UAE against Afghanistan, changes were expected in the 16-man squad, and two were made.

Bangladesh dropped underperforming opener Mohammad Naim and with Litton Das out injured, in again out again opener Soumya Sarkar returned to the setup. Pacer Nahid Rana was also axed, and in his place, middle-order wicketkeeper batter Mahidul Islam Ankon earned his maiden callup into the ODI squad.



SQUAD

at Basseterre.

He was in the T20I plans but after failing to recover from a back injury, he lost his place in the UAE and Pakistan T20Is. Subsequently, without any justification of performances, Soumya was dropped from the ODI series against Sri Lanka and then Afghanistan.

"Many are playing well in his position," the chief selector had explained back then. Those "many" included Naim, the latest batter to get dropped after failing to emulate his domestic performances at the international stage.

Domestic performances have rarely been an indicator for international success in Bangladesh. It was seen with opener Anamul Haque Bijoy too recently. Parvez Hossain Emon was also dropped from ODIs due to inconsistency.

Mehidy Miraz (C), Tanzid Tamim, Soumya Sarker, Saif Hasan, Najmul Shanto, Towhid Hridoy, Mahidul Ankon, Jaker Ali, Shamim Hossain, Nurul Hasan Sohan, Rishad Hossain, Tanvir Islam, Taskin Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Tanzim Sakib, Hasan Mahmud.

Interestingly, the creaky middle order was left unchanged with only Ankon added to the mix, a clear indication of a dried-up pipeline.

"By bringing in Ankon, we have increased depth, which will give the team management and the captain a choice. We can now give one or two of the batters who haven't batted very well a break for a few matches," chief selector Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu said in a video message on Thursday.

Soumya, who missed the Afghanistan T20Is due to visa complications, last featured in ODIs during his sole appearance in this year's ICC Champions Trophy against India. Before that, he had appeared in three ODIs against West Indies, making a run-a-ball 73 in the third ODI

Given the scenario, Soumya returned not because of his performances, but because he is not the only option left.

Meanwhile, Ankon had made 431 runs in the last Dhaka Premier League (DPL) at an average of over 47, far behind Bijoy, Emon and Naim -- the top three run-getters -- who averaged 79.45, 61.38 and 61.80 respectively. All three are now out of the ODI fray.

Like a game of musical chairs, the same group of names have come in and gone out of the squad, but the changes have not created any sustainability.

Now with Ankon, the question is whether he too would become another name in this vicious cycle or break free from it.

Tigresses' record total no match for Australia

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh posted their highest ever total against Australia in WODIs but could not pose any challenge to the seven-time world champions, and were handed a crushing 10-wicket defeat in their fifth match of the ICC Women's World Cup 2025 in Visakhapatnam, India on Thursday.

Riding on a career-best unbeaten 66 off 80 balls from Sobhana Mostary and a gritty 44 from Rubya Haider Jhelik, Bangladesh posted 198-9 after opting to bat first.

However, any hopes of making Australia sweat quickly faded as Australian openers, skipper Alyssa Healy and Phoebe Litchfield, forged an unbroken 202-run partnership to seal the victory in just 24.5 overs. Healy smashed an unbeaten 113 off 77 balls with 20 boundaries, while Litchfield remained not out on 84.

With the win, Australia became the first team to seal a place in the semifinals with nine points from five matches. The defeat all but ended Bangladesh's faint semifinal hopes, as they remain sixth on the table with two points from five games.

Before yesterday, the Tigresses faced Australia four times in the format with their best total being 135-6, which came in their very first meeting in a rain-affected 43-over-a-side contest at the 2022 Women's World Cup in New Zealand.

In Visakhapatnam, Bangladesh had reached 73-1 inside 18 overs, largely thanks to Rubya. But spinners Ashleigh Gardner and Alana King then struck twice each as the middle-order crumbled.

Eventually, Mostary's second fifty of the tournament took the side near the 200-run mark.

Without the injured duo of pacer Marufa Akter and left-arm spinner Nahida Akter, Bangladesh's bowling looked toothless. The fielding looked equally sloppy, as Australia sealed their fifth WODI win over Bangladesh without breaking a sweat, and showed the gulf between the two sides.

Chronic condition of cringe culture

KHALID HOSSAIN

In Bangladesh cricket's latest flashpoint, the line between passion and poison blurred once more. After a 200 run thrashing against Afghanistan in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday, part of the national team returned home the following night to a hostile reception at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. Fans hurled abuse as players exited the terminal, and the chaos was enough to raise safety concerns. Viewed through a rational lens, this Jekyll-and-Hyde nature reveals a fanbase living vicariously through the team's fortunes. Meanwhile, as the Tigers bear the brunt of fan fury, their female counterparts' achievements have gone largely unnoticed. Unlike the men, however, the women have not been afforded the luxury of patience while taking baby steps on the world stage. It's remarkable how the sentiment around the women's team flipped in a matter of weeks; from being mocked for losing to an under-15 men's team in the World Cup build-up, to teaching the Tigers a lesson in batting application. Ultimately, the destination does not define the journey.

Read full story on The Daily Star website

Girls aim to pass Chinese Taipei test with win

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will aim to reach the final round with a win when they face Chinese Taipei in their last Group H match of the AFC U-17 Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers today at Aqaba Stadium in Jordan, starting at 10 pm (Bangladesh time).

Following a 1-1 draw with hosts Jordan in their opener and Chinese Taipei's 6-1 thrashing of the same opponents on Wednesday, Saiful Bari Titu's side now face a daunting challenge against a team that has qualified for the final round four times.

"We want to play with confidence since there is no other option but to win. At the end of the day, if the girls want to win, then it's possible," coach Titu said yesterday, adding that the scenario for his team would have been the same even they had won against Jordan.

To reach the final round for a third



time, Bangladesh must deliver a stronger, more composed performance than against Jordan, sustaining energy throughout and

staying disciplined in dealing with Chinese Taipei's forwards; especially Chang Hui-Hsin, who scored a hat-trick against Jordan.

Bangladesh to host Women's Kabaddi World Cup

SPORTS REPORTER



HIGHLIGHTS

Dates: November 15–25, 2025

Venue: Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium, Mirpur

Teams: 14 confirmed — Bangladesh, India, Iran, Argentina, Chinese Taipei, Germany, Netherlands, Japan, Kenya, South Korea, Nepal, Thailand, Uganda, and Zanzibar; Pakistan and Poland on standby

Budget: Tk 10.44 crore (including Tk 5 crore from the Ministry of Youth and Sports)

IKF Support: 350 air tickets for participating teams

Bangladesh's target: Top-three finish

Last Performance: 5th place in 2012 (Bihar, India)



Morocco players celebrate after beating France 5-4 on penalties following a 1-1 draw in regulation time to reach their first-ever FIFA U-20 World Cup final. They will face Argentina in Sunday's showdown in Chile, after Mateo Silvetti's second-half strike sealed Argentina's first final appearance since 2007.

PHOTO: REUTERS/FACEBOOK





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Warehouse owner still at large

Case filed against 8 over Mirpur factory fire

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MUNTAKIM SAAD

Three days have passed, but law enforcers are yet to arrest the owner of Alam Traders, the chemical warehouse that burned down in Tuesday's deadly fire, claiming 16 lives.

Police said Saiful Islam, brother of garment worker Sanwar Hossain, who died in the blaze, filed a case on Wednesday night accusing eight people, including Shah Alam, owner of Alam Chemical Warehouse, over the Mirpur fire, on charges of death caused by negligence.

He filed the case under Section 304 of the Penal Code with Rupnagar Police Station on Wednesday.

Other accused include Alam Chemical Warehouse manager Akram; owners and managers of Evergreen Color Print, NRS-Wash, Shah Ali Wash, and Shahjali Wash factories; along with 10-15 unidentified individuals.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Pallabi Division Police Saleh Muhammad Zakaria told The Daily

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Rohingya boat departures triple in first half of 2025

Says Save the Children report on Bangladesh



FILE PHOTO

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The number of Rohingya who left Bangladesh by boat in the first six months of this year has tripled compared to last year, as conditions for children in the camps of Cox's Bazar continue to deteriorate and funding cuts reduce essential services.

According to Save the Children, at least 1,088 Rohingyas embarked on sea journeys from Bangladesh during the first six months of this year, with around 87 of them children, heading for Southeast Asian countries including Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

The number was 364 during the same period last year, according to figures from the UN Refugee Agency.

"As the rainy season ends and the situation in the camps continues to deteriorate, with increasing crime and reducing services, more families are contemplating

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

World hunger a collective failure: Pope

AFP, Rome

Pope Leo XIV yesterday condemned the world's failure to stop millions of people from going hungry, blaming a "soulless economy" and calling on others to rethink their lifestyles and priorities.

"Allowing millions of human beings to live -- and die -- victims of hunger is a collective failure, an ethical aberration, a historical sin," Leo said in a speech at the Rome-based UN agricultural agency.

"The scourge of hunger... continues to atrociously plague a significant portion of humanity," he said, a day after the United Nations warned global hunger "is at record levels".

The crisis was "a clear sign of a prevailing insensitivity, a soulless economy", Leo told the FAO at a World Food Day ceremony that falls on the agency's 80th anniversary.

Ensure fair trial, victim protection in key cases: Türk

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk has said the initiation of proceedings against those accused of carrying out enforced disappearances and torture under the previous government in Bangladesh is an important step towards accountability.

"This marks the first time that formal charges have been brought for enforced disappearances in the country. It is a significant moment for victims and their families," High Commissioner Türk said in a press statement on Wednesday.

Last week, International Crimes Tribunal submitted formal charges of crimes against humanity in two cases related to enforced disappearances and torture alleged to have occurred at the Task Force for Interrogation Cell and the Joint Interrogation Cell, respectively.

The tribunal also issued arrest warrants for mostly former, but also some serving, military officers, including a number of former directors-general of



SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



A father embraces his daughter, a student of Viqarunnissa Noon School and College, with unbridled joy after her HSC results were published yesterday. This year, girls once again outperformed boys across all nine education boards. The photo was taken in front of the school on the capital's Bailey Road.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

3 Bangladeshis found dead in Tripura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Three Bangladeshi nationals were allegedly killed in the Indian state of Tripura, according to the officials of Border Guard Bangladesh.

The bodies were recovered from the Vidyabil area of Khowai district in India's Tripura state, the BGB officials said on Wednesday.

The deceased were identified as Jewel Mia, 32, of Alinagar village; Pati Mia, 45, of Basulla village; and Sajal Mia, 20, of Kavilashpur village under Chunarughat upazila in Habiganj, said Tarekur Rahman, a member of Gazipur Union Parishad in Chunarughat upazila.

Their bodies were kept at the Sampahari Police Station in India, said Lt Col Md. Tanzilur Rahman, commanding officer of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) battalion 55 in Habiganj, yesterday.

He said the three Bangladeshis illegally entered Karedgichhara under Tripura's Khowai Police Station through Sreemangal border two to three days ago.

The area falls under the jurisdiction of the 70th Battalion of India's Border Security Force, the official said.

He also said, "Initial reports suggest the victims may have entered India with the intention of cattle smuggling. Fearing theft, local Indian residents attacked them at night. All three died on the spot."

At the BGB's request, the BSF agreed to hold a flag meeting to discuss the incident.

'Fight not over yet' in Gaza, wider region

Warns Netanyahu as Hamas seeks more time to find hostage bodies

AGENCIES

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday that Israel was "determined" to secure the return of the remains of all hostages still held in Gaza, vowing that the "fight is not over yet".

"We are determined to secure the return of all hostages," Netanyahu said at a state ceremony at Jerusalem's Mount Herzl military cemetery, marking the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel that sparked the military campaign in Gaza.

"The fight is not over yet, but one thing is clear -- whoever lays a hand on us knows they will pay a very heavy price. We are determined to win a victory that will shape our surroundings for many years," he added, a day after Hamas said it had handed over all the captives it could access.

Israel said yesterday it was preparing for the reopening of Gaza's Rafah crossing with Egypt to let Palestinians in and out but set no date as it traded blame with Hamas over violations of a US-mediated ceasefire.

Israeli government spokesperson Shosh Bedrosian told reporters Israel remained committed to the agreement and continued to uphold its obligations, demanding Hamas return the bodies of the 19 deceased hostages it had not handed over.

The Islamist faction has handed over 10 bodies, but Israel said one was not that of a hostage. The group says it has handed over all bodies it could recover.

The armed wing of Hamas said the handover of more bodies in Gaza, reduced to vast tracts of rubble by the war, would require the admission of heavy machinery and excavating equipment into the Israel-blockaded Palestinian enclave.

Meanwhile, a senior Hamas official yesterday accused Israel of flouting the ceasefire by killing at least 24 people in shootings since last Friday and said a list of such violations was handed over to mediators.

Two Palestinians killed by Israeli fire

Opening of Rafah crossing delayed

Israel returns 30 Palestinian bodies to Gaza

'Will go in and kill Hamas if Gaza killings continue'

Warns Trump

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump yesterday threatened to "go in and kill" Hamas if the armed group continued to kill people in Gaza, in an apparent reference to recent shootings carried out by Hamas targeting alleged gang members and suspected Israeli collaborators.



"If Hamas continues to kill people in Gaza, which was not the Deal, we will have no choice but to go in and kill them," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social network. "Thank you for your attention to this matter!"

Trump did not elaborate on what he meant by "we". But he said on Wednesday that "we won't need the US military" to be involved in Gaza.

His comments come just days after he backed the Hamas shootings -- which include public executions -- and described them as killings of gang members.

Since the partial withdrawal of Israeli forces in Gaza under the US-backed 20-point ceasefire deal,

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

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DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk has said the initiation of proceedings against those accused of carrying out enforced disappearances and torture under the previous government in Bangladesh is an important step towards accountability.

"This marks the first time that formal charges have been brought for enforced disappearances in the country. It is a significant moment for victims and their families," High Commissioner Türk said in a press statement on Wednesday.

Last week, International Crimes Tribunal submitted formal charges of crimes against humanity in two cases related to enforced disappearances and torture alleged to have occurred at the Task Force for Interrogation Cell and the Joint Interrogation Cell, respectively.

The tribunal also issued arrest warrants for mostly former, but also some serving, military officers, including a number of former directors-general of



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17 OCTOBER

20th Year of Journey to eternal rest

Founder of the 1st Private company in the Insurance Business 40 years ago in Bangladesh, you initiated an Industry which now has a family of 80 members.

Though we mourn your absence, the Insurance Profession will continue to feel your presence through the books & writings that you have written for generations taking up this honorable profession.

We pray to the Almighty to grant our founder Late M. A. Samad Jannatul Firdaus, Ameen.

BGIC Family



M. A. Samad
(1923-2005)

Founder of BGIC



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Bangladesh General Insurance Company PLC.
(First General Insurance Company in the Private Sector)