



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and three other advisers pose for photos with delegations of Jamaat-e-Islami and NCP after separate meetings with each party yesterday.

PHOTOS: PID

MEDIA WORKER DEATH Gonotantrik Odhikar Committee demands fair investigation

Urge establishing anti-harassment cells in all workplaces

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonotantrik Odhikar Committee has demanded a fair probe into the death of media worker Sornomoye Biswas and called for the strict enforcement of anti-harassment policies in workplaces.

In a statement issued yesterday, the committee said that Sornomoye and several colleagues had filed sexual harassment complaints against Altaf Shahnewaz, head of Dhaka Stream's Bangla department, but the management failed to act, leaving her mentally distressed.

The statement was signed by noted economist Prof Anu Muhammad, Dhaka University teachers Samina Luthfa and Dr Nazmus Sakib, economist Mahtab Uddin Ahmed, researcher Ferdous Ara Rume, activist Sajib Tanvir, and writer Seema Dutta.

"The mental and physical conditions of victims are often ignored. Not only the perpetrator, but also the management and investigators share responsibility. Dhaka Stream's Editor-in-Chief Golam Iftekhar Mahmud, and inquiry officers must be held accountable," the statement read.

It also noted Dhaka Stream's failure to implement the 2009 High Court directive of establishing of anti-sexual harassment cells in workplaces. "Such environments [without such cells] force women out of the workforce and erode their professional motivation."

The committee urged the government to ensure a transparent investigation, hold the accused accountable, and enforce the HC guidelines across all institutions.

Sornomoye Biswas, a freelance graphic designer working for the online portal Dhaka Stream, was found dead at her residence on October 19.

Dhaka ratifies 3 more ILO conventions

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repeated industrial disasters and continuing concerns over workers' rights.

"This day will be remembered as a milestone in Bangladesh's struggle for workers' rights," Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus said after the signing of the instruments of ratification for the three conventions.

Labour and Employment Adviser Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain signed the instruments at the state guesthouse Jamuna. CA's Special Envoy for International Affairs Lutfey Siddiqi, Labour and Employment Secretary Sanwar Jahan Bhuiyan, and ILO Country Director Max Tunon, among others, were present.

Recalling the Rana Plaza tragedy of 2013, Prof Yunus said that although the then government had pledged various reforms after the incident, little had been implemented. "We said, no more 'being done or will be done'; we will actually do it."

He added that upon taking office, his first focus was on labour rights and that the signing of these conventions would benefit all.

"This is only the beginning. Signing the documents does not mean the work is done; the work has just begun," he said.

Labour Adviser Sakhawat said everyone had worked extremely hard for this achievement and added that the interim government had been sincerely working to protect workers' rights from the outset.

Lutfey Siddiqi said the journey had been difficult but rewarding, noting that all parties had worked tirelessly to make it possible.

With the ratification of these three conventions, Bangladesh has become the only country in South Asia to ratify all 10 fundamental ILO conventions, the statement added.

ICT sends 15 army officers to jail

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prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her former defence adviser Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique stand accused in both cases. Besides Tarique Ahmed Siddique, nine retired senior army officers are also among the accused.

Former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, and three former Rab chiefs are also accused in the case involving the alleged torture in the TFI Cell.

In the third case over the killings of 28 people during the student-led protests in Rampura on July 18-19 last year, two former BGB officers -- Lt Col Mohammad Redowanul Islam and Maj Rafat Bin Alam Moon -- were produced before the tribunal. They too are originally from the army.

The next hearing was set for November 5 in this case. Two police officers, currently absconding, are also accused in the case.

As law enforcers failed to arrest the remaining accused, the tribunal ordered public notices in two newspapers, asking absconding suspects to appear within seven days.

HEARING

Around 7:15am, the army officers were brought to the tribunal in an air-conditioned prison bus. Police escorted each officer to the lock-up on the tribunal's ground floor.

Ten of the officers accused in the case involving the alleged torture in the TFI Cell were first taken to the dock, minutes before the tribunal began proceedings at 8:15am.

As the session opened, the tribunal chair read out their names one by one, asking each to stand. At that, the officers confirmed their presence.

They were followed by three former DGFI officers accused in the case involving the alleged torture in the JIC and two accused in the Rampura killings case.

The 15 accused were taken back to the prison bus from the lock-up around 10:00am.

A heavy security blanket was thrown around the tribunal premises ahead of the hearing, with personnel from Rab, BGB, police, and the Armed Police Battalion deployed to maintain order.

Lawyer M Sarwar Hossain, who represented the accused army officers, submitted three petitions seeking bail, permission for appearance of the accused via video link, and privileged communication.

The tribunal said it would look into the appeals for bail and online appearance later, directing the lawyer to have the vikalatnamas (official document that allows a lawyer to represent a client in court) signed to formally represent the officers and hold privileged communications.

Sarwar told the tribunal that his clients appeared before the tribunal following the court's order.

Countering Sarwar's claim, ICT

Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam told the tribunal that the army officers did not appear voluntarily, but were arrested by law enforcers.

Sarwar later told reporters that the officers "voluntarily surrendered out of respect for the law" and were "innocent professionals who hope to prove their innocence".

"These officers are courageous, innocent, and have surrendered believing that they will be proved innocent ultimately," he said.

He claimed the real perpetrators had fled abroad and said the officers were likely to be kept in a sub-jail within Dhaka Cantonment.

Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim said the officers were arrested

support for the judicial process. They have kept that commitment," he said.

He warned all against spreading misinformation about the patriotic armed forces.

Replying to a query, Tajul said that under the amended ICT law, the accused are no longer in active service once formal charges are pressed.

Barrister Mir Ahmad Bin Quasem Arman, a victim of enforced disappearance, talked to journalists outside the tribunal. He urged the government to form a commission to probe how top military officers managed to flee despite cancelled passports and cantonment restrictions.

Arman, son of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Mir Quasem Ali, also called for oversight to ensure those detained in cantonments are held under the jail code and cannot communicate with serving personnel.

"My hope as a victim is that patriotic members of the army will never again be used as tools of hired killing or made to stand against the people they are meant to protect," he said. "This trial will ensure that."

SUB-JAIL

The government on October 12 declared MES (Military Engineering Service) building number 54, located north of Bashir Road in Dhaka Cantonment, as a temporary jail under the provisions of the Prisoners Act, 1984. The sub-jail, prepared for the 15 army officers, is also called the Visiting Senior Officers' Quarters (VSOQ).

Sources from the prisons directorate confirmed that the 15 army officers had not been kept at the facility until the court ordered the authorities to send them to jail.

The VSOQ "mess" comprises small serviced apartments, according to those who had resided there.

Inspector General of Prisons Brig Gen Syed Md Motaher Hossain said that the individual rooms have been turned into cells by fitting them with grilles needed to turn the rooms into "lock-ups".

According to the Jail Code, prisoners are kept locked in their cells from sundown.

When asked if they will each get "division" status, which allows them each a room of their own, Brig Gen Motaher said that all commissioned officers get "division" status in jail.

"These quarters had two rooms or single rooms, and we modified them according to the security arrangements of the Jail Code," he said.

The boundary walls of the compound have been reinforced. CCTV cameras have also been installed.

The officers were searched upon entry into the sub-jail and they will not have access to communication devices.

by cantonment police under tribunal warrants. "They were brought in a prison bus with a forwarding report from the police that proves they were arrested by the police."

He also said police probably made the arrests on Tuesday.

Asked about the prosecution's claim, defence counsel Sarwar insisted the army officers surrendered themselves before the tribunal, and since the surrender took place under police escort, the prosecution wrongly termed them arrested.

Tajul thanked law enforcement and the army for executing arrest orders.

He said the Bangladesh Army, whom he described as "guardians of national sovereignty", cooperated in executing the court's arrest orders.

"They had pledged respect for the law of the land and expressed full

teacher duties related to election training and preparations, urging that the directive be suspended immediately.

The EC plans to finalise the panel of polling officials by October 30.

A circular issued on September 2 instructed district election officers to prepare lists of presiding, assistant presiding and polling officers with recruits from government offices, private institutions, schools, colleges, banks and insurance firms.

The BNP also proposed that expatriates' voting rights through postal ballots be exercised with full transparency and that the list of registered expatriate voters willing to vote by postal ballot in different countries be provided to political parties well ahead of time.

The party is seeking the cancellation of all contractual appointments in embassies and election-related government, semi-government and autonomous bodies.

The letter also calls for immediate and effective steps to recover illegal arms across the country and to stop the entry of illegal weapons, fake currency and black money through the borders.

The document further said all

firearms distributed on political consideration during the tenure of the past government must be submitted before the announcement of the election schedule.

It will also seek strict presence of the military, BGB, Rab, police and other law enforcement agencies at every polling centre at least one week before the polls.

The BNP will propose that, alongside administrative officials, the EC appoint competent, honest and experienced officers from its own Election Service cadre as returning officers, where possible.

It also suggested giving the EC's own officials magisterial powers to strengthen election management and accountability.

The document recommended that, with the announcement of the election schedule, a Complaint Redress Centre be set up at each district election office and at every upazila or thana election office across the country.

Any form of violence or terrorist activity must be immediately suppressed not only within a 400-yard radius of polling centres but also anywhere in the constituency, the document said.

According to sources from yesterday's meeting, it was broadly agreed that the order would be based on the July 18th itself.

As per the preliminary draft, the implementation process will begin with the issuing of a special order,

Reshuffle EC, admin

FROM PAGE 1

all as he heads a neutral, caretaker-style government.

"Necessary reshuffles should be made wherever needed before the election," Taher said.

In response to their demand, the chief adviser told Jamaat leaders that he would personally supervise the matter and make transfers through a lottery system.

"We said we had no objection to that. You can hold a lottery, but make sure no unseen 'influence' is there," Taher said.

The Election Commission has not yet announced an official date for the national polls. However, it is preparing to hold the election in the first half of February, in line with the chief adviser's announcement following his meeting with BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman in London in June, and his televised address on August 5 marking the first anniversary of the July uprising.

Jamaat leaders during yesterday's meeting also discussed the July charter implementation process with Yunus.

They said the July National Charter must be granted legitimacy through an executive order. "We have consistently said that if it is legally sound, then the chief adviser should issue the order, not the president. Everyone knows whose product this president is," Taher said.

He said that the charter is not constitution. "It is an extra constitutional arrangement, which any government has the authority to issue when faced with such a situation. And the chief adviser agreed that this should be done through an order."

The order will serve as the basis for

Amnesty hails move to try army officers for torture, abduction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amnesty International in a statement issued yesterday welcomed the decision by the Bangladeshi authorities to bring 15 serving army officers before a court to face charges under the International Crimes Tribunal.

"This marks the first instance in which military personnel have been formally charged in connection with enforced disappearances in Bangladesh, representing a significant step towards accountability and

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Reconstitute EC, admin

FROM PAGE 1

all as he heads a neutral, caretaker-style government.

"Necessary reshuffles should be made wherever needed before the election," Taher said.

The Jamaat leader also thanked BNP for agreeing on the referendum issue.

"However, they are now trying to complicate the matter by insisting that the referendum and the national election must be held the same day. These are two entirely separate processes," Taher said.

"Since BNP did not originally support the referendum, they agreed only under public pressure. But now they've added a twist. In the meeting, we made it clear that we don't accept any such twist. The referendum must be held first, in a simple and straightforward manner."

He said they did not discuss the caretaker government issue for two reasons. First, the issue is still under hearing in the Supreme Court. Once the SC delivers its ruling, they will bring the caretaker issue into the discussion accordingly.

"We believe the current government is interim and should remain so. If the Supreme Court's order does not contradict this, then this government will continue to play the role of a caretaker government," Taher said.

In a press statement, the Chief Adviser's Press Wing quoted Taher as saying in the meeting, "The referendum must be held before the national election because the July charter contains many issues linked to the national polls."

Taher also said, "If the referendum and the national election are held the same day, there is a risk that the voting process will be prolonged."

Reconstitute EC

FROM PAGE 1

raise questions about the commission's impartiality and sense of justice."

The government had assured them of measures to create a neutral environment and a level playing field for all parties, he added.

The NCP also questioned the neutrality of recent administrative transfers and postings, alleging that ministries were being divided among political groups with support from within the advisory council.

Regarding student advisers in the government, Nahid said they represented the July uprising and not any political party.

"If student advisers are seen as political representatives, the same should apply to other advisers with political backgrounds," he said.

About the July charter, Nahid said the party would sign it only after receiving guarantees of its implementation.

"It is not enough to sign a document -- there must be a constitutional order to ensure execution. And only Dr Yunus whose legitimacy stems from the July uprising -- can issue it."

The caretaker issue could only be addressed after a referendum, as specified in the charter.

"Those calling for it now might have other motives," he said.

Nahid added that the government had promised to review the NCP's proposals after receiving the National Commission's recommendations.

"We believe both the Election Commission and the advisory council must demonstrate neutrality and competence for a fair election. Without that, neither reform nor justice can be achieved," he added.

Another such meeting will be held this afternoon, following

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ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্ণার' পুবালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়



My request is that the interim government should, as soon as possible, move into full caretaker mode and act according to the character and features of a caretaker administration.

AMIR KHOSRU
MAHMUD
CHOWDHURY
BNP senior leader



The BNP has not demanded the reinstatement of the caretaker government system; rather, it wants the current interim government to function in a caretaker-style role.

ASIF NAZRUL
Law Adviser

Lawyer seeks cancellation of verdict on 13th amendment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Senior lawyer Sharif Bhuiyan yesterday urged the Supreme Court to restore the non-party caretaker government system by cancelling its 2011 verdict that scrapped the 13th Amendment to the Constitution.

He said the system is essential for holding free and fair elections and establishing democracy.

Bhuiyan told the court that if restored, the caretaker system would be effective for the parliamentary polls following the upcoming one, expected in February next year, as it cannot be implemented under the current interim government.

He placed his arguments for the second consecutive day before a seven-member Appellate Division bench headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed during the hearing of appeals and review petitions against the 2011 verdict that struck down the non-partisan caretaker government system.

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Open your Account from anywhere

PI
PI Banking-
a Pubali Bank apps



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Clearing and forwarding agents, along with importers, collect their goods from Gate-9 of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. Following the recent fire at the airport's cargo village, large volumes of imported goods are being stored in Biman's hangar near Gate-9. C&F agents are now collecting their deliveries as quickly as possible, especially temperature-sensitive items such as vaccines. The photo was taken yesterday.

CHEMICAL, INDUSTRIAL BLAZES Fire service struggles with limited capacity

DIPAN NANDY

Lack of basic fire safety measures, poor coordination among agencies, and weak emergency response systems are the main reasons why three recent major fire incidents could not be brought under control quickly, said experts and officials.

They made the observations after analysing the fires at Dhaka airport, the Chattogram Export Processing Zone, and chemical warehouse in Mirpur -- all of which exposed the Fire Service and Civil Defence's limited capacity to handle chemical and large-scale industrial fires.

Experts expressed grave concern over the incidents, which occurred within just six days, noting that two of them took place in key point installation areas.

"The capacity to deal with general and chemical fires is



FILE PHOTO: CEPZ FIRE

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Modernise fire service to improve capacity
- Provide modern tools, training
- Conduct regular joint drills with relevant agencies
- Keep KPI areas under constant surveillance
- Probe causes, response failures in recent incidents
- Equip cities, key fire stations with specialised gears

different, so the entire department needs modernisation," Brig Gen (retd) Abu Nayeem Md Shahidullah, former director general of the fire service, told The Daily Star.

He urged the government to equip the fire service with the tools and training required to tackle chemical fires effectively.

"Initial response, alarm systems, and water supply -- all are part of fire management. Major weaknesses were visible at all three sites. Authorities should verify whether joint drills between the fire service and relevant agencies are being conducted regularly," he said.

The fire at Dhaka airport broke out around 2:30pm on October 18 and took more than 26 hours to douse. Similarly, the Chattogram EPZ fire, which started around 2:10pm on October 16, raged for over 24 hours.

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'Want equal access to jobs, higher studies'
Says Qawmi Education Rights Movement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Qawmi Education Rights Movement yesterday placed a five-point demand calling for full recognition of Qawmi education and equal access to higher studies and employment.

The demands were made at a seminar at the Dhaka Reporters Unity, where speakers also sought state recognition for Qawmi students who were killed and injured during the July uprising.

The other demands include granting national equivalence to all levels of Qawmi education up to the master's level in line with the existing law, removing all restrictions that prevent Qawmi students from pursuing higher Islamic education abroad, and formulating a law to

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Germany our top trade partner in Europe: Yunus



PHOTO: PID
UNB, Dhaka

Describing Germany as Bangladesh's biggest trade partner in Europe, Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday expressed optimism that newly appointed German Ambassador to Bangladesh Dr Rüdiger Lotz would work to boost trade and investment between the two countries.

The German ambassador paid a courtesy call on the chief adviser at the State Guest House Jamuna and discussed issues of mutual interest.

During the meeting, the ambassador expressed support for the interim government and enquired about preparations for the national election in February 2026.

He said it was encouraging to see people in Bangladesh becoming more engaged in the democratic process, according to the chief adviser's press wing.

The chief adviser said the National Consensus Commission had done an excellent job by bringing major political parties together to sign the charter.

They also discussed the Rohingya situation and Germany's continued support in this area.

Migrant workers to get job contract before departure
Says Saudi minister

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia have signed a new labour agreement requiring every migrant worker to receive a documented job offer and contract before departure through authorised digital channels.

Saudi Minister for Human Resources and Social Development Ahmad Bin Solaiman Al-Rajhi made the announcement in a statement issued by his ministry on Tuesday.

Al-Rajhi and Bangladesh's Expatriates' Welfare Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul signed the agreement on October 6 in Saudi Arabia, marking the first such deal between the two countries.

Earlier, the two nations signed an agreement in 2015 concerning domestic worker recruitment and another in 2022 on skill verification.

Currently, about 25 lakh Bangladeshi workers are in Saudi Arabia. However, there have been numerous reports of labour abuses, including excessive

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Battery-run auto-rickshaws crowd the main road in front of the IDB Bhaban, causing severe traffic congestion and immense suffering for commuters. Although such rickshaws are not permitted on the main roads, they continue to defy the rules, creating major problems for regular vehicles that use the route daily. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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A man evacuates a child from a kindergarten hit by a Russian drone strike in Kharkiv, Ukraine, yesterday. Separate strikes on Ukraine's capital killed at least two people, a city official said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Gaza health crisis to last for generations

Says WHO chief; most Americans support US recognition of Palestinian state: poll

AGENCIES

Gaza is experiencing a health "catastrophe" that will last for "generations to come", the director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO) has warned.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told BBC Radio 4's Today programme that a massive increase in aid is needed to begin to address the complex needs of the Strip's population.

Israel has allowed more medical supplies and other aid to cross into Gaza since a ceasefire with Hamas came into effect on 10 October, but Dr Tedros said levels are below those needed to rebuild the territory's healthcare system.

His intervention comes as the US attempts to shore up the ceasefire helped to broker following an outbreak of violence at the weekend.



The agreement has been described by the White House as the first phase of a 20-point peace plan that includes an increase to the amount of aid entering Gaza, and supplies distributed "without interference" from either side.

Most Americans - including 80 percent of Democrats and 41 percent of Republicans - think the US should recognise Palestinian statehood, a sign that President Donald Trump's opposition to doing so is out of step with public opinion, a Reuters/Ipsos poll found.

The six-day poll, which closed on Monday, found 59 percent of respondents backed US recognition of a Palestinian state, while 33 percent were opposed and the rest were unsure or did not answer the question.

About half of Trump's Republicans - 53 percent - opposed doing so.

Trump, Modi talk trade as India, US seek to repair ties

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said yesterday he had held a conversation with Donald Trump, with the US president saying the pair had discussed trade as the countries negotiate a deal that could mend strained ties.

During a ceremony to mark Diwali on Tuesday, Trump told reporters he had spoken by phone with Modi. "We talked about trade - we talked about a lot of things, but mostly the world of trade," Trump said while lighting candles for the celebration at the White House. "He's very interested in that."

Modi thanked Trump for the call, saying on X that he hoped "our two great democracies continue to illuminate the world with hope."



A health worker wearing protective gear inspects a resident from Sukatani village at a community centre in Cikande, Banten, on Indonesia's island of Java, yesterday. A total of 64 residents living near the Cesium-137 radioactive exposure zone in the Modern Cikande Industrial Estate underwent health checks before being relocated to a designated safe area.

PHOTO: AFP

40 African migrants dead in shipwreck off Tunisia

AFP, Tunis

Forty migrants from sub-Saharan Africa were found dead yesterday following a shipwreck off Tunisia while 30 were rescued, a judicial spokesman told AFP.

"Initial investigations indicate that there were 70 people on board the vessel," said Walid Chtabri, spokesman for the public prosecutor's office in Mahdia.

"Forty bodies, including infants, were recovered, and 30 people were rescued," Chtabri added. "They were all from countries in sub-Saharan Africa." At least 61 bodies of migrants have been recovered over the past two weeks on the coast west of the Libyan capital Tripoli.

The Emergency Medicine and



recovered in Zuwarah, Abu Kammash and Mellitah, the center added.

It added that 12 bodies were buried, but some others were transported to the morgue for autopsies and documentation.

Pictures of medics were posted on the center's verified Facebook page showing them recovering the bodies from the beaches.

In mid-September, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said at least 50 people had died after a vessel carrying 75 Sudanese refugees caught fire off Libya's coast.

"Remains of three bodies were found in Mellitah and 12 bodies in Zuwarah, all of them belonging to irregular migrants," the center said.

Another group of 34 bodies was

India proposes strict rules to label AI content

Cites growing risks

REUTERS, Bengaluru

India's government yesterday proposed that artificial intelligence and social media firms should clearly label AI-generated content to tackle the spread of deepfake and misinformation, prompted by similar moves by the European Union and China.

With nearly 1 billion internet users, the stakes are high in a sprawling country of many ethnic and religious communities where fake news risks stirring up deadly strife and AI deepfake videos have alarmed officials during elections.

The new rules require platforms to label AI-generated content with markers covering at least 10 percent of the surface area of a visual display or the initial 10 percent of the duration of an audio clip, placing more responsibilities on the likes of OpenAI, Meta, X and Google.

Social media companies will also have to obtain a



user declaration on whether uploaded information is AI-generated, and deploy reasonable technical measures to ensure checks and balances, the Indian government's draft proposal said.

The rules will "ensure visible labelling, metadata traceability, and transparency for all public-facing AI-generated media," India's IT ministry said, inviting suggestions from the public and industry by November 6.

Global warming pushing planet to the brink

Says UN chief, urges countries to implement disaster warning systems to protect people

REUTERS, Geneva

The United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned yesterday that global warming is pushing the planet to the brink and urged countries to implement disaster warning systems to protect people against extreme weather.

"Every one of the last ten years has been the hottest in history. Ocean heat is breaking records while decimating ecosystems. And no country is safe from fires, floods, storms and heatwaves," he told delegates at the UN World Meteorological Organization's extraordinary conference in Geneva to mark its 75th year.

Guterres urged countries to mobilize funding to enable a global system of surveillance, known as Early Warning Systems, to protect people from extreme weather.

"They give farmers the power to protect their crops and livestock. Enable families to evacuate safely. And protect entire communities from devastation," Guterres said.

Getting notice 24 hours before a hazardous event can reduce damage by up to 30 percent, he added.

Over 60 percent of countries have introduced multi-hazard Early Warning Systems since Guterres launched an initiative in 2022 for all countries to have these in place by 2027.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Food
Directorate General of Food
Procurement Division
16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka
www.dgfood.gov.bd

Date: 22/10/2025

International Tender Notice for Import of Non-Basmati Parboiled Rice (Package-04, FY 2025-2026)

International tender in sealed cover are invited from bonafide traders for supply of 50,000 (Fifty thousand) (+5%) Metric Tons of Non-Basmati Parboiled Rice. The particulars of international tender are furnished below:

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh					
Ministry of Food Directorate General of Food Procurement Division 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka www.dgfood.gov.bd					
No. 13.01.0000.093.46.008.25-765					
Date: 22/10/2025					
International Tender Notice for Import of Non-Basmati Parboiled Rice (Package-04, FY 2025-2026)					
International tender in sealed cover are invited from bonafide traders for supply of 50,000 (Fifty thousand) (+5%) Metric Tons of Non-Basmati Parboiled Rice. The particulars of international tender are furnished below:					
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh					
1 Ministry/Division	Ministry of Food	2 Agency	Not applicable		
3 Procuring entity name	Director Procurement	4 Procuring entity code	Not applicable		
5 Procuring entity district	Dhaka	6 Invitation for	Procurement of 50,000 MT (+5%) Non-Basmati Parboiled Rice		
7 Invitation Ref. No. & date	13.01.0000.093.46.008.25-765, Dated: 22/10/2025				
KEY INFORMATION					
8 Procuring method	International Open Tender Method				
FUNDING INFORMATION					
9 Budget and source of fund	GoB fund	10 Development partners (if applicable)	Not applicable		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION					
11 Project/ programme code (if applicable)	Not applicable	12 Project/ programme name (if applicable)	Not applicable		
13 Package No.	Package-04	14 Package name	Procurement of 50,000 MT (+5%) Non-Basmati Parboiled Rice		
15 Notice publication date	23 October, 2025	16 Selling of tender schedule	23 October, 2025 to 05 November, 2025 up to 4.30pm (BST)		
17 Date and time of closing	06 November, 2025, Upto Time 1.00pm (BST)	18 Date and time of opening	06 November, 2025, Time 2.00pm (BST)		
19 Name and address of the office(s)	Office Chamber of Director, (Procurement), Room No. 501, Directorate General of Food, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka	Selling tender documents	Office Chamber of Director, (Procurement), Room No. 501, Directorate General of Food, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka		
Receiving place of tender	1) Office Chamber of Director, (Procurement), Room No. 501, Directorate General of Food, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka 2) Office Chamber of Additional Secretary, Room No. 114, (1st Floor), Building No. 04, Ministry of Food, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka	Opening place of tender	Office Chamber of Director, (Procurement), Room No. 501, Directorate General of Food, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka		
20 Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional)	Not applicable				
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER					
21 Eligibility of tenderer	Necessary papers to be submitted complying the conditions mentioned in the tender documents.	22 Brief description of goods or works	50,000 (+5%) MT. of Non-basmati Parboiled rice at Chattogram (60%) and Mongla (40%) port on CIF Liner Out term. Cost of the Cargo, Insurance and Freight including Stevedoring, Overseide Handling and Lightering are on seller's account. Single price per MT is to be quoted in US\$.		
23 Brief description of related services	Not applicable	24 Price of tender document (Tk.)	Tk. 5,000 (five thousand) or USD 100 (One hundred) non-refundable by Pay Order/Bank Draft drawn in favour of Director General, Directorate General of Food.		
Mode of payment	Through Letter of Credit (L/C).	Crop year	2025 or latest		
Validity of the offer	20 November, 2025 Upto 5.00pm (BST)				
Quality & Specification					
Quality parameters	Specification	Margin of tolerance with claim for deviation beyond specification	Rejection		
Moisture (maximum)	13.5%	14.0%	above 14.0%		
Broken grain (Maximum)	5.0% (Rice of size 3/4th and below will be considered as broken and less than 1/4th broken should not be more than 2%)	6.0% (Rice of size 3/4th and below will be considered as broken and less than 1/4th broken should not be more than 3%)	above 6.0%		
Foreign matter (Maximum)	0.3%	0.5%	above 0.5%		
Dead, damaged & discoloured grains (Maximum)	3% in total	4.0%	above 4.0%		
Radio-Activity (maximum)	50 Bq/Kg of 137Cs/134Cs (Relaxable for the crop of SAARC and South-East Asian country)	50 Bq/Kg of 137Cs/134Cs (Relaxable for the crop of SAARC and South-East Asian country)	above 50 Bq/Kg of 137Cs/134Cs		
All the parameters must be limited to percentage mentioned against each item individually and separately.					
Pack. No.	Identification of shipment	Country of origin	Location	Tender security amount (US\$)	Shipment period
Pack-04	50,000 MT (+5%) Non-Basmati Parboiled rice	Any country of the world except Israel	Chattogram port-60% and Mongla port-40%	US\$ 300,000 (Three hundred thousand) in favour of Director General of Food for 50,000 MT Parboiled rice (+5%) in the form of a Bank Draft/Pay-Order (No Bank Guarantee is allowed)	40 (forty) days from the date of opening of the L/C. Note that at least 50% of the total quantity must be shipped within 25 days of opening of the L/C.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS					
26 Name of official inviting tender	Md. Moniruzzaman				
27 Designation of official inviting tender	Director (Procurement)				
28 Address of official inviting tender	Office Chamber of Director, (Procurement), Room No. 501, Directorate General of Food, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka.				
29 Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone: +88-02-41050178 E-mail: dproc@dgfood.gov.bd				
30	(i) Incomplete, conditional tender and alternate offer shall not be considered. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders partly or wholly without assigning any reason. (ii) Tenderer who has been awarded two NOAs (Notification of Award) waiting for signing the contract or has signed two contracts but shipment under any of the contracts has not yet sailed for destination, shall not be eligible to participate in the tender. (iii) Tenderer who has been awarded NOAs (Notification of Award) earlier but could not execute contract by submitting PG (Performance Guarantee) on time, shall not be eligible to participate in the next two tenders. (iv) Tenderer whose bid-bonds have been forfeited twice for not submitting PG or signing contract on time, shall not be eligible to participate in the tender for the current financial year, whether the money accruing from the bid-bonds so forfeited is deposited to the Government treasury or not. (v) Tenderer whose whole PG (Performance Guarantee) had been forfeited for non-supply of the contracted quantity, shall not be eligible to participate in the tender for the rest period of the current financial year, whether the money accruing from PG so forfeited is deposited to the Government treasury or not.				


Md. Moniruzzaman
Director
Procurement Division
Directorate General of Food
Phone: +88-02-41050178
E-mail: dproc@dgfood.gov.bd

GD-2235

Take decisive action to curb air pollution

Greater caution needed before dry season suffocates Dhaka air

It is unfortunate that the arrival of the dry season in Dhaka has become synonymous with the collapse of air quality, even going by our usual dismal standards. The current readings are already alarming, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) in the capital and surrounding areas hovering between 150 and 200, well above the healthy threshold of 50. It is not surprising then that the Department of Environment has advised people to wear masks when outdoors. These warnings and health risks are not just seasonal inconveniences, however. They align with the findings of a just released State of Global Air report that reveals that over 271,000 people in Bangladesh died from air pollution in 2023, with over 90 percent connected to non-communicable diseases. Let that sink in.

The numbers point to a single conclusion: air pollution is now the country's deadliest external health risk, slicing five and a half years off an average citizen's life. The economic cost, estimated at 8.3 percent of the national GDP, also shows how it has become a massive drag on productivity, healthcare expenditure, and overall national development. Yet, the threat continues to be met with inertia. Decades of promises—to phase out polluting brick kilns, control construction dust, and curb waste burning—have yielded little outcome as implementation remains abysmal, even during the tenure of a so-called environment-friendly interim administration. As a result, Dhaka's PM2.5 concentration now exceeds the World Health Organization's guideline by more than fifteenfold.

Officials are sometimes quick to refer to the transboundary nature of the pollution problem, but this deflection cannot hide their chronic governance failure. While external drift contributes, the majority of the problem—at least 56 percent of emissions—is generated right within the greater Dhaka area, fuelled primarily by thousands of non-compliant traditional brick kilns. The recent declaration of Savar Upazila as a "degraded airshed" to finally shut down conventional kilns is a warning that degrading air quality and policy failure have both been persistent. The government must understand that its environmental policy is failing to deliver on even core obligations, including protecting lives.

To break this deadly cycle, it must elevate the pursuit of clean air to a national priority, and act with the urgency that it demands. The time for symbolic gestures and advisory warnings is long over. A pollution czar, if you like, must be empowered with executive authority to enforce compliance across all government agencies, from holding city corporations accountable for waste management to mandating dust control on all public works. Furthermore, the closure of illegal brick kilns and other major sources of pollution must be pursued ruthlessly, not just in Dhaka but across all major cities, backed by severe financial and legal penalties. We cannot remain trapped in a cycle of toxic air and empty promises when the cost is so great.

Zero pass rate a sign of bigger problems

Address teacher shortage and other chronic issues behind the HSC debacle

We are concerned about the zero pass rates recorded in this year's HSC exams across many colleges. Reportedly, a total of 202 colleges has recorded zero pass rates, a sharp rise from 65 such institutions last year. The Dinajpur board topped the list with 43 zero-pass colleges, followed by Rajshahi (35), Dhaka (34), Mymensingh (15), and smaller numbers in Cumilla, Sylhet, and Barishal. Additionally, 37 technical institutions and 22 madrasas also saw all their students fail. Surprisingly, in one college, only two students appeared in the exams, and both failed, raising questions about whether this institution is functional at all.

According to an official, some colleges do not even conduct classes and are only discovered during the result publication process. That education boards remain unaware of the existence of such colleges demonstrates how poorly regulated the sector in general is. Of course, teacher shortage is a major contributing factor behind the debacle. For example, at Narayanganj's Naba Kisholoy High School and Girls' College, where all 25 examinees failed, there was no English teacher at the higher secondary level, and the ICT teacher was also unable to take classes. In Mymensingh's Trishul Ideal College, there are very few full-time teachers, and most classes are conducted by part timers. This is a serious issue that needs proper attention from the authorities. Moreover, irregular or poor salaries lead many teachers to frequently leave these colleges. For instance, at Kurigram's Rashed Khan Menon College, teachers have reportedly not received salaries for seven years, which is unthinkable.

Another major issue is that most of the colleges are non-MPO institutions, meaning teachers do not receive any government support. The 43 zero-pass colleges in Dinajpur and 15 in Mymensingh fall under this category. These institutions rely on small, irregular tuition fees, making it difficult to retain qualified teachers and carry out academic activities efficiently. Furthermore, child marriage, particularly in rural and low-income areas, contributes significantly to the problem. In Narayanganj's Naba Kisholoy college, for example, 13 of the 25 examinees were married off during the academic session.

We urge the authorities to address these issues urgently. The prevailing teacher crisis must be resolved, with proper measures to ensure regular salary payment. The respective education boards also must strengthen their supervision and provide necessary support to struggling colleges. As the Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee has directed all boards to submit reports on these institutions, we hope that the respective boards will take meaningful action based on the findings and address the root causes of this alarming situation.

EDITORIAL

Ports for private profit or national progress?



Ahamedul Karim Chowdhury is adjunct faculty at Bangladesh Maritime University, and former head of inland container depot at Kamalapur and Pangaon Inland Container Terminal under Chittagong Port Authority.

AHAMEDUL KARIM CHOWDHURY

Bangladesh's port privatisation debate has entered a decisive phase as global operators express strong interest in managing the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT), the under-construction Matarbari Deep Sea Port, and the proposed Bay Terminal. Supporters view this as an opportunity to enhance efficiency, attract technology and capital, and integrate Bangladesh into global logistics chains. But critics warn that premature concessions without a robust governance framework could jeopardise economic sovereignty, transparency, and control over critical infrastructure.

The NCT, built in 2007 at a cost of nearly Tk 2,000 crore, remains Chattogram port's most profitable facility, handling over 40 percent of container throughput and generating steady revenue for the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA). Despite the record, the government's plan to lease NCT to a foreign operator has sparked widespread concern. Originally designed for a landlord-model concession, NCT's operation was assumed locally after the 2007-08 political transition. The CPA later self-funded ten ship-to-shore cranes and proved that domestic expertise can deliver competitive results. Some stakeholders question why such a high-performing terminal must now be handed over when inefficiencies stem largely from customs clearance delays, channel depth, and inland connectivity, rather than port yard operations.

In this regard, it should be mentioned that following a writ petition challenging the legality of NCT management handover to a foreign operator, the High Court on July 30 issued a rule asking why the handover process should not be declared illegal, and why fair and competitive public bidding should not be ensured before appointing any operator. However, despite the writ being pending, the government has reportedly continued the process of the planned handover.

Internationally, port reforms succeed when sequencing and regulation are right. Governments typically invite foreign operators to develop greenfield terminals, demanding heavy capital, not to take over running and revenue-earning assets. Malaysia's Port of Tanjung Pelepas and India's Jawaharlal Nehru Port illustrate that privatisation works only within transparent regulatory frameworks. As Dr Peter de Langen, during a class at Erasmus University Rotterdam that I attended, noted, sustainable maritime reform requires political consensus, clear concession law, and an enforceable

competition policy.

India's example also offers a lesson here. After allowing private operators in major ports, India enacted a competition law specifically covering port concessions to prevent monopolistic control by a few global terminal operators. No single company is allowed to operate adjacent terminals within the same port complex, ensuring competitive pricing and performance. Bangladesh, however, lacks such protection. Without a competition act tailored to terminal operation, a dominant foreign operator could gain

The CPA's recent tariff hike—reportedly advised by the International Finance Corporation (IFC)—has added fuel to the controversy. While pricing reforms are necessary, the rationale should reflect service efficiency and local competitiveness, not investor appetite. Tariffs must be linked to measurable service delivery benchmarks such as berth productivity, crane moves per hour, and ship turnaround time. Without those, rate increases risk burdening exporters and importers without improving performance.

A more balanced framework is therefore urgently required. Bangladesh needs a comprehensive port reform act to define concession models, competition rules, and accountability mechanisms. This should include mandatory disclosure of concession contracts, an independent tariff setting authority, and periodic performance audits. Such measures are not barriers to private investment—they are the very foundations of credibility.

However, Bangladesh should not view foreign operators as adversaries. Global firms such as DP World, PSA International, or Hutchison Ports bring advanced automation, larger ship-handling capacity, and international connectivity networks. Their participation can accelerate Bangladesh's aspiration to become a South Asian logistics hub. But partnerships must remain transparent, time-bound, and reciprocal. Concession durations should be reasonable, revenue-sharing clearly defined, and mid-term reviews built into every agreement. Contracts must be published online, and citizen access to key performance data must be guaranteed.

The challenge lies not in whether Bangladesh should privatise but in how and when. If reforms proceed without governance, competition law, and regulatory oversight, the nation risks surrendering strategic control. Conversely, if Bangladesh builds



FILE PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Ports are not mere commercial assets; they are extensions of national territory and instruments of trade diplomacy.

excessive leverage over tariff setting, berth allocation, and even cargo prioritisation, undermining both fair trade and national interest.

The Matarbari Deep Sea Port, financed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), is the country's most strategic maritime investment. CPA has already spent a considerable amount developing its access channel and related infrastructure. Yet, even before Matarbari begins operation, the government has advanced the World Bank-supported Bay Terminal Marine Infrastructure Project. Experts fear that parallel megaprojects, planned without coordination of dredging depth, hinterland connectivity, and cargo forecasts, could lead to duplication and under-utilisation. Bangladesh must prioritise a unified national port master plan integrating Matarbari, Bay Terminal, and Chattogram port under one logistics vision rather than allowing overlapping concessions driven by external financiers.

Privatisation should serve as a means to modernisation, not an end pursued for short-term fiscal or political gains. Global partnerships can help upgrade equipment, digital systems, and logistics know-how—but only within a framework where national interest remains non-negotiable. Technology transfer clauses must be explicit, requiring foreign operators to train Bangladeshi professionals and share operational software and maintenance know-how.

Employment provisions have to secure local jobs rather than displacing CPA's skilled workforce, while performance bonds and KPI-based bonuses or penalties should ensure consistent standards. Moreover, oversight must evolve from passive supervision to active regulation. An independent national logistics commission could monitor concession compliance, publish benchmarking reports, and prevent conflicts of interest, along with its other responsibilities.

institutions first, then invites global players under fair rules, the result can be transformative. Efficiency, innovation, and private investment would then complement—not compromise—sovereignty.

Ultimately, ports are not mere commercial assets; they are extensions of national territory and instruments of trade diplomacy. Chattogram, Matarbari, and the Bay Terminal can together redefine Bangladesh's role in regional supply chains. Privatisation should align with a long-term maritime strategy that protects the public purse, nurtures domestic competence, and welcomes global expertise on Bangladesh's terms.

If done right, Bangladesh can create a model of public-private partnership rooted in accountability and competition—one that mirrors global best practice while defending its own economic sovereignty. If done wrong, it risks replacing state inefficiency with private monopoly. The choice is ours.

The dilemma triangle of tertiary education



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NAFIS EHSAS CHOWDHURY

As soon as our HSC, A-Level, or equivalent examinations come to an end, a vast ocean of possibilities opens before us. However, the majority proceed to pursue higher education without much clarity of mind or thought about their future career paths, even in their late teens. Sometimes, we wander away for a while to explore entrepreneurship, but most of us eventually fall back on education, hoping that the next degree will bring us closer to stability. If not, there are Master's programmes at our disposal—avenues through which we can even change disciplines while cluelessly derailing our twenties.

Despite being largely regarded as a gateway to prosperity and social mobility, tertiary education is in profound crisis. This crisis is especially visible in developing nations, where the pressure to don a graduation cap outweighs the pursuit of knowledge. The core challenges facing higher education today—often described as the "dilemma triangle"—collectively undermine the quality, purpose, and value of university degrees, impeding genuine socio-economic development and the realisation of individual potential.

To begin with, the first corner of this dilemma is inflated "status symbolisation." In many societies, including ours, a university degree has tragically mutated from a mark of intellectual achievement into a social commodity. It has become a prerequisite for familial reputation, a good marriage, or a comfortable seat in the corporate hierarchy. This societal pressure ensures that the act of enrolment and the possession of the certificate become the primary goals, relegating the actual educational experience to a secondary concern.

The second vertex of the triangle represents the systemic flaw of "oversimplified access." Due to rapid and largely unregulated expansion, tertiary education has been compromised in terms of academic quality. Driven by political agendas to increase enrolment rates and by institutions' thirst for maximum revenue—without balancing service delivery to appropriate standards—access to higher education has become remarkably easy in certain contexts. While democratising education is a noble goal, when access is expanded without corresponding investment in quality control, faculty

development, or infrastructure, the entire system stands on precarious ground.

Admission criteria are sometimes designed to enrol large numbers of students. Consequently, oversized class sizes hinder meaningful student-teacher interaction, and compressed curricula leave little room for purposeful learning.

For many universities, particularly private and profit-oriented ones, the incentive leans more towards retaining students than fostering their tenacity.

This also results in grade inflation and lenient assessments, allowing students to progress through the system without mastering foundational concepts.

The final, and arguably most insidious, aspect is "guided ignorance." Systemic failure is embedded within the educational process itself, where institutions actively guide students towards compliance and superficial knowledge rather than encouraging independent thought. It is the by-product of "status symbolisation," which creates the demand for easy credentials, and "oversimplified access," which makes those credentials attainable through convenient shortcuts.

A lack of emphasis on critical analysis, coupled with curricula that are often outdated or disconnected from modern industry needs, provides fertile ground for "guided ignorance" to hide in plain sight. Students are often taught what to know, but seldom how to learn, evaluate, or adapt. The educational environment discourages intellectual risk-taking, complex problem-solving, and cross-disciplinary thinking—qualities that should ideally serve as

the cornerstones of genuine innovation and leadership. Unfortunately, the focus remains on passing standardised exams that test memory retention rather than conceptual application.

On a broader note, the glorification of the leadership mindset and the pursuit of high status positions are quietly eroding the fundamentally important sense of personal responsibility and accountability among the younger generation—an especially harmful trend for a developing nation like ours. Overcoming this inertia requires a fundamental rewiring of both the purpose and infrastructure of tertiary education, as well as a shift in socio-economic perspectives. Institutions must move their focus from credentialling to capability-building, while the younger generation should be able to chart futures that make them work-ready and resourceful much earlier in life. This calls for reforming curricula to emphasise critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and entrepreneurial skills.

Furthermore, the demand extends to investing in a highly qualified and dedicated teaching force at all levels. Most importantly, society must collectively attain the maturity to challenge the perception that an academic degree is an assured status symbol, and instead insist that it represents genuine intellectual and professional preparedness. Only by systematically dismantling the entire dilemma triangle can we restore the integrity and value of higher education for the next generation of nation-builders.

The unfinished revolution for women's political rights



Dr Samina Luthfa
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of Sociology in Dhaka University.

SAMINA LUTHFA

For more than five decades, women's representation in Bangladesh's national parliament, the place where political and state policies are shaped, has remained very low, despite the introduction of reserved seats for female candidates. Nonetheless, research shows that reserved seats do not translate into real political power for women. Thus, post July 2024, it became an important agenda for the discourse on female political participation.

Women's participation in the uprising was not merely symbolic; they stood at the forefront as leaders with agency and courage. Women's visibility is often strategically employed during political rallies—either to discourage law enforcement from using repressive tactics, or, if they are attacked, to generate public sympathy that can strengthen the movement. But in the July uprising, even if female students' participation in the earlier phase was strategic, once the killings started, women took charge with genuine leadership and decision-making power. Women from all walks of life—mothers, homemakers, doctors, teachers, journalists, regardless of their profession—took bold steps to protect students and other protesters, organised rallies, and provided shelter and other strategic support necessary to sustain the movement on the ground.

As a result, it was expected that women would have a visible and central role in policymaking in the post-July discussions on political reform. However, we saw only a few women in the interim government cabinet. Besides, none of the three student advisers appointed to the cabinet were women. This immediately raised concerns that women were being sidelined. If you look at the photographs or screen grabs from August 5, 2024, the presence of women among anti-discrimination student leaders is hardly visible.

Later, we saw deliberate efforts from certain groups to restrict women's physical movement as well as rampant harassment of women in cyberspace. There were even some seminars and discussions on women's issues held in the capital, where all the speakers were men. This created a perception that women were being deliberately excluded.

There are both social and political reasons behind this exclusion. Politics in Bangladesh has never been a safe or welcoming space for women. It relies heavily on money and muscle power—areas where women are often perceived as disadvantaged. This perception has some basis: women still lack equal rights to property and wealth. Even the rights that religion grants to women are not fully realised in Bangladesh. Even working women often do not have full authority over their earnings. Major family decisions in a household, such as marriage, education, or medical spending, are still taken by men.

With little to no property ownership and limited control over their earnings, it becomes extremely difficult for women to participate in the money-driven world of electoral politics. Besides, politics is often conflict-ridden, and women are less visible in those confrontational spaces.

Patriarchal values, both in society and among women themselves, reinforce this exclusion. Families, the state, and even colleagues often create social and institutional barriers that prevent women from fully participating in political discussions. This has been blatantly displayed by the lack of females in the meetings of the all-male consensus commission, where political parties did not bring their female colleagues during the most important discussions about our politics.

Moreover, because most women receive little support from men in sharing household responsibilities, they bear a double burden—

managing both domestic and professional duties—which becomes a triple burden when they also engage in activism. Since politics demands full time commitment, many women hesitate to join this profession, not because of a lack of ability, but because the system makes it unsustainable for them.

Despite these structural barriers, we had hoped that the uprising would create an opportunity to strengthen women's political

for increasing women's representation in parliament following both the Constitution Reform Commission and the Electoral Reform Commission's proposals. We expected that, after decades of reserved seats that failed to ensure genuine empowerment, the focus would now shift towards direct elections.

We, the Forum for Women's Political Rights, proposed that if our society is not yet ready for full direct elections, the reserved

remained, without any promise of direct elections.

Another major concern for women in politics is the cost of elections. Given the role of money in politics, we have demanded reforms to ensure fairness. Specifically, we proposed that the government finance the campaign expenses of all female candidates as part of the gender budgeting framework, which the government already promotes internationally. The state should provide campaign funds to all female candidates who will later submit expenditure reports within three months, regardless of election results.

The fate of these proposals remains uncertain, as recent events offer little confidence that women's voices are being included in political decision-making. For example, many of the 32 political parties involved in the July Charter discussions had little or no real public support, yet they were invited to the table, while women, who make up half the population, were not. The government never formally met with women's groups or leaders to discuss the charter clauses, despite Bangladesh's long and respected history of women's movements. The complete exclusion of women from these processes is not just a failure; it is an embarrassment for the government and for the so-called "human rights champions" and NGO leaders who are part of it.

This is an opportunity lost due to the inaction and indifference of the government and our party leaders. The consensus-building process could have been a chance to include women, gender-diverse communities, and other marginalised groups in shaping a more inclusive, equitable Bangladesh. Unfortunately, they were left out. The system that women trusted has drawn a charter that hardly reflects the aspirations of women and these groups. Therefore, the Forum for Women's Political Rights has formally rejected the July Charter.

The forum met the Election Commission, political leaders, and civil society organisations through roundtables, conferences, and press briefings to demand that women be included in the political process in a meaningful way. We know we have not yet succeeded. But our fight for women's political rights will continue. This is a long race, and we are preparing for it. We will keep working, with even greater determination, in the days to come.



FILE PHOTO: TITU DAS
In the July uprising, even if female students' participation in the earlier phase was strategic, they eventually took charge with genuine leadership and decision-making power.

voice through greater representation in new political platforms and the interim government. Yet, the government delayed forming the Women's Affairs Reform Commission. When it was finally formed and the commission submitted its report, the members faced harassment and intimidation. Worse still, the government failed to stand by the commission members and did not include the report's suggestions in the consensus talks. This left many women feeling betrayed, with neither the government nor the political parties taking their concerns seriously.

Still, women continued to trust the reform process and saw it as a significant opportunity

seats provision can continue temporarily, but the seats should be filled through direct voting. We also demanded that political parties increase the percentage of female candidates they nominate for general seats. The Representation of the People Order (RPO), 1972, required every political party to ensure 33 percent female representation in its committees by 2020, but parties repeatedly failed the deadline that was later extended to 2030 through an amendment in 2023. When we spoke with the parties, we were disappointed to see their reluctance to our most basic demands, such as 33 percent nominations for women. Reserved seats

A bitter brew: Climate change and the decline of Sylhet's tea gardens



MIND THE GAP

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NOSHIN NAWAL

There's a certain poetic irony in the fact that while we sip our morning cha and post inspirational quotes about climate change on social media, the tea leaves themselves are quietly dying. Sylhet, once described as a place where the hills smelled faintly of tannins and nostalgia, now smells more like apprehension. Climate change is not knocking at our door politely anymore. It is behind the kitchen counter, stirring the pot and casually spilling hot tea all over our economy.

Bangladesh ranks as the ninth-largest tea producer in the world. Sylhet and its surrounding districts, Moulvibazar and Habiganj, account for the vast majority of production. These emerald slopes, immortalised in colonial postcards and honeymoon photos, yield around 9.7 crore

kilograms of tea a year. But the romance ends there. The Bangladesh Tea Research Institute (BTRI) reports that yields at the historic Malnicherra Tea Estate, the oldest one in Bangladesh, have been declining by about 110 kg per hectare every year between 2012 and 2017. This conveys the message that our tea gardens are slowly bleeding out.

The weather in Sylhet has developed the emotional stability of a reality TV contestant. In the first three months of 2024, the region recorded significantly lower rainfall compared to the amount during the same period the previous year. By April 2024, Sylhet recorded 39.2 degrees Celsius, the highest temperature in history between 2006 and 2025. The tea bushes, delicate as they are, now face an existential dilemma: drown or dehydrate.

Tea plants are fussy by nature. They thrive on balance. But instead of moderate rainfall and gentle sunshine, they now endure flash floods followed by droughts—sometimes in the same week. Pest infestations have also become more aggressive, as warmer, wetter conditions turn Sylhet into an all-you-can-eat buffet for fungi and insects. To survive, farmers have resorted to chemical pesticides that degrade soil and pollute water. This resulted in lower yields, weaker plants, and suffocating humidity in which the workers spend their days plucking leaves while coughing through pesticide fumes.

And if you thought the suffering ends with the plants, think again. The real cost of your cup of cha is paid by the workers who pluck its leaves. There are over three lakh tea workers in Bangladesh, and nearly three-quarters of them are women. Many belong to marginalised ethnic communities and live in tin-roofed quarters that leak during every monsoon. When yields drop, their incomes fall too, because pay depends on how many leaves they can pick. For them, climate change is not an abstract debate—it is dinner.

Meanwhile, in air-conditioned conference rooms in Dhaka, someone would soon host yet another "stakeholder dialogue" on climate-smart agriculture. There will be

slides, buzzwords and polite nodding. Then everyone will go home and drink imported coffee. Because why invest in irrigation systems, shade trees, and better wages when you can have a lovely panel discussion instead?

The BTRI has made some progress in developing drought-tolerant cultivars, but the work remains painfully small in scale. What Sylhet's tea gardens need is not another pilot project—they need real policy muscle. Irrigation canals, soil conservation, agroforestry, fair-trade wages, and credit support for smallholders are no longer optional. Without them, the industry will continue to crumble under a heatwave of neglect.

Globally, tea prices have been falling even as production costs rise. The result is a cruel paradox: farmers work harder for less, while consumers demand cheaper blends. We chase discounts like Olympic medals, never stopping to think who is actually paying for them. That "Buy One Get One" box of teabags is not a bargain—it is a warning. Discounted tea today is tomorrow's scarcity, neatly packaged with a smile.

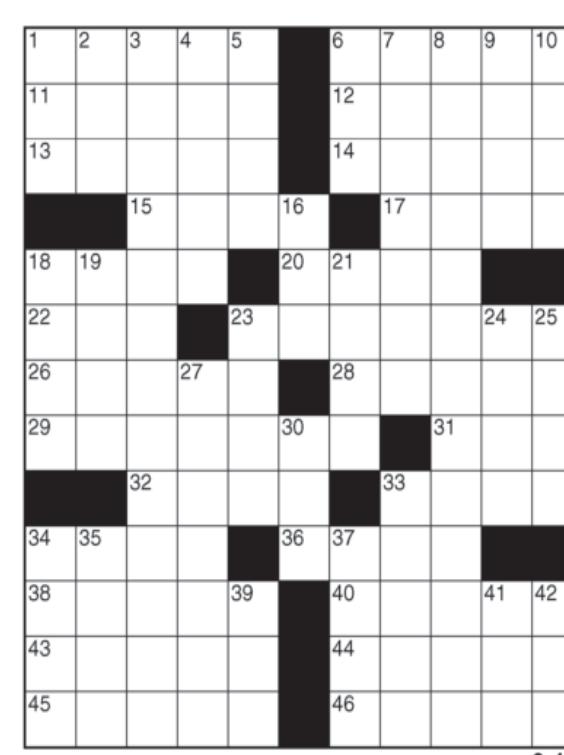
Projections by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) indicate that tea cultivation areas could shrink by 2050, and climate models forecast a 40

percent decline in tea yields in Northeast India and adjacent regions. Tea is not merely an export item; it is woven into the country's cultural fabric. It is what we start our mornings with, soothe our tempers with, and survive our politics with. Losing it would be like losing a national ritual—the one thing that unites us, regardless of how divided we are about everything else.

And yet, we remain blissfully oblivious. As long as the kettle boils, the problem does not seem to exist to us. But here is the inconvenient truth: the storm has already arrived in your cup. Every sip you take now carries the flavour of a changing climate, the bitterness of exploitation, and the faint aroma of apathy.

Perhaps the next time we sit down with a steaming cup of cha, we should pause for a moment of inconvenient gratitude. Because that comforting sip comes from a plant that is burning, a worker who is sweating, and a planet that is begging for a break. Climate change is not just altering the weather—it is rewriting the taste of tradition.

So, drink your tea slowly, savour it deeply, and remember: Sylhet's hills are not eternal. They are whispering, warning, and wilting—one leaf at a time. And if we do not start listening soon, the only thing left to steep will be regret.



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



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ACROSS
1 Intense beam
6 Unmovable
11 Sung story
12 Plain silly
13 J.R. Ewing, for one
14 Evil spirit
15 Movie pooch
17 Budget item
18 Muscle quality
20 Movie pooch
22 Outdated
23 Passes along, as a present
26 Cover words
28 Shop turner
29 Augment
31 Derby, e.g.
32 Amorous archer
33 Fine study
34 Amazon rodent

36 A fan of
38 Japanese cartoon genre
40 "Lou Grant" star
43 Loosen, as laces
44 "Superman" star
45 Tier
46 TV oldie "Ben —"

DOWN
1 Whole bunch
2 Clumsy one
3 Emmy-winning HBO series
4 Wipe away
5 Crazy talk
6 Relieve (of)
7 Resistance to change
8 Emmy-winning HBO series
9 A party to
10 Car scar
16 Consumed
18 Pledge week premium
19 Ken of "thirtysomething"
21 Lusty look
23 Nevada city
24 Not this
25 Filming sites
27 1960s TV western
30 CBS series with spinoffs
33 Puzzled
34 Giamatti of "Billions"
35 "True Blood" star Paquin
37 Dealer's foe
39 Poetic "always"
41 Genesis woman
42 Spanish king

Yamada Yoji to receive Lifetime Achievement Award at Tokyo Film Festival

Japanese cinema legend Yamada Yoji will be honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 38th Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF), celebrating a storied career spanning over six decades and 91 films.

The festival will also screen Yamada's latest film, *Tokyo Taxi*, starring Chieko Baisho and Takuya Kimura. Adapted from the 2023 French hit *Driving*



Madeleine, the film will serve as TIFF's official centrepiece before its nationwide release on November 21. Yamada will appear at a special talk session alongside *Kokuhō* director Lee Sang-il at the TIFF Lounge.

A cultural icon, Yamada has received some of Japan's highest honours, including the Order of Culture (2012), recognition as a Person of Cultural Merit (2004), and designation as an Honorary Citizen of Tokyo (2014).

The 38th Tokyo International Film Festival will take place from October 27 to November 5 in the Hibiya-Yurakucho-Marunouchi Ginza district.



'IN SEARCH OF PEACE' A spark of artistic serenity

AISHWARYA RAIHAN

Galerie Zoom at Alliance Française de Dhaka (AFD) inaugurated a solo art exhibition by Sadrul Rafi titled *In Search of Peace* on October 17, 2025. The event was graced by Ekushey Padak-winning artist Professor Shahjahan Ahmed Bikash, who praised Rafi's artistic finesse and the depth of his imagination.

Artist Sadrul Rafi invites viewers into his distinct world of creative exploration, where he masterfully blends diverse techniques and mediums. His work reflects the inspiration of artistic greats such as Picasso, Michelangelo, Botticelli, and Monet, alongside the profound influence of Bangladeshi masters like Safiuddin Ahmed, SM Sultan, and Zainul Abedin. Coincidentally, Rafi shares his birthday – October 25 – with Pablo Picasso, a connection he regards as a blessing from the universe.

Inspired by Picasso's *Guernica* (a powerful anti-war painting), Rafi has created his own interpretation that



captures his personal thoughts and struggles. His delicately illustrated white bird stands as a symbol of peace and a tribute to his admiration for Picasso and his art. Among his works, one of the most striking pieces depicts pots of soup and a tiny bird; rendered in soft, soothing hues, crisp lines, and a gentle sense of charm.

The artist demonstrates remarkable precision, patience, and dedication through his ink drawings. Rich in colour and vibrancy, his works maintain a harmonious balance, and each

PHOTOS: AISHWARYA RAIHAN

composition feels visually soothing.

Rafi shared that his art aims to inspire the younger generation. He hopes children and young adults will nurture their minds through creative expression so that they may find peace in a world full of chaos. Through his work, he envisions a more inclusive and harmonious society.

In Search of Peace may be a small-scale exhibition, but it presents a thoughtful glimpse into the artist's mind and soul. The showcase at AFD will remain open to visitors until October 28, 2025.

James announces marriage, welcomes newborn son

Legendary rock musician Nagarbaul James has announced the birth of his son, Gibran Anam, with his wife, US-born Bangladeshi Namia Amin (now Namia Anam).

The baby was born on June 8, 2025, at Huntington Hospital in New York. Speaking to The Daily Star, James said, "The feeling of becoming a father is extraordinary. Please pray for the mother and the baby."

James and Namia married in Dhaka on June 12, 2024, a year after meeting in Los Angeles. This marks the musician's third marriage; he has three children from previous marriages.



WHAT'S THE HAPS?

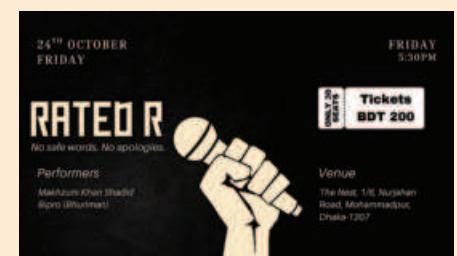
'Rated R'

Rated R brings a fearless comedy experience with Makhzum Khan Shadid and Bipro (Bhuriman). Blending dark humour with unflinching truths, the show shatters boundaries, and strips away filters, it challenges audiences and redefines contemporary stand-up for the daring and curious.

DATE: FRIDAY | OCT 24, 2025

TIME: 5:30 PM ONWARDS

VENUE: THE NEST, NURJAHAN ROAD



NEWS

Judges may hold executive posts

FROM PAGE 12

The drafting of the ordinance gained momentum after an HC bench on September 2 directed the government to establish a separate secretariat for the SC within three months.

Following the hearing of a writ petition, the HC declared article 116 unconstitutional and ordered that the corresponding provision of the 1972 constitution be reinstated. The earlier provision had empowered the SC to deal with transfers, promotions, and discipline of lower court judges.

The draft ordinance said the SC secretariat would be given the status of a ministry-level entity, with full authority over planning, formulation, budget, expenditure management, of judiciary-related projects.

The secretariat would also oversee subordinate courts, administrative tribunals, all judicial officers and staff, as well as all issues regarding their discipline, control and postings, it said.

Once the SC secretariat is set up, it will be able to directly communicate with any ministry or division of the

Israel must ensure

FROM PAGE 12

refugees, also worked for the Hamas group it is fighting in Gaza, reports AFP. US Vice President JD Vance yesterday cautioned there were challenges ahead both in terms of disarming Hamas and rebuilding Gaza as part of a US-brokered ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinian movement.

"We have a very, very tough task ahead of us, which is to disarm Hamas but rebuild Gaza, to make life better for the people of Gaza, but also to ensure that Hamas is no longer a threat to our friends in Israel," Vance said during a joint press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem.

Amnesty hails

FROM PAGE 2

justice for victims," said the rights organisation.

Amnesty urged the authorities to ensure that the proceedings adhere to international human rights standards, including guarantees of due process, the right to a fair trial, and the use of civilian courts for the hearings.

The rights body also called on the government to refrain from imposing the death penalty.

Tug-of-war for water lily continues

FROM PAGE 12

Assembly behind the president and Speaker's seats, positioned for clear visibility. It will be exhibited in the president's office at Bangabhaban, other official workplaces, and conference rooms, and the same applies to the prime minister's offices.

It may be displayed during functions or meetings presided over by the president, on vehicles used by the president and prime minister, behind the chief justice's seat in the Supreme Court, and at embassies and high commissions during national day ceremonies. It may also appear on the president and prime minister's official letterheads.

Rule 5 states that no one else may use the national emblem without written government permission, nor may it appear in trademarks, designs, patents, or for trade or professional purposes.

NCP AND EC'S BACK-AND-FORTH

On June 22, NCP submitted its registration application to the EC, proposing three symbols: water lily, pen, and mobile phone. In follow-up letters dated August 3 and September 24, the party revised its preference to a white or red water lily.

The EC wrote back on September 30 asking the party to choose from the list of allocable symbols and submit its choice by October 7.

However, in another letter, it asked the party to select a symbol by October 19. That day, NCP sought a written explanation from the EC regarding the criteria for including or excluding symbols.

Earlier on July 9, the EC decided not to include the water lily as an electoral symbol under the Election Conduct Rules. Election Commissioner Abdur Rahaman Masud had said, "We've already decided in principle that the water lily will not be included in the symbol list, primarily because it is part of the national emblem."

Asked about NCP's push to secure the water lily through amendments to electoral rules, he said the matter would be decided collectively within the commission.

Meanwhile, NCP Chief Coordinator

Nasiruddin Patwary on October 9 said his party would not accept registration without its desired symbol. "The EC now faces two options: either cancel symbols like dhan [paddy], tara [star], and sonali aash [golden fibre] or allocate shapla [water lily]. We do not want symbols of any fraternal political parties to be cancelled."

About parties such as BNP using symbols linked to the national emblem, an election commissioner said, "Before 2001, the EC would sit with political parties on the day of symbol allocation ahead of national elections and assign symbols. It was a norm that parties had contested with earlier."

Ahead of the 2008 election, the EC introduced party registration and, in accordance with the Electoral Conduct Rules 2008, allocated a specific symbol to each registered party while reserving others for independents.

"The BNP first used its symbol [sheaf of paddy] in the 1979 election, and it was formally designated as the party's symbol ahead of the 2008 polls as well. Why revisit a matter that has long been settled?" the commissioner said, requesting anonymity.

Explaining why other elements of the national emblem were allocated to parties, EC Tahmidia said, "The issue of the water lily only recently came up, and the commission now needs to make a decision. The water lily is the main element of the emblem. The other elements are decorative additions, but the foundation of it is the water lily."

Speaking to this newspaper, NCP Senior Joint Member Secretary Nahida Sarwar Niva said the party wants the water lily because it's a symbol widely accepted by people. "During our mass marches in July, we saw public enthusiasm for the water lily. That is why we believe using it is an effective way to connect with the people."

3 teens jailed

FROM PAGE 12

the sentences under the relevant laws. As the convicts are juveniles, the punishments were determined following the Children Act," he added.

According to the case statement, the victim was an HSC second-year student. On March 18 this year, while returning home after visiting her father's grave in South Pangashia village, the girl was raped.

The next day, the victim filed a case with Dumki Police Station under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act. She died by suicide on April 26 at a house in Dhaka.

The victim's father was killed in police firing during the July uprising last year in Mohammadpur.

Russia, Ukraine pound each other

FROM PAGE 12

Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday backed US leader Donald Trump's proposal to make the current front line the basis for negotiations with Russia, but doubted his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin would accept it.

On October 15, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul told reporters that the draft ordinance would be sent to the advisory council within a few weeks.

At several past events, he expressed hope that a SC secretariat would be set up within the tenure of this government. The committee also recommended using the term "servant" instead of "officer" throughout the draft ordinance.

Clauses 12(7) and (8) will provide the chief justice with the authority to allocate and use a budget for the SC. The committee advised that the finance ministry's inputs be sought on these matters.

The committee also recommended

removing this clause, noting that the government already has specific ministries and departments to carry out such functions.

It also suggested scrapping clause 12(4), which said any proposal from the SC secretariat regarding the judiciary's expenditure limit cannot be changed without consultation with the chief justice.

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NEWS

Buet student sent to jail over 'hurting religious sentiment'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent Buet student Sreeshant Roy to jail in a case filed under the Cyber Security Ordinance for allegedly hurting religious sentiments on social media.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Ehsanul Islam passed the order after police produced him before the court.

Earlier in the day, Buet security officer Afgan Hossain filed the case against Sreeshant with Chawkbazar Police Station, accusing him of posting derogatory comments about women and religion on a social media platform, said SI Abdur Razzaq, duty officer of the police station.

According to the case statement, Sreeshant posted the comments between June 8 and September 7.

Around 10:30pm on Tuesday, Afgan and some Buet students detained Sreeshant at Ahsan Ullah Hall after screenshots of his remarks went viral, sparking widespread outrage and protests on campus.

He was later handed over to Chawkbazar Police Station.

Following protests, Buet authorities suspended him from the university the same night.



A railway official inspects damaged sleepers while being pushed on a trolley along the Ishwardi-Chatmohar route in Pabna. Sleepers under the tracks have been breaking down, with nuts and bolts coming loose, making train movement through the Chalan Beel area risky. The photo was taken yesterday at Dilpashar Railway Station in Bhangura upazila.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Fire service struggles with limited

FROM PAGE 3

Fire service officials said the absence of basic safety measures made both operations difficult.

Brig Gen (retd) Ali Ahmed Khan, another former fire service DG, said KPI areas like airports and EPZs should remain under constant surveillance.

"Even if a fire breaks out, it shouldn't burn for so long. Despite the presence of the airport's own capable fire service unit, the delay in controlling the fire indicates negligence," he said.

He called for a full investigation into the causes and response failures.

Major (retd) Shakil Newaz, former director (operations) of the fire service, said weak preparedness and administrative complications caused the delays in response.

The Mirpur chemical warehouse fire broke out around 11:30am on October 14 and took about 27 hours

to control.

Earlier, on September 22, three fire service officials died while tackling another warehouse fire in Tongi's Saha Market area.

Contacted, fire service DG Brig Gen Muhammad Jahed Kamal said several measures are underway to enhance the department's capacity.

"Modern buildings now use highly flammable decorative materials that make fires spread fast. When we arrive after it reaches the 'developed stage', it naturally takes longer to control," he said.

He said in cases involving chemicals, firefighters must act cautiously to avoid further hazards. "Since most institutions lack basic firefighting systems, small fires often turn into massive incidents, causing further delays," he said.

According to fire service sources, following a meeting chaired by the

disaster management ministry secretary on May 4, a proposal was sent to the Ministry of Industries to enhance the fire service's capacity for chemical disaster risk reduction, response, search, and rescue operations.

The proposal includes allocating one Hazmat tender -- a specialised emergency response vehicle for hazardous materials -- for each divisional city and for stations near land, river, and airport areas, alongside all necessary equipment.

"Since parliament was dissolved over a year ago, it's not possible to make the system effective under the current provisions," he said.

He argued that the 2011 verdict, delivered by a bench led by then Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque, contained "serious flaws" and went beyond judicial jurisdiction.

"The judges took on responsibilities meant for the parliament or the executive," he said.

Bhuiyan added that the 2006 political crisis was not caused by faults in the caretaker system but by constitutional violations when the then president assumed the role of chief adviser.

He said the current interim government was formed under public mandate and would hand over power to the next elected government.

After yesterday's hearing, the Supreme Court set today to resume proceedings on the matter.

On August 27, the Appellate Division allowed BNP and five citizens, including Badru Alam Majumder, to move two appeals against the 2011 verdict.

BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, five citizens, and freedom fighter Mofazzal Islam filed review petitions last year, arguing that the caretaker system introduced through political consensus -- was part of the constitution's basic structure.

The 13th Amendment was declared void on May 10, 2011, and the 15th Amendment, passed on June 30, 2011, formally abolished the caretaker system.

Lawyer seeks

FROM PAGE 3

In response to the chief justice's query about when the system would become effective if revived, Bhuiyan said the 13th Amendment required forming a caretaker government within 15 days of parliament's dissolution.

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Migrant workers

FROM PAGE 3

recruitment costs, joblessness, underpayment, and deportation.

"The agreement clearly prohibits any recruitment agency or employer from charging workers unauthorised fees or deducting costs from their salaries -- a critical safeguard that protects workers and ensures accountability on both sides," Al-Rajhi said.

He said domestic workers would also benefit from defined roles, fair terms, and job-readiness preparation before leaving home.

"The agreement also guarantees that every worker's salary will be paid directly into a bank account in their name, reinforcing our commitment to wage protection and financial transparency," the Saudi minister said.

To ensure accountability and progress, a joint technical committee will meet regularly to monitor implementation, review challenges, and recommend improvements, according to the statement.

DHAKA THURSDAY OCTOBER 23, 2025

KARTIK 7, 1432 BS

The Daily Star

9

35 trafficking victims rescued in Teknaf

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Border Guard Bangladesh rescued 35 trafficking victims and arrested three suspected traffickers with local weapons in Teknaf, Cox's Bazar on Tuesday.

The BGB-2 Teknaf Battalion conducted two operations in Teknaf on the day.

Lt Col Ashiqur Rahman, commanding officer of the Teknaf Battalion, yesterday said they rescued six hostages from the hills early on Tuesday, and later that night, another raid on Marine Drive beach led to the rescue of 29 victims.

The detainees were identified as Md Salim, 35, and Md Nurul Absar, 19, both from Teknaf's Maheshkhaliya Para; and Monsur Alam, 22, a resident of Kutupalong Rohingya camp.

BGB said at least seven other suspected traffickers are on the run.

During the operation, BGB seized a locally made knife, a motorcycle, and an engine-run wooden boat.

Lt Col Ashiqur said all the rescued victims would be handed over to the concerned authorities. Legal action is underway against the three arrested traffickers.

Bangladesh Bank

Common Services Department-2

Head Office

Dhaka

Website: www.bangladeshbank.org.bd

Invitation for Re-Tender Through Web

Re-Tender No. CSD-2(EES):25/HO/Premises//Electrical/Maintenance/2025-99

Date: 22/10/2025

Re-Tenders through electronic media (e-Tenders) are invited from the bona fide contractors/firms for "Daily operation, maintenance, repairing and servicing of electrical system viz. 4 Nos. Electrical Substations, 11KV AVR, Diesel Generator, Internal and External electrification related works including DB, BBT, Cabling, Electrical Points etc. installed at Bangladesh Bank, Head Office Premises buildings and outer periphery Motijheel, Dhaka. Necessary information are given below:

01 Procuring entity : Common Services Department-2, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka
02 Source of funds : Bangladesh Bank's own fund.
03 Invitation for Re-Tender No. : CSD-2(EES):25/HO/Premises/Electrical/Maintenance/2025-99
04 Method of procurement : Open Tendering Method (OTM); National.
05 Qualification of Re-Tenderer

a) The minimum number of years of general experience of the Tenderer in Electrical Installation/Maintenance Works shall be 10 (Ten) years.

b) The minimum specific experience as a Prime Contractor in Daily Operation and Maintenance work of Electrical Installation including 2500KVA or above capacity Electrical Substation (Transformer, HT< Switchgear, PFI plant, 11KV AVR etc.), Diesel Generator (minimum 400KVA) Internal Electrification (for at least 20-storied building) including Busbar Trunking System (BBT) and other External Electrification works completed during last 05 (Five) years under a single contract worth not less than Tk. 1.85 crore (Taka One Crore Eighty-five) only in any government/semi-government/autonomous organization of Bangladesh.

Liquid asset/Credit facility shall be Tk 43.00 Lac (Taka Forty-three Lac) only. In case of credit facilities Bank shall ensure that abovementioned credit limits will be given if the said works is awarded to the contractor.

The Tenderer shall have 1 (one) No. 2500 KVA or above capacity Substation Operation, Servicing & Maintenance work ongoing in any govt/semi-govt/autonomous organization of Bangladesh.

Tenderer shall have to fulfill the qualification criteria stipulated in the Tender Documents; failing which the Tender shall be rejected and considered as non-responsive.

06 Web address of receiving tender : <https://etender.bb.org.bd/>
07 Tender document price : Tk 4,000.00 (Taka Four Thousand) only
08 Last date and time of selling tender document : 02/11/2025 up to 6:00pm.

09 Name & address of the offices receiving tender security & other documentary evidence : Director (Engg.: Electromechanical), Common Services Department-2 (7th Floor of 30-storied Building). Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.

10 Last date and time for submission of tender document through web. : 03/11/2025 up to 1:00pm.

11 Last date and time for receiving original tender security and tender submission letter : 03/11/2025 up to 1:00pm.

12 Date, time and place for tender opening : All Tenders shall be opened at Common Services Department-2 (7th Floor of 30-storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka on 03/11/2025 at 1:15pm (Intending Tenderer or their authorized representative are allowed to attend the Tender Opening).

13 Brief description of the goods and related works : Daily operation, maintenance, repairing and servicing of Electrical System viz. 4 Nos. 11/0.15KV Electrical Substation, 3 Set 11KV AVR(Set-3 Nos.), DG Set, 4 Nos. BBT, internal and external electrification related works including DB, Cabling, Electrical Points etc. installed at Bangladesh Bank, Head Office Premises buildings and outer periphery Motijheel, Dhaka except ICT Related Power Distribution System.

14 Time for completion of the work : 36 (Thirty-Six) months from the date of issuing the Award of Contract.

15 Tender security : BDT 9.00 lac (Taka Nine Lac) only.

i) The Tenderer shall submit tender and scanned copy of documentary evidence through Bangladesh Bank Website (e-Tendering) & must have valid e-mail address for registration & participation in e-tendering.

ii) Original PO/BD/Bank Guarantee as Tender Security along with Original Tender submission letter(PSN-1) shall reach at Director (Engg: Electromechanical), Common Services Department-2, within stipulated date and time mentioned in TDS.

iii) Tenderer shall provide all documentary evidences (original or attested whichever necessary) as per tender document, failing which the Tender shall be considered as non-responsive.

iv) Tenderer shall submit Valid ABC Supervisory and Electrical Contracting License from Electrical Licensing Board, Bangladesh.

v) The Tenderer shall submit "PSN-1", "PSN-2", "PSN-3" and "PSN-4" as per format given in Tender Document and attached during submission of tender through e-Tender (as pdf format)

vi) Furnishing of any false, misleading documents shall result in rejection of tender and shall lead to action under Rules 127 of PPR 2008 or same as PPR 2025.

vii) All sorts of safety and security measures shall be carried out by the Contractor during execution of work.

viii) Bank reserves all right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever. No claim will be entertained in this regard.


Sudhangshu Kumar Sarker
Director (Engg. Electromechanical)
Common Services Department
Phone: 88-02-9530490

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা
কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

GD-2336

DCP 48/2025-2831
Date: 22-10-2025

GD-2234

Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank
Head Office, Common Services Department
272, Banalata C/A, Airport Road, Rajshahi
Tel: 02588-820101, Mobile: 01708-806010
E-mail: dgmcse@rakub.org.bd, Website: www.rakub.org.bd

Tender Ref. No. CSD/GR/e-GP OTM/2025-2026/01 Date: 22.10.2025

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for Design, Printing, Binding & Supply of Wall Calendar for the year 2026 and related services as stated below:

Sl. No.	e-Tender ID No.	Tender Reference No.	Description of work	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time
01	1160627	CSD/GR-e-GP OTM/2025-2026/01	Design, Printing, Binding & Supply of Wall Calendar for the year 2026 and related services.	02 Nov, 2025, 16:00pm	03 Nov, 2025, 13:00pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

CHARTING the south's path

Review of 'Apostles of Development: Six Economists and the World They Made' (Penguin Viking, 2025) by David C. Engerman

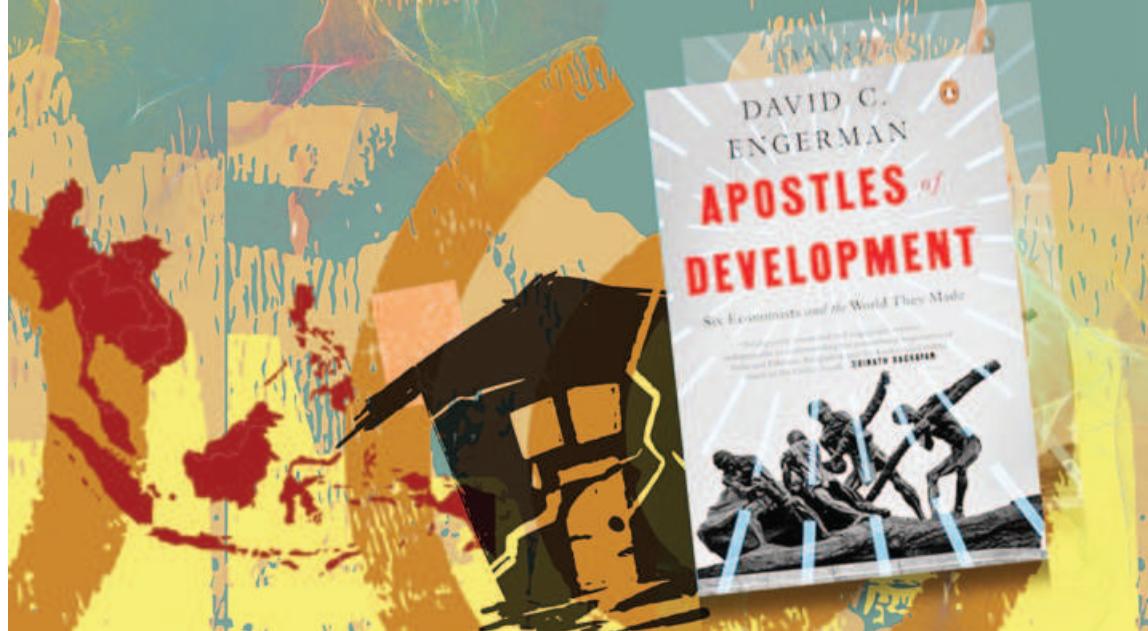


ILLUSTRATION: MAHMUDA EMDAD

TANIM AHMED

The Apostles of Development is about the struggles to solve the problems of poverty and inequality. The book looks at international development through the lives of six protagonists—"apostles," as the author David Engerman calls them. It examines the context and circumstances that spurred these six central figures to devise or promote the solutions they did. Engerman chose Cambridge University as the common ground for his apostles, all of whom hailed from South Asia. Born in the early 1930s, they were too old to be called 'Midnight's Children'—referring to those born at the same time as India's independence—"they were perhaps 'Midnight's Teenagers,' coming of age in the tumultuous 1940s," writes Engerman. All six studied economics at Cambridge in the mid-1950s, forming a unique constellation made up of Amartya Sen, Manmohan Singh, Mahbub ul Haq, Lal Jayawardena, Jagdish Bhagwati, and Rehman Sobhan. It is through their biographies that the author seeks to explain poverty and inequality, showing how together they went on to play crucial roles in shaping efforts to improve quality of life

and promote economic development in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

Engerman writes, "They were all men, providing living evidence of the gap in opportunities between men and women in their time and place. They came of age in a tumultuous decade that saw the exhilaration of military victory and of independence, tempered by the bloody Partition of British-ruled India into Muslim Pakistan and Hindu-majority but secular India."

A history professor at Yale, the author notes that his protagonists "gravitated to twin problems in economics: poverty and inequality." He writes, "Their performance there established them as trailblazers; five of the six earned first-class honors. For three years running, the South Asian economics students collectively held the Economics faculty's Adam Smith Prize—with two others winning honorable mentions."

While Engerman finds it difficult to settle on a favorite, he admits that Singh must have been the most successful. "It would be hard to contest Dr. Singh's reforms, which had been in place even before he became the prime minister." Having served as

India's finance minister in 1991 and later as prime minister between 2004 and 2014, Manmohan Singh—the trader's son turned refugee, as Engerman introduces him in the early chapters—had the enviable pleasure of seeing his reforms take shape and bear fruit. Describing the former Indian premier, Engerman writes that he was "born in a poor village in what is now Pakistan, [and] became a bureaucrat—a role that suited his retiring demeanor."

Each of Engerman's six apostles achieved much in life, so when asked whose journey was the most exciting, Engerman says, "I'm hard-pressed to think of any who didn't. They're all so different, both in personality and in career and ideas. I would say that Lal Jayawardena was probably the least satisfied, from some of the things I read about him in his final years." One of the six economists—and perhaps the lesser known in Bangladesh—Jayawardena, a Conversazione Club

as the World Bank's policy planning director and his role in reorienting the Bank's approach to poor countries.

"The ambitious Pakistani Mahbub ul Haq lived two professional lives," writes Engerman. He explains that Haq was commended internationally for redefining development at the World Bank and for formulating the Human Development Index, while also being criticised for his service under military dictatorships in Pakistan.

"I think they all would have defined excitement differently. For Sen and Bhagwati, they were mostly writing for academic journals, shaping ideas and pointing to new ways to analyze events. But in the sense of excitement as in being part of a movement for a cause, Professor Sobhan is probably the most exciting."

Engerman says Sobhan was the most active of the six. "In fact, he did not shy away from it but actually dove into it, returning home in the late 1960s while studying at the London School

'ideological Bengali,' devoting himself to East Bengal—a place he had rarely visited, with a language he didn't speak."

Being a professor of history and global affairs, Engerman admits he had to study extensively to understand the work of his subjects, which was not easy. "I imagine there are economists who would say I have not read up sufficiently, and I'm sure that's the case. I wish I had deeper knowledge still. I did have the privilege of spending a semester at Yale taking courses in development economics. But I would never pretend that I understand enough. I definitely had a hard time working my way through some of Bhagwati and Sen's writings."

The author especially recalls Sen's work in welfare economics and social choice theory, which he found highly abstract. "On the other hand, I feel I had a lot to contribute as a historian. I feel like I still have something to offer. But I don't offer critiques. The purpose of a historian in this is not to critique economic ideas but to understand where they came from and where they went."

Beyond the historical context through which to view these policies, Engerman's book also shows how these economists shared a common goal but could not agree on the paths to reach it. The differences become most apparent in the disagreements between Mahbub ul Haq and Rehman Sobhan, and in the debates between Bhagwati—a champion of free trade—and Sen, which, many say, occasionally transcended civility.

When asked what he hopes readers will take away from the book, Engerman says, "I am hoping that it makes at least two arguments. One is to situate development as a Global South project—and this comes, I think, from reading a generation of historians, mostly based in the Global North, writing histories of international development and saying that they were northern ideas."

This is an excerpt. Read the full review on *The Daily Star* and *Star Books and Literature's* websites.

Tanim Ahmed is digital editor at *The Daily Star*.

"I imagine there are economists who would say I have not read up sufficiently, and I'm sure that's the case. I wish I had deeper knowledge still. I did have the privilege of spending a semester at Yale taking courses in development economics. But I would never pretend that I understand enough. I definitely had a hard time working my way through some of Bhagwati and Sen's writings."

member at Cambridge, was born to an upwardly mobile Sinhalese family in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). He served his country as both an economic official and a diplomat, and is remembered for establishing a UN development think tank and for being an architect of the modern Sri Lankan economy—an honor that lost some of its luster after the economic meltdown in the summer of 2022."

"There is a certain degree of satisfaction from steering a major government into a new set of policies," Engerman said of Singh, adding, "Or steering a large and cumbersome institution like the World Bank into a different perspective, as Haq did," referring to Mahbub ul Haq's tenure

of Economics. His instinct was to rush home, which says something about his engagement."

The author describes Jagdish Bhagwati as a "prolific economist of international trade at Columbia University with a chip permanently implanted on his shoulder," while about the Nobel-winning Sen, he writes, "one of very few in the uniquely Indian category of 'VVIPs' when he returns home—but more regularly commutes between Harvard and Cambridge universities."

As for Rehman Sobhan, Engerman calls him "Bengal's golden youth," writing that he "was born into the English-speaking upper crust of Bengali society, [and] became an

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

Fragments of memory and regret

Review of 'Breaking Dreams' (Bengal Publications, 2025) by Niaz Zaman

LAMIA SULTANA KAKON

The proof that Dr Niaz Zaman is an amazing writer lies in the fact that she knows exactly how to wound you with four words: "You are too late." As a retired professor of English from the University of Dhaka and recipient of the Ekushey Padak—one of Bangladesh's highest literary honours—she's spent her career translating the untranslatable: the ache of women who lived and loved in wartime, who survived Partition, who buried their dreams beneath duty. Her 2025 collection *Breaking Dreams* isn't just another book of stories. It's 12 confessions from women across generations, eight of them previously published, now gathered like letters found in an attic—each one a small devastation, each one impossibly true.

Each story cracked open something in me. I found myself identifying with women who were much older, who had witnessed different wars, different losses, different kinds of silence—and yet, their questions were mine too.

With every ending, I exhaled a sigh I didn't know I'd been holding. "What if?" became a motif in my head filled with threads of thoughts. Sometimes they whispered, sometimes they screamed. After finishing each story, I caught myself reaching for my phone, texting or calling someone, asking: "Will you remember me how I am now, even after 20 years?"

It wasn't about the characters anymore. It was about me. And them. And all the selves we lose and carry and bury along the way.

One story from the collection, "The Letter", explores the futility of confession when it arrives too late. It's everything she couldn't say when it mattered. This isn't a story of love fulfilled—it's about missed cues, dignity mistaken for indifference, and affection buried under social roles. The ending was a quiet catastrophe for me. "You are too late."



she writes regularly made it almost inevitable that she would one day write this story for Iqra Islam. I felt how the name Iqra itself was so symbolic. In Arabic, Iqra means "read." What an amazing choice of word!

"The Collaborator's Daughter" forces you to sit with discomfort—to understand that collaboration isn't always monstrous but often born of fear, and that its price is paid by the children, by daughters like Ratna. The prose is clean, but its directness makes the emotion sting harder. Moments of tenderness slip through like light through cracks, making the tragedy more acute.

"My Grandmother's Secret" is a multi-generational spiral that takes its time before turning the mirror inward. The delayed revelation isn't a plot twist—it's a recontextualisation of every detail that came before. You find yourself re-reading lines, and everything hits differently after the final page. But "My Grandmother's Crazy Poet" starts hitting from the beginning. It opens with the scent of loss but pulls us into the lifeblood of memory. The brilliance lies in the double vision of two women, two voices—one voice remembering, another finally confessing. The chain at the story's end is more than jewelry; it's a metaphor for life interrupted, repaired, and passed down.

These stories share a remarkable craft. The endings are emotional rather than plot driven, and that's what makes them unforgettable.

Breaking Dreams isn't just a gathering of stories; it's a mirror of time. Its characters examine our conscience. In just a few words, there is a festival of fireflies here. Sometimes it is the light of memories, sometimes the darkness of forgetfulness. At times they also act as moral examiners or a timeless witness to human existence.

Lamia Sultana Kakon is a writer, poet, translator and journalist. Reach her at kakonsultana1908@gmail.com.

almost closed the book here, not because I was done, but because that single sentence had already gutted me. It's not angry or cruel—it's just true. A life unfixed, love never named, loss unacknowledged until it was no longer changeable.

"Breaking Dreams" takes memory and reshapes it into fiction with surgical grace.

Where "The Letter" is about love unspoken, this story is about love remembered in fragments—through war, separation, marriage, migration, and dreams. It's an elegy not just to a man, but to a version of

the narrator that might have been. The story begins in a surreal frame—a dream set in Lahore. But it's quickly ruptured: "And the dream breaks." This line isn't just a transition; it's a mission statement. Everything after becomes a series of broken dreams: literal, metaphorical, historical.

"My Friend, My Enemy" reads like a diary-turned-letter, covering over 20 years, two wars, multiple cities, and a love that mutates from possibility to ghosthood. The brilliance lies in how Zaman tells national trauma through personal memory. She's crafted a

story not just about two people, but about two countries that were once one—stitched by love, split by history.

"Recommendation Letter for Iqra Islam" was personally interesting to me. Even though I never got one, I had several chances to ask Dr Niaz Zaman for a recommendation letter for myself. But I never found the courage, thinking maybe I was not quite qualified yet to ask her for something like this. Then I read this story and I remembered a book reading session I once joined, where the author herself said the number of recommendation letters

Can Tigers escape their OWN TRAP?

SPORTS REPORTER

After falling into the spin trap they had laid themselves in the second ODI, Bangladesh are heading into today's third and final match of the series against the West Indies short of confidence as the visitors have seemingly cracked the code on how to win in the Mirpur turner.

The hosts successfully spun a web around the Caribbean side in the first ODI, winning it by 74 runs, but were surprised by the tourists in the following game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium on Thursday, losing the bout in the Super Over.

The West Indies bowled an unprecedented 50 overs of spin in that game with three frontline spinners -- Akeal Hosein, Roston Chase and Khary Pierre -- and part-timers Alick Athanaze and Gudakesh Motie completing their quota of overs.

The Tiger batters struggled to rotate the strike against them, evidenced by 193 dots in the innings. Forty seven percent of their runs came from boundaries, while for the West Indies, the number was only 35.6 percent -- a clear indication that the visiting batters fared better with singles and doubles.

West Indies had come prepared for the



PHOTO: STAR

ambush by spin in Mirpur, having sent some of their players to Chennai prior to the series to train and from the looks of it, the move has paid dividends.

Asked why Bangladesh opted for such spinning turfs which do not allow batters to flourish when better wickets come around, Soumya Sarkar, who made a sluggish 45 off 89 balls on Thursday, revealed it was the management's

decision. "I already said that wicket and weather are not in our hands; they are in the hands of the management. We players don't think about these things. We try to cop up with whatever situation we are given," he said.

It reveals the glitches in planning from Bangladesh's side of things. The team management perhaps felt spin was the

chink in West Indies' armor that could be exploited but it did not turn out that way in the second ODI.

So far in the series, the top-order of Saif Hassan, Soumya and Najmul Hossain Shanto has not provided stability, the middle order has remained adamant to bat only for survival and late flourishes from Rishad Hossain has pushed the total past 200.

There is also criticism on why Rishad, who hit an unbeaten 14-ball 39 in the second game, was not sent in for the Super Over.

Captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz also seemingly miscalculated the overs at the death as part-timer Saif Hassan had to bowl the final over even though death over specialist Mustafizur Rahman had two overs left in his quota.

For the hosts, today's match is not just about winning the series, it's also about regaining lost pride after losing the spin battle on Thursday.

In order to bounce back from the defeat, the management has to get their plans right, the skipper must take better calls, and the batters need to figure out a method to churn out risk-free runs. If not, a fifth straight ODI series loss is very much on the cards for the Tigers.



Bangladesh T20I skipper Litton Das was all smiles during training in Mirpur yesterday. After being sidelined with a side strain for over a month, Litton is expected to return to competitive cricket through the upcoming three-match T20I series against the West Indies, scheduled to begin on October 27 in Chattogram.

"He has already started batting and hasn't made any complaints yet. Alongside batting,

his running and everything else also look fine; there are no issues," Bangladesh Cricket Board's chief physician Debasish Chowdhury told The Daily Star on Wednesday.

All three matches will be played at the Bir Shrestha Shaheed Flight Lieutenant Motiur Rahman Stadium in Chattogram, with the final two games scheduled for October 29 and 31.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Coach Saeed pleased as records tumble

SPORTS REPORTER

The 34th National Swimming, Diving and Water Polo Championships witnessed three more national records fall on the third day of competition, bringing the total number of new records to 15.

Promising swimmer Samiul Islam Rafi continued his exceptional performance, setting his sixth individual national record at the National Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday.

Egyptian swimming coach Saeed Magdy expressed his satisfaction at the steady stream of broken records, despite facing a number of challenges in preparing the national swimmers for the upcoming South Asian Games.

In the day's events, Rafi of Bangladesh Navy improved his own national record in the 100m backstroke, finishing with a time of 00:57.95 seconds -- bettering his previous best of 00:58.45 seconds.

Meanwhile, Tonmoy Mali of Bangladesh Army broke his teammate Sukumar Rajbangshi's record in the 50m breaststroke, clocking 00:29.59 seconds, surpassing the previous record of 00:29.90 seconds.

The third record of the day came in the women's 4x400m freestyle relay. The team of Anny, Rupa, Juthi, and Tumpa clocked 09:50.01 seconds, breaking the previous national record of 09:52.09 seconds.

While observing the competition, coach Saeed made a point of personally engaging with the swimmers, offering encouragement and feedback.

"Actually, our swimmers here are hard-working, disciplined, and giving their best. They are improving



week by week. At this stage of the competition, many national records have already been broken, which shows real progress," said Saeed, voicing high hopes for both Rafi and Kajol Mia.

"Their qualifications are very good, and I believe in their potential. What they've been missing is high-quality training. Now, with improved support, we can already see how much they are developing. I believe that for next year's Asian competition in Japan, we can have at least two male swimmers -- Rafi and Kajol -- qualify among the top six."

Despite the success, Saeed expressed some frustration over the lack of functional infrastructure, particularly the electronic timing board, which has remained inactive since its installation in 2019.

"I wish we had Omega timing systems here to be more professional and to prepare our swimmers for international level competitions. Official timings are crucial for international qualification. But for now, we are working with what we have, and doing our best to support the swimmers. That is the main focus," the head coach added.

Since arriving in mid-July, Saeed has been training 38 national swimmers, including 18 women. However, he faces significant difficulties due to the open-roof pool, which hampers training during rain, and poor water quality, which poses health risks.



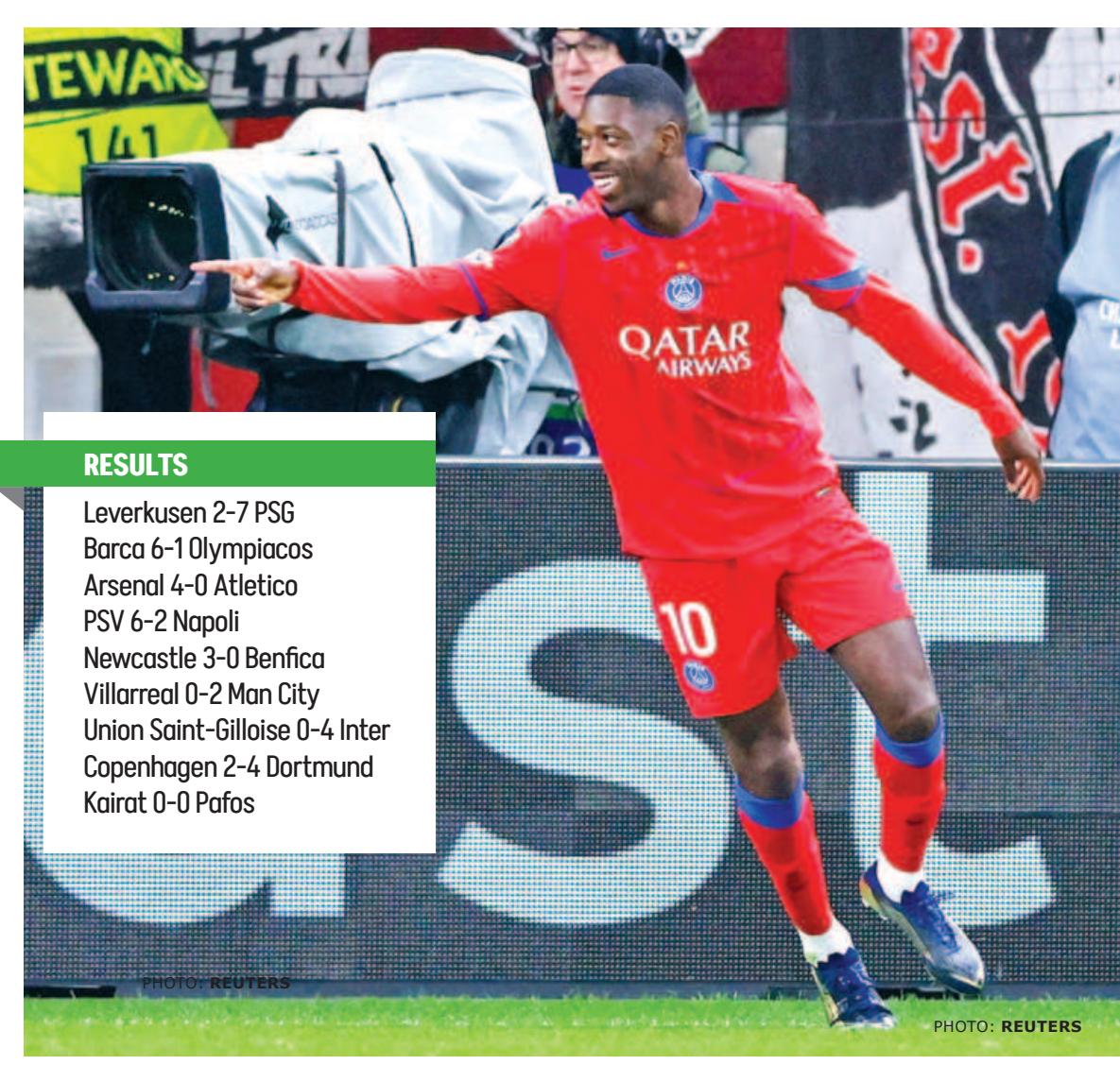
SPLASH OF JOY: Bangladesh Army's Romana Akter did not let go of the chance to celebrate her fifth gold medal with her four-and-a-half-year-old daughter after finishing first in the 100m butterfly event on the third day of the 34th National Swimming Championships at the National Swimming Complex in Mirpur on Wednesday. Romana's daughter, Falak Ahmed Ruzba, enjoyed splashing around in the pool, making her mother's achievement even brighter.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

43 GOALS IN A DAY!

Goals flooded in as 43 strikes were recorded in just nine Champions League fixtures, with PSG, Barcelona, and Arsenal delivering statement wins on Tuesday.

- 1 This was the third-highest single-day total in Champions League history, behind January 29 this year (64 goals in 18 games) and October 1, 1997 (44 goals in 12 matches).
- 2 Ousmane Dembele marked his return from injury -- and his first appearance since winning the Ballon d'Or -- with a goal, as PSG made it three wins in three to top the table.
- 3 Barcelona's Fermín López became the first Spanish player to score a Champions League hattrick for the club. Barca sit ninth with two wins and one loss.
- 4 Arsenal reached 100 wins in the competition -- only the third English side after Manchester United (125) and Chelsea (102) -- and seventh overall. The Gunners, alongside Inter, remain the only teams yet to concede a goal this season. Both also boast perfect records, with Arsenal currently third in the standings.
- 5 Manchester City's Erling Haaland netted his 15th goal of the season -- and 24th for club and country -- equalling Cristiano Ronaldo's 2018 record of scoring in 12 consecutive club matches. City's unbeaten run (two wins, one draw) sees them move up to fifth.



RESULTS

Leverkusen 2-7 PSG
Barca 6-1 Olympiacos
Arsenal 4-0 Atletico
PSV 6-2 Napoli
Newcastle 3-0 Benfica
Villarreal 0-2 Man City
Union Saint-Gilloise 0-4 Inter
Copenhagen 2-4 Dortmund
Kairat 0-0 Pafos

PHOTO: REUTERS

SHORT CORNER

Bangladesh volleyballers off to sparkling start in CAVA Cup

Bangladesh, who will now face Nepal on Thursday as six participating nations are playing in a round-robin tournament, initially faced a bit of a challenge from Maldives but ended up winning 3-0 on the opening day of the Cava Cup at Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

BFF appoints Cameron Lord to boost women's team fitness

The Australian becomes the second foreign member of Peter Butler's backroom staff, joining the English head coach who had repeatedly emphasised the need to raise the team's physical standards following their success in the 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup qualifiers.

Zimbabwe crush Afghans for rare Test win by an innings

Zimbabwe won a Test by an innings for only the third time when they defeated Afghanistan by an innings and 73 runs at Harare Sports Club yesterday, with two days to spare. Zimbabwe beat Pakistan by an innings in 1995 in Harare and repeated the feat against Bangladesh six years later in Bulawayo.

Bangladesh kabaddi near bronze at Asian Youth Games

Bangladesh youth kabaddi team are on the verge of winning a bronze medal at the 3rd Asian Youth Games after beating Pakistan 56-29 with four bonus points in their fifth match of the men's kabaddi event at the Isa Sports Centre in Bahrain yesterday.

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



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3 teens jailed for 10yrs for rape of July martyr's daughter

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A Patuakhali tribunal yesterday sentenced three teenage boys to 10 years' imprisonment for the rape of 17-year-old girl in Dumki upazila of Patuakhali. The victim, daughter of a July uprising martyr, took her own life around a month after the rape incident.

According to case document, all the convicts are aged 17.

In addition, two of the convicts got three more years in jail under the Pornography Control Act for filming the incident. The court ordered that the additional sentence will begin after the first one ends.

Judge Nilufar Shirin of the Patuakhali Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal delivered the verdict around 11:00am in the presence of the convicts.

After the verdict, they were sent to Jashore Juvenile Correctional Centre.

Confirming the judgement, Public Prosecutor Abdullah Al Noman said, "After examining 16 witnesses, the tribunal handed down

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Palestinians stand near unidentified bodies as they prepare them for burial at a mass grave site, after the bodies were handed over by Israel amid a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

SC SECRETARIAT ORDINANCE Judges may hold executive posts

Cabinet Division officials say it's double standards

BAHARAM KHAN

Lower court judges will be able to hold executive positions in the law ministry as well as state entities even after the establishment of a Supreme Court secretariat aimed at keeping the judiciary free from the executive's influence, says a draft ordinance.

Upon the SC's recommendations, lower court judges may be appointed to the offices of various ministries or departments, agencies and institutions of the government, according to section 7(3) of the draft "Supreme Court Secretariat Ordinance 2025".

Terming this "a form of double standards", several Cabinet Division officials told this newspaper that it's unacceptable that judges would demand the separation of the judiciary from the executive and also want to hold posts in ministries or other government institutions at the same time.

Seeking anonymity, a joint secretary at the public administration ministry said many lower court judges are currently serving in the law ministry. "If a separate secretariat is formed for the judiciary, why should they continue working in the ministry? This goes against the very principle of judicial separation."

The draft ordinance, prepared by the High Court Division of the SC, was sent to the Cabinet Division on October 13 through the law ministry. The following day, the inter-ministerial committee on legal scrutiny of the Cabinet Division reviewed the draft and returned it to the ministry with 18 observations.

In its observation, the committee said section 7(3) contradicts article 22 of the constitution, which states: "The State shall ensure the separation of the judiciary from the executive organs of the State."

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Russia, Ukraine pound each other 6 people, including 2 children, killed in Kyiv

AGENCIES

Russia and Ukraine pounded each other with heavy overnight missile attacks as diplomatic efforts to end the war faltered, with the White House saying there were no imminent plans for presidents Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin to meet.

Ukrainian officials said yesterday that Russian attacks had killed six people, including two children, in Kyiv and the nearby region, and forced power outages nationwide.

Ukraine's military said late on Tuesday that it used Franco-British Storm Shadow air-launched missiles to strike a chemical plant in southern Russia's Bryansk region.

Putin and Trump spoke last week and agreed to hold a summit in Hungary that the Kremlin said could take place within a couple of weeks.

But following a phone call on Monday between the two countries' top diplomats, the White House said the next day that Trump had no plans to meet Putin "in the immediate future". Trump said he did not want to have a wasted meeting - something Moscow also says it wants to avoid.

Russian officials said, however, that preparations continued for a summit.

The delay came after Russia reiterated to the US its previous terms for reaching a peace deal, including that Ukraine cede control of the whole of the southeastern Donbas region, three sources told Reuters.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3



Ukrainian law enforcement officers work at the site of a Russian drone attack that hit a kindergarten in Kharkiv yesterday.

Israel must ensure basic needs in Gaza

Says ICJ, rules Israel has to facilitate aid flow

AGENCIES

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) yesterday said Israel must meet the "basic needs" of the population on Gaza, including providing everything they need to survive.

"As an occupying power, Israel is obliged to ensure the basic needs of the local population, including the supplies essential for their survival," said ICJ President Yuji Iwasawa.

Israel must not use starvation as a means of waging war: ICJ

'Tough task' ahead to disarm Hamas, rebuild Gaza: US VP

'No change' with truce as Israel blocks aid: Palestinians

Israel must not use starvation as a means of waging war in Gaza, he said. "The court considers that Israel is under an obligation to agree to and facilitate relief schemes provided by the United Nations and its entities, including UNRWA," said Iwasawa.

The court ruled that Israel has not stood up allegations that members of UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Tug-of-war over water lily continues

EC cites emblem rules; NCP warns it won't join polls without desired symbol

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and AHMED DEEPTO

The Election Commission and National Citizen Party remain locked in a heated debate over the party's choice of electoral symbol, the water lily -- a dispute that began in June.

Despite several exchanges of letters and multiple meetings between NCP and the chief election commissioner, other

to deliver a fair outcome in the election.

The EC, however, has refused to allocate water lily, citing the flower's status as a key element of the national emblem and the legal constraints surrounding its use.

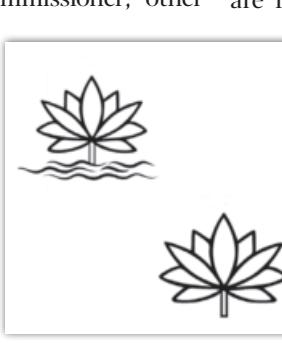
Speaking to The Daily Star, Election Commissioner Tahmidah Ahmad said, "The water lily is a prominent part of the national emblem of Bangladesh. There are rules that clearly state the national

allocate something that isn't on the list?

Few parties requested the same symbol previously, and we did not grant it for the same reason. How can we give it to NCP now?" she said.

Earlier, Nagarik Oikya and Bangladesh Congress had sought the water lily as their electoral symbol.

The national emblem features the national flower resting on water, with



NCP presented these options of water lily images to use as its electoral symbol

commissioners, and senior EC officials, the issue remains unresolved.

NCP has stood firm in its demand for the water lily, accusing the EC of "unfairly denying" it the symbol. Party Convener Nahid Islam yesterday said, "If our symbol [water lily] is not allocated, it will not be possible for us to take part in the election."

He also said a commission that does not ensure fairness regarding registration and symbol allocation cannot be expected

emblem cannot be demoted. Doing so would constitute a punishable offence."

The water lily, the national flower of Bangladesh, appears on the country's currency, national ID cards, passports, various insignia of different forces and in government buildings.

"If it's already present everywhere, how can it be used as an electoral symbol? Most importantly, it's not even in our approved list of symbols. How can we

an ear of paddy on each side and three connected jute leaves above the centre petal. There are two stars on each side of the jute leaves.

Rule 4 of the Bangladesh National Emblem Rules-1972 states that the national emblem, being an extremely dignified symbol, may only be used in specific places.

It must be displayed in the National

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

CASE AGAINST HASINA Ex-IGP became approver to protect himself

Defence lawyer tells ICT tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun became an approver to "save himself" by concealing his own crimes and putting the blame on others, Amir Hossain, the state-appointed defence counsel for deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday.

He made the remarks while presenting his concluding arguments for the third consecutive day in a case filed against Hasina, Kamal, and Mamun over crimes against humanity committed during the July uprising.

While briefing journalists, Prosecutor Mizanul Islam said the tribunal may set the date for delivering its verdict in the case today after the prosecution presents counter arguments against the defence counsel.

During yesterday's hearing, the defence counsel also questioned the procedure through which Mamun's confessional statement was recorded by the Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, alleging that it was not done properly.

In July, former IGP Mamun pleaded guilty in the case and offered to be state approver, which the tribunal accepted. He also made a confessional statement before a magistrate.

When the tribunal sought his response regarding Amir's claim that Mamun became an approver to save himself, the former IGP's lawyer, Jaiad Bin Amjad, said, "My client made a true and full disclosure regarding this incident when he gave his deposition."

Amjad said neither the prosecution nor the defence could discredit the statement or present anything substantial against it. His client's deposition corroborates the testimonies of other witnesses in the case, he added.

Tribunal member Justice Shofiqul Alam Mahmood observed that Mamun's statements appeared cautious and careful, seemingly intended to protect himself to some extent.

Lawyer Amjad outright rejected the allegation, saying his client had also provided crucial information about the enforced disappearance case, the trial of which is set to begin soon.

Regarding the deposition of witness Nahid Islam, a key leader of the July uprising, Amir questioned Nahid's claim that he called Prof Muhammad Yunus and requested him to form a government on July 4.

"How did Nahid know that on August 5 the [Awami] government would resign?" he asked.

The tribunal responded that

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4