



"The United States is our adversary, and their talkative 'peacemaker' has now fully embarked on the warpath with Russia."

Says former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev referring to Trump

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RPO AMENDMENT

Alliance candidates must use their own party symbols

Fugitives cannot contest polls; 'no vote' returns in case of single candidate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The advisory council yesterday approved major amendments to the Representation of the People Order, 1972, making it mandatory for candidates contesting polls under an alliance to use the symbol of their own party, not that of the coalition leader.

The amendments also bar anyone declared a fugitive by a court from contesting elections, reintroduce the "no vote" option for single-candidate constituencies, and recognise the armed forces as law enforcement agencies during elections.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus chaired the meeting at his Tejgaon office.

Briefing reporters afterwards, Law Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul explained the change in rules for symbols of alliances. The move aims to give voters a clear idea of each candidate's party identity, he said.

- ④ Armed forces may be deployed directly by the EC
- ④ EC can now cancel polling across entire constituencies
- ④ False affidavits will lead to probe, legal action, loss of seat
- ④ All provisions related to EVMs scrapped
- ④ Nomination papers must be submitted in person
- ④ Creating, spreading false, AI-generated content have been criminalised

In the past, smaller partners in alliances led by major parties like the Awami League and BNP were able to run under the larger party's symbol.

Contacted for comments over this amendment, BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed said his party opposed the change.

"From our side, we gave a proposal that this should not be changed. We think it should remain the same as before. If the small parties in an alliance cannot use the symbol of the big party, then there will be no meaning in being part of the alliance."

Asked about the amendments, Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar said the changes would create problems for some parties.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



PHOTO: AZAHLA UDDIN

Sacks of radish, cauliflower, pointed gourd, and other winter vegetables from early harvests await transport at Naohata market in Rajshahi's Paba upazila yesterday, signalling winter is not far away. Customers there complained that retail prices remain much higher compared to wholesale despite improved supply.

ACC may get power to probe Bangladeshis abroad

Cabinet okays draft law aimed at boosting anti-graft body's authority

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission is set to gain authority to investigate corruption involving Bangladeshi citizens both at home and abroad, as well as foreign nationals residing in the country.

It will be handed this power under the draft Anti-Corruption Commission Ordinance 2025, which received in-principle approval at an Advisory Council meeting chaired by Chief

Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday.

Briefing reporters at the Foreign Service Academy afterwards, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul said the ACC will now be able to pursue allegations against anyone living in Bangladesh, regardless of nationality, and will also have the authority to probe Bangladeshi citizens abroad if evidence of graft is found.

He, however, noted that the mechanisms for conducting investigations overseas are yet

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Govt to ease labour union requirement

Draft ordinance prohibits blacklisting of workers, recognises house helps as workers

ASIFUR RAHMAN and SUKANTA HALDER

The government is planning to relax key labour law requirements, significantly lowering the entry barrier for a trade union.

The advisory council yesterday approved a draft ordinance to allow groups of as few as 20 workers to apply to form a trade union, a major regulatory shift in worker representation, particularly in smaller industrial units.

It came after the government recently ratified three ILO Conventions that would guarantee workers' rights, safety and freedom from violence and harassment in the workplace.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



The victorious Bangladesh team celebrates with the trophy after winning the series-deciding third ODI against the West Indies by 179 runs to clinch the series 2-1, and end a four-series losing streak in the format at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

We will ensure Dhaka-Delhi ties based on respect
Says Shafiqur, apologises for any mistakes since 1947

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday said if elected to office, his party would ensure Dhaka's relationship with Delhi is based on mutual respect.

"We want to respect our neighbour, and in the same way, we expect respect from our neighbour," Shafiqur said in response to a question during a meeting with journalists in New York on Wednesday.

He said, "India is 26 times larger than Bangladesh. Its resources and manpower are much greater than ours. Considering that, we respect their position. However, they must also respect the existence of our small territory, home to nearly 18 crore people. This is our demand. If that happens, not only will both neighbours live happily, but one neighbour will also be respected in the global arena because of the other."

Replying to another question, he said, "I want to make one thing very clear: over the last 54 years, people of different religions have migrated from Bangladesh. We are not in favour of forcibly stopping anything, nor are we in favour of forcibly expelling anyone from the country."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

'State runs on laws, not on emotions'

CA has no authority to issue constitutional order, says BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposing the stance of Jamaat-e-Islami and the National Citizen Party, the BNP yesterday said the chief adviser has no authority to issue a constitutional or executive order to give the July charter legal recognition, arguing that such a move would exceed the government's powers.

Addressing an event at the Jatiya Press Club in the afternoon, BNP Standing Committee Member Salahuddin Ahmed said, "Some people are saying that the chief adviser can now promulgate a law or issue an order in line with the people's wishes expressed during the July uprising."

"That is a revolutionary and emotional statement. But a state does not run on emotions; it runs according to laws, rules, and regulations."

"I notice with frustration that some political parties are trying to delay the election, trying to make sure it is not held on time. This is not right."

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir

He explained that any law can only be issued with the cabinet's approval, and in the absence of parliament, the president can issue an ordinance, according to a UNB report.

Earlier, on Wednesday, Jamaat and the NCP said the chief adviser should issue an executive order to give the July charter legal and institutional recognition.

To that, Salahuddin said, "The government can only issue gazette notifications, or circulars as part of its administrative powers. The chief adviser, being the head of government, does not have any such right under our constitution."



SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

BANGLADESH SUPPLY CHAIN CONFERENCE 2025
Digital Data Shapes the Future

An initiative of **The Daily Star** | **Mind Mapper** Shape Your Mind

SPEAKERS



Ruhul Quddus Khan
CEO and Managing Director, Unilever Bangladesh



Ewa Wasiluk
Head of Supply Chain Operations, AMEA Syngenta



Ejazur Rahman
Regional CEO, ISCEA (Asia)



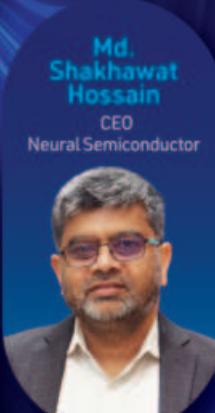
Syeda Tahya Hossain
Chief Human Resources Officer, Grameenphone



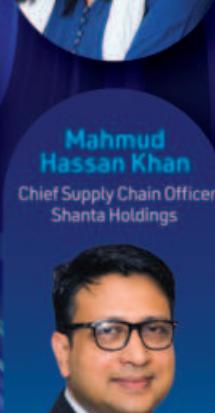
Farah Zabeen
Global Operational Excellence Director, Coats



Md. Shakhsawat Hossain
CEO, Neural Semiconductor



Syed Shakil Ahmed
Head of AI Strategy & Development, Grameenphone



Mahmud Hassan Khan
Chief Supply Chain Officer, Shanta Holdings

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WATER GARDEN

7 November 2025

Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel, Dhaka

How Dhaka always shows a way!

JANNATUL BUSHRA

Often, while stuck at a traffic signal in Dhaka, all it takes is a glance left or right to notice a narrow alley slipping away, quietly mocking the chaos around you.

Whether you're in a car, rickshaw, bike, or CNG, these alleys somehow manage to fit it all — buses, unfortunately, are out of luck. The main roads crawl, signal lights blink in vain, and gridlocks stretch like eternity itself. Yet, right there, between buildings and shops, these improvised lanes with no dividers, no traffic police, and no rules promise something the main roads can't: movement!

We all know how Dhaka traffic tests patience. Sometimes, it tests the soul. The signal-heavy, dutifully patrolled main roads pretend to obey every rule and yet, manage to disappoint everyone at once. Time slows, intersections freeze, and you could stare at the same billboard for half an hour, wondering how far "just five more minutes" can really stretch.

And then there are the alleys. The entirely accidental veins of the city where logic and rules are optional. These are often the roads no urban planner intentionally planned, no one designed; they simply just happened. Narrow, improvised lanes that snake through buildings and grocery shops, where every turn feels like a guess and every vehicle moves on pure instinct. No traffic police, no dividers, no signals — just people negotiating space and sanity in equal measure. These are the "chipa golis" (narrow alleys) that save us, again and again.

Take, for example, Mohakhali to



Farmgate. There's that little-known rickshaw trail through Shaheenbagh and Nakhelpara that gets you to your destination before your friend on the main road even makes it past Bijoy Sarani Mor. It's dusty, loud, and uncomfortably tight — and thanks to the never-ending construction, your vehicle might shake hard enough to rearrange your bones — but hey, it's still effective enough to beat the inertia of the main way!

The same trick works from Farmgate to Dhanmondi. While Manik Mia Avenue crawls inch by inch, those in the know glide through Indira Road, cut

into Shukrabad, and pop out at Kalabagan bus stand without crossing a single traffic light. It's not exactly smooth, but it works!

But everything in Dhaka comes with a price, not in tolls, but somehow in temperament! You must learn the fine art of shouting. "Who parked here?" "Why are all the rickshaws coming one way?" "Move the car! Let the bikes slide!" This, ladies and gentlemen, is what we call community-driven traffic



management. Not exactly anger, more like strident negotiation. A collective roar that somehow restores order — or at least the illusion of it.

Even from Jigatola to Mohammadpur, when Satmasjid Road turns into a parking lot of despair, there's always the inner Sher-e-Bangla Road, a narrow, gritty shortcut that will drop you right in front of Allah Karim Mosque after shaking your stomach up to your brain!

Then, of course, even Dhaka's shortcuts have bad days. There are times when everyone suddenly remembers the same "secret route," a truck driver mistakes a lane for a highway, or three rickshaws meet head-on in a space meant for one. That's when the city decides to teach us humility.

There's no escape then — no heroic shortcuts, no clever diversions. Just a shared resignation and a silent acceptance that the city has outsmarted us again. The alleys that once promised salvation can suddenly turn into claustrophobic mazes of rickshaws, cars, and more frustration! Those are the days when not even Google Maps shakes to reroute you. Dhaka wins on those days!

But most of the other days, Dhaka lets you win!

Because that's Dhaka for you: a city that might drive you mad, shake you silly, and make you shout at strangers... but somehow, it always lets you find a way! The shortcut way!

ACC may get power

FROM PAGE 1

to be detailed and will be clarified once the ordinance is finalised.

The draft ordinance introduces several new amendments and definitions aimed at strengthening the ACC's capacity.

Asif Nazrul said, "The draft ordinance defines 'known income' as lawful income — such matters have been clarified. It also includes provisions to establish special courts in areas where the ACC has offices. Additionally, the commission's functions and powers have been expanded — covering case filing, investigation, and inquiry."

It also outlines the process for forming the commission, with a seven-member selection committee, headed by an Appellate Division judge, tasked with appointing the ACC chairperson and commissioners.

The committee will select candidates through public notice and may also choose candidates at its own discretion. Interviews will be conducted with those interested in becoming commissioners," the adviser explained.

Stressing that internal accountability mechanisms must be strengthened before the ordinance is finalised, he said allegations of corruption within the ACC were discussed with urgency at the meeting.

He expressed hope that the new law would enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the anti-graft body's operations. "We want the ACC to earn public trust in combating corruption."

In October last year, the government formed the ACC Reform Commission, led by Dr Iftekharuzzaman, which submitted its recommendation report to the chief adviser on January 15 this year.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Iftekharuzzaman, also executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said, "The law adviser's comments sound encouraging. But I wouldn't comment further before fully reviewing the draft ordinance, if and when it is available."

"All I'd say is that the government has approved it without involving the ACC Reform Commission. Our request to share the draft [with the commission] before the cabinet's approval was summarily denied, which is disappointing. An unofficial version of the draft shows that significant recommendations made by the commission have been arbitrarily undermined."

He added, "It's particularly frustrating because we've no idea if, in exercising its discretion, the government took into consideration the fact that almost all commission-made recommendations related to amendment of the act had received complete consensus among political parties."

The government was specifically informed about this. It's embarrassing that it followed the same practice of unilateralism and secrecy as the previous regime."

Alliance candidates must use

FROM PAGE 1

the then ruling BNP were elected uncontested in the February 15, 1996 election, boycotted by the Awami League, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and other parties.

Citing the 2014 polls, Law Adviser Asif said, "It was a staged election. This type of election should not happen again."

As per the amendments, candidates providing false information in affidavits will face investigation even after taking oath. If found guilty, they may lose their parliamentary seat.

The new law criminalises the creation or spread of false or misleading content, including AI-generated materials, intended to harm a candidate, influence the election, or undermine electoral integrity. Offenders using bots, fake accounts, or synthetic media will face legal action.

The amendments restored a 2001 provision that defines members of the armed forces as law enforcers under the RPO. This allows their direct deployment by the EC, with the authority to arrest offenders within 400 yards of polling stations for offences related to polls or law and order.

The clause had been removed in 2009, though the army continued to serve as a striking force in subsequent elections — for 13 days in 2024 and 10 days in 2018.

Through the amendments, online submission of nomination papers has been scrapped. Candidates or their proposers or seconders must now submit papers physically to the

EC.

The EC may now suspend the registration or withhold the symbol of any political party whose activities are suspended by the government.

At the press briefing, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said the government is considering equipping on-duty police officers with body cameras, installing CCTV at polling centres, and deploying drones during the upcoming national election.

"The legal aspects of these measures are currently under review," he added.

historic, said Kalpona Akter, a labour rights activist.

Advocacy and campaigns were ongoing for many years to ratify important ILO conventions, including Conventions 121 and 189, that focus on health, safety, domestic workers' recognition and compensation for employment injuries.

The interim government ratified at least three conventions, reflecting the persistent efforts of the labour movement, she said.

The government now needs to align current laws with these conventions or introduce new provisions to implement them effectively.

Akter pointed out the confusion surrounding union registration thresholds and emphasised the importance of reviewing the official gazette to understand the actual provisions.

About the recognition of domestic workers, she said she needs to see how their rights are protected under the new amendment.

Fazle Shamim Ehsan, president of the Bangladesh Employers' Federation, expressed concerns over the draft amendments.

He said the interim government is not following the spirit of tripartism by excluding owners and workers from important decisions.

Ehsan also claimed that the final version of the law that was sent to the council of advisers was unclear and seemed different from what was agreed upon in meetings.

The changes were fixed following the recommendations from a 17-member tripartite committee from workers, employers and the government, and a series of meetings and expert consultations, reads the notes of the draft ordinance.

The recent developments regarding labour laws and conventions were

returning officer.

In the event of a tie, when two candidates get the same number of votes, re-polling instead of a lottery will take place.

All provisions related to Electronic Voting Machines have been abolished.

Postal voting will now require digital registration for expatriates, detained individuals, and public officials on election duty.

Candidates' security deposits have been raised from Tk 20,000 to Tk 50,000.

The expenditure ceiling is set at Tk 10 per voter or Tk 25 lakh in total, whichever is higher.

Parties may now receive donations, grants, or services worth up to Tk 50 lakh per year from individuals or entities. Any contribution over Tk 50,000 must be made through banking channels and reflected in the donor's tax return.

Parties are also required to maintain transparent accounts and publish income and expenditure statements on their websites.

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Referring to article 152 of the constitution, he said, "The hierarchy of laws starts with the constitution, followed by national laws enacted by parliament, presidential ordinances, orders, and then rules and regulations."

Salahuddin also said a political party that earlier skipped the signing ceremony of the charter is now looking for an opportunity to sign it.

"Yesterday [Wednesday], a political party said, 'the BNP has finally agreed to hold a referendum on implementing the July National Charter under public pressure' ... but in reality, the proposal to hold such a referendum originally came from the BNP itself."

He also said all parties, except two, agreed to the BNP's referendum

Govt looks to implement new pay scale in phases

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The interim government is examining the scope for partially implementing the new pay scale for public sector employees.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed said they will proceed with a preliminary implementation based on the Pay Commission's recommendations.

"We're expecting to receive the commission's report by December. Once we get it, we'll try to review it and make decisions by January," he said.

In July this year, the finance ministry formed the Pay Commission for public officials and employees, led by former finance secretary Zakir Ahmed Khan. It was tasked with submitting its report within six months of its first meeting.

In the eighth pay scale introduced in 2015, the basic salary component was implemented in the 2015-16 fiscal year, followed by allowances in the following year.

The Pay Commission for the ninth pay scale has completed its fieldwork, including a survey conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics to gather opinions on how much salaries and allowances should be raised.

It has been learned that the commission is considering a new salary structure which, after adjusting for inflation, does not fall below the 2015 level. If it does, salary hikes at the lower grades could be nearly double, while increases at the upper grades may be smaller.

Although inflation rose gradually after 2015, it began surging in 2022 and has remained above nine percent since March 2023. The commission is taking this into account while finalising its recommendations.

Of the country's 6.9 crore employed population, 4.7 percent — or about 32.47 lakh people — worked in government service last year, according to the Labour Force Survey 2024.

State runs on laws

FROM PAGE 1

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apology.

"How can I say that we never made any mistakes till today? We are humans. Our organisation is a human organisation. Out of 100 decisions, 99 might have been right, but one could be wrong... So, if any of my decisions caused harm to the nation, what's the problem in asking for forgiveness for that?"

"After seeking forgiveness, some say it should not be in this language, or it should be in that language. I sought unconditional forgiveness, without any condition. What else is left?"

He said, "For all the mistakes we have made, knowingly or unknowingly, we are grateful to those who corrected us. And to those who were harmed by our mistakes, we seek forgiveness from them. Is there anything more to say? This is very clear and loud."

At one point, someone from the audience said some people ask Jamaat for an apology for its actions in 1971.

Shafiqur said, "Brother, have we made mistakes only in 1971? Not at other times? And those who tell us to apologise, are they angels?"

North Korea says it tested new weapon system

AFP, Seoul

North Korea said yesterday it had tested a "cutting-edge" new weapon system using hypersonic missiles aimed at bolstering its defences against Pyongyang's foes.

The launch was detected by Seoul's military on Wednesday and was Pyongyang's first of its kind in months.

It came a week before world leaders, including US President Donald Trump, are set to descend

on South Korea for a major regional summit.

Top military official Pak Jong Chon declared the "new cutting-edge weapon system is a clear proof of steadily upgrading self-defensive technical capabilities of the DPRK", state news agency KCNA said, using North Korea's official acronym.

KCNA said the test was aimed at enhancing the "



Long tailbacks formed at the Manik Mia Avenue intersection in the capital yesterday, leaving commuters stranded in traffic for hours. The severe congestion was caused by students blocking the Farmgate intersection to demand safer roads and a ban on battery-run auto-rickshaws.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Don't include 'controversial officials' in next polls
BNP urges EC
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday urged the Election Commission not to involve controversial or questionable government officials in the process of the upcoming 13th national elections.

The party leaders said the commission has assured them that it remains cautious about the issue, following a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin at the EC headquarters in Agargaon.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, BNP Standing Committee Member Abdul Moyeen Khan said the administration has been moulded over the past 15 years to act loyally towards one political party. As a result, it is widely known that voters were victims of mockery in the past three elections.

The commission must establish a transparent system that can restore public confidence. Moyeen said it is unrealistic to exclude all officials who served in the past from the upcoming election process.

"Rather, those who may have acted unjustly under pressure or fear in the past should now be encouraged to discharge their duties properly in a democratic

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Trapped in charity, deprived of rights

How the country's system treats persons with disabilities as a welfare issue, denying them inclusion, equal opportunities

NILIMA JAHAN

Persons with disabilities in Bangladesh continue to face exclusion from education, health, training, and rehabilitation services -- despite constitutional

the Sustainable Development Goals.

Under the government's Allocation of Business framework, responsibility for disability affairs lies solely with the Ministry of Social Welfare. Other key ministries

a charity issue rather than a rights issue, leaving millions without essential services.

Although the UNCRPD requires all ministries to ensure inclusion in education, employment, health, sports, accessibility, and gender

in 2008, is essential to end this segregation. Until then, persons with disabilities will continue to be treated as charity recipients rather than citizens entitled to rights.

The problem is most visible in education. Despite having



RECOMMENDATIONS

Create disability focal points in every ministry

Develop programmes for women, children with disabilities under relevant ministries

Increase monthly disability allowance from Tk 850

guarantees, the 2013 Disability Rights Act, ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2007, and commitments to

Education, Health, Youth and Sports, and Women and Children Affairs -- remain largely disengaged.

Experts say this outdated structure disability as

equality, Bangladesh's disability agenda remains confined to one ministry.

Experts argue that reforming the Allocation of Business, as recommended

two education ministries -- Education and Primary and Mass Education -- schooling for children with disabilities is still handled by social welfare,

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TYPHOID CAMPAIGN 1.7cr children vaccinated so far

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As part of the ongoing typhoid vaccination campaign across Bangladesh, at least 1.7 crore children have been vaccinated as of Wednesday.

The campaign is progressing well, although some individuals have been spreading rumours about the vaccination on social media, said health officials at a meeting yesterday.

Authorities are working to identify and counter these false claims, they said.

Launched on October 12, the nationwide campaign aims to vaccinate 4.9 crore children aged between nine months and 15 years. It will continue on all working days till November 13, covering a total of 18 working days.

The Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) organised a progress review meeting at CIRDAP, with support from the Shastho Shurokha Foundation and Unicef.

EPI Deputy Director Shahriar Sajjad said 1.7 crore children -- 34 percent of the target -- have been vaccinated so far. Around 2.7 crore children have registered online to date, he added.



While the campaign's performance has been strong in Dhaka, Chattogram, and Rajshahi divisions, Khulna and Barishal lag slightly behind, said Sajjad.

Coverage remains lower in urban areas, especially city corporations, he said, adding that measures have been taken to improve coverage there.

Citing a report, Firdausi Qadri, emeritus scientist at icddr,b, said around 1,310 people in Bangladesh are infected with typhoid every day, and 22 of them die -- 15 of whom are children. The Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine (TCV) is 85 percent effective, meaning about 12 child deaths could be prevented each day if all children were vaccinated.

Prof Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser for the health ministry, said the vaccine is safe, effective, and globally approved. "We urge all parents to have their children vaccinated," he said.

DGHS Director General Prof Abu Jafor said some people are spreading rumours about the vaccination campaign. "We have been trying to identify and counter them."

Fewer than 500 cases of adverse effects have been reported, an insignificant number compared to the total vaccinated, he added.



Families stay in a waiting room at Bangladesh Shishu Hospital. Most of them are from low-income families outside Dhaka and have come to this specialised hospital to seek treatment for their children. They were told to wait three to four hours before being provided with a bed due to the patient rush at the facility. The photo was taken yesterday.

'They shot at me while I hung from building ledge'

July uprising victim testifies before tribunal as trial begins against 5 ex-cops over Rampura killings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A young man who was shot multiple times during the July uprising in Dhaka's Rampura testified before the International Crimes Tribunal yesterday, describing how police opened fire on him as he tried to save himself while hanging from the ledge of a building.

With the deposition of Amir Hossain, 18, as the first prosecution witness, the trial of the crimes against humanity case began against five former police officers, including former Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Habibur Rahman, over the killing of two people and the shooting of two others in Rampura last year.

The other accused are then DMP's (Khilgaon zone) Additional Deputy Commissioner Rashedul Islam; then Rampura Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mashru Rahman; then Sub-Inspector of the police station Tarikul Islam Bhuiyan; and then Rampura police outpost Assistant Sub-Inspector Chanchal Chandra Sarkar. Only Chanchal is in custody, while the remaining four are on the run. The witness, who at the time worked at a food

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

How long will it take to complete the probe?

HC rebukes taskforce over Sagar-Runi murder case delay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday blasted the government-formed taskforce for again failing to submit its full-fledged probe report in connection with the murders of journalists Sagar Sarwar and Meherun Rumi.

"Thirteen years have passed since two people (Sagar and Rumi) were murdered. Who killed them? Nothing could be known. Even the investigation into this case has not been completed yet. People all over the country are looking at this case. How many more years will it take to complete the investigation?" the HC bench of Justice Fatema Najib and Justice Fatema Anwar told the state counsel and the taskforce representative.

The bench asked Azizul Haque, investigation officer of the case, "Tell us what percentage of the investigation of the Sagar Rumi murder case has been completed."



Azizul, also a high official of the Police Bureau of Investigation, said six months' time was needed to complete the investigation.

At one stage of the hearing, Advocate Mohammad Shishir Monir, lawyer for the complainant in the murder case, told the court that he felt ashamed as the investigation had not been completed for such a long time.

Monir opposed the taskforce's petition seeking six months' time and prayed to the HC bench to grant three months to submit the report.

The HC granted six months' time for the last time to the taskforce to complete the investigation and submit its report.

On April 22, the HC had granted the taskforce an additional six months to complete the investigation and submit its report.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Memorial meeting for Ahmad Rafique today

CITY DESK

A condolence meeting commemorating Ahmad Rafique, a Language Movement veteran, will be held around 3:30pm today at the Abdul Karim Sahityabisharad Auditorium of Bangla Academy in Dhaka, said a press release.

Dhaka University Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury, convener of the national committee for the condolence meeting, will preside over the programme.

Ahmad Rafique, a renowned cultural activist, Tagore exponent, poet, essayist and columnist, passed away at Dhaka's BIRDEM Hospital on October 1. He was 96.

BGCS now Jatiyo Chhatro Shokti

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Just eight months after its formation, Bangladesh Gontantrik Chhatra Sangsads (BGCS) has been dissolved and reconstituted under a new name "Jatiyo Chhatro Shokti".

The announcement was made yesterday during a national coordination meeting at the Abu Sayed Convention Hall in Dhaka, with BGCS Convener Abu Baker Mojumdar unveiling the change.

Present at the event were Akhter Hossen, member secretary of NCP; Hasnat Abdullah, chief organiser for the southern region; Sarjis Alam, chief organiser for the northern region; Ariful Islam Adib, senior joint convener; Zahid Ahsan, member secretary; and other key organisers.

BGCS was originally formed on February 26 this year by a faction of leaders from the anti-discrimination student movement.



Locals form a human chain on the bank of the Gangadhar river in Kurigram yesterday, demanding the construction of a permanent embankment to protect their homes and farmlands from erosion that has already devoured areas stretching nearly two kilometres at Dhanirampur and Madhya Dhanirampur villages.

UPRISING CASE
Police seek to clear Iresh Zaker, ex-cabinet secy Mahbub

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Police have sought to clear marketing professional and actor Iresh Zaker of charges in a case filed over the killing of BNP activist Mahfuz Alam Shraban, linked to the July uprising.

Iresh, listed as accused number 157, was found to have no evidence connecting him to the incident, said investigation officer Sazzad Roman, inspector of Mirpur Model Police Station.

Police have also moved to clear former cabinet secretary Mahbub Hossain and Bangladesh Insurance Forum President BM Yousuf Ali in the same case. The IO has also appealed to the court to relieve 16 other accused.

They include Forethought PR Managing Director Ikram Moin Chowdhury, Popular Life Insurance Company Ltd Additional Managing Director BM Shawkat Ali, and Tiger IT Chairman Ziaur Rahman.

Sazzad filed three interim investigation reports with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court between October 9 and 16.

"In the primary investigation, no evidence was found linking them to the incident, so they have been exempted," he said, citing the report.

The case was filed by Shraban's brother on March 27, accusing ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 406 others of involvement in Shraban's killing in Mirpur on August 5 last year.

Iresh's inclusion in the case had sparked widespread criticism, with many netizens highlighting his active role in the uprising.

The accused include 24 journalists, at least 36 former ministers and state ministers, more than 41 former AL lawmakers, six former advisers to Hasina, businesspersons, lawyers, doctors, and police.

Caretaker system scrapped under a pre-planned design
Says Jamaat lawyer at SC hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami lawyer Mohammad Shishir Manir yesterday told the Supreme Court that a dictatorial and totalitarian regime had been established in the country through the cancellation of the non-party caretaker government system.

"Due to this dictatorial regime, Bangladesh has gone through a major disaster in all aspects of politics, economy and social policy. The non-party caretaker government system is the most acceptable formula for democracy as it is possible to hold free, fair, impartial and credible elections under such a government," he said.

The lawyer made the remarks while placing arguments before a seven-member bench of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed, during the third day's hearing of the appeals and review petitions against its 2011 verdict that scrapped the non-party caretaker government system.

The apex court fixed October 28 for resuming the hearing.

Arguing for restoring the caretaker government system, Shishir Manir told the court that the system cannot be effectively implemented during the period of the current interim government as the parliament is not functional now.

Yesterday, Manir told the court that the caretaker government system was scrapped as part of a completely pre-planned design, although the parliamentary committee concerned at that time had not wanted to exclude the system.

Arguing for restoring the caretaker government system, Shishir Manir told the court that the system cannot be effectively implemented during the period of the current interim government as the parliament is not functional now.

He said whatever verdict the Appellate Division delivers in this case should conform with the July charter's proposals on the caretaker government system. Otherwise, the total reform process will be affected and lost, he added.

Earlier in the day, Barrister Ehsan A Siddiqi, the lawyer for rights body Law, Governance and Policy, an intervener of the case, told the SC that the 13th amendment, which had introduced the caretaker system in 1996, is a basic structure of the constitution and a constitutional convention as it has strengthened the democracy of the country through holding free, fair and credible elections.

The elections held under the otherwise governments were questionable and therefore, the caretaker government system cannot be removed.

A seven-judge full bench of the Appellate Division, headed by the then Chief Justice ABM Kairul Haque, had declared by a majority view on May 10, 2011, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution null and void.

Two govt ambulances sit idle in Habiganj

Patients forced to pay double for private service

MINTU DESHWARA

Critically ill patients in Habiganj are being forced to pay high fares to private ambulance operators for emergency transfers to Sylhet or Dhaka, while two government ambulances meant to serve them sit idle and in disrepair.

Aslam Uddin, a resident of Habiganj town, said he had to pay nearly double the normal fare to take his ailing mother from Habiganj Sadar Hospital to Dhaka in a private ambulance after failing to get a government one.

"I'm not alone -- this is happening to many families here," he added.

Families say they often have no choice but to pay Tk 6,000-7,500 for a Dhaka trip, despite the official government rate being Tk 3,900.

Every day, an estimated 10 to 15 patients leave Habiganj 250-bed District Hospital for advanced treatment in Sylhet or Dhaka. But most depend on private ambulances, as the hospital's two government vehicles -- one received in 2009 and another in 2017 -- have become nearly unusable.

A hospital official, seeking anonymity, said one vehicle

is "almost permanently at the workshop", while the other runs intermittently. Drivers often refuse to operate the old ambulance, the official said.

Private ambulance businesses, however, are thriving.

Abdullah, a local operator, said they charge Tk 6,500-7,500 for

"The Dhaka-Sylhet highway is in bad shape, and these ambulances can't handle long-distance trips. Sometimes we have to turn patients away because the vehicles aren't roadworthy," he said.

Dr Aminul Haque Sarkar, superintendent of Habiganj District Hospital, said he has been

Every day, 10 to 15 patients leave Habiganj 250-bed District Hospital for advanced treatment in Sylhet or Dhaka. But most depend on private ambulances, as the hospital's two government vehicles have become nearly unusable.



Dhaka and Tk 3,000-4,000 for Sylhet, depending on the vehicle model. Each of their ambulances earns Tk 40,000-50,000 a month.

Abdur Rouf, one of the government ambulance drivers, said both vehicles are old and frequently break down.

appealing for replacements since his posting two and a half years ago.

"Both ambulances are in terrible condition due to age, but we try to serve as many patients as possible. I've repeatedly requested new vehicles from higher authorities, but none have arrived yet," he added.

They shot at me while I hung

FROM PAGE 3

shop, said that after Friday prayers on July 19, he left the shop for home. "As I crossed the small bridge over the Rampura canal and got onto the main road, I saw police and BGB members firing on protesting students and people," he told the tribunal.

"Out of fear, I climbed to the roof of a nearby under-construction building,

Three policemen followed me to the fourth floor. I held onto a rod at the edge of the roof and tried to hang there. One of them ordered me to jump off. As I did not comply, the policeman fired three rounds at me. All three bullets hit my legs. Then another policeman fired three more rounds -- those bullets also struck both my legs," he said.

Don't include

FROM PAGE 3

manner," he said.

Moysen said over the past 17 years, the administration has been politically motivated, turning the 2014, 2018, and 2024 elections into mockeries in the name of elections.

Yesterday, the BNP delegation submitted a series of demands to the EC, however, when asked how many proposals it submitted, Moysen did not disclose the number.

Asked whether the issue of a referendum was raised during the meeting, he said, "We want the referendum to be held on the same day as the general election."

PRAYER

TIMING

OCTOBER 24

Fazr Juma Asr Magrib Esha

AZN 4-50 12-30 4-00 5-36 7-15

JAMAAT 5-25 1-15 4-15 5-39 7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Three policemen followed me to the fourth floor. I held onto a rod at the edge of the roof and tried to hang there. One of them ordered me to jump off. As I did not comply, the policeman fired three rounds at me. All three bullets hit my legs. Then another policeman fired three more rounds -- those bullets also struck both my legs," he said.

"Out of fear, I climbed to the roof of a nearby under-construction building,

I lost consciousness. When I regained sense, I found myself in Famous Hospital, where doctors were stitching and bandaging my wounded legs," Amir said, adding that he later received treatment at several other hospitals.

While cross examining, the defence counsel for accused Chanchal wanted to show the wounds. As Amir was wearing trousers, the prosecution brought in a lungi that he wore upon the tribunal's permission and showed the wounds.

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Africa accounts for 40pc of global conflicts: ICRC

Some 50 clashes currently going on across the continent

AFP, Addis Ababa

Africa accounts for roughly 40 percent of the world's armed conflicts, with some 50 ongoing clashes across the continent, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) vice-president told AFP yesterday.

The continent is home to roughly 1.4 billion people, and while it contains huge mineral wealth and the world's most youthful population, many parts of Africa remain mired in poverty and insecurity.

"We now have more than 50 active armed conflict situations in Africa," said the ICRC's Gilles Carbonnier.

This represents a 45 percent increase since 2020, he said, and accounts for "approximately 40 percent of total conflicts in the world".

"The humanitarian consequences are truly dramatic, because we have some 35 million people displaced due to these conflicts in African countries, and this represents



almost half of the displaced people in the world," Carbonnier said.

It comes as the ICRC, like many other humanitarian organisations, faces a decline in funding due to massive aid cuts by the United States and other Western countries this year -- despite the "enormous" needs, he said.

In July, an international study revealed that the withdrawal of US aid could lead to more than 14 million additional deaths by 2030 among the most vulnerable, a third of them children.

"This forces us to make very painful choices, where we must reduce, or even cease, some of our operations to prioritise others," Carbonnier said. The most "worrying" situation is Sudan, he said, gripped by a civil war since April 2023. Clashes between the regular army and the Rapid Support Forces have left tens of thousands dead, displaced nearly 12 million people, in what the United Nations calls "the world's worst humanitarian crisis."

"We have a health system that is largely destroyed," he said, with the ICRC worried about the resurgence of cholera, malaria and dengue fever.



A person records a federal agent at an intersection in Chicago's Cicero neighborhood during an immigration raid, following US President Donald Trump's order to increase federal law enforcement presence to aid in crime prevention, on Wednesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Gunmen kill Pak militia chief, 5 others

AFP, Peshawar

Gunmen fired on a vehicle in Pakistan's northwestern border region, killing a pro-government militia leader and five others before torching their bodies, an official told AFP yesterday.

The attack took place in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Wednesday, where violence has surged since the Taliban returned to power in neighbouring Afghanistan in 2021.

The gunmen fired on the victims, poured fuel onto their vehicle and set it ablaze, a senior administration official told AFP on condition of anonymity. "The victims," the official said.

Methane threat grows as global action stalls: UN

REUTERS, Copenhagen

Almost 90 percent of satellite-detected methane leaks flagged to governments and oil and gas companies are not being acknowledged, the UN said Wednesday ahead of the COP30 climate talks next month.

The International Methane Emissions Observatory, which integrates over 17 satellites to observe plumes, got a 12 percent response rate from 3,500 alerts from leaks detected across the oil and gas sector, the report said, marking limited progress from last year's response rate when only 1 percent of alerts resulted in action to prevent them.

Although methane stays in the atmosphere for a shorter time



than carbon dioxide, which is the biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, it is much more effective at trapping heat. As a result, scientists consider cutting methane emissions to be the fastest way to tackle climate change in the near term.

More than 150 countries have signed a 2021 pledge to cut methane emissions by 30 percent this decade. "Actions remain too slow,"

said Inger Andersen, executive director of the UN Environment Programme, which oversees the observatory's Methane Alert and Response System that remotely detects leaks of the colourless gas.

"We are talking about tightening the screws in some cases," Anderson said, referring to methane leaks from the oil and gas sector from venting and flaring. "We can't ignore these rather easy wins."

The report said it has documented 25 instances where a notification led to a large emissions event being fixed. Methane leaks from the oil and gas sector offer the most potential for mitigation, the observatory says. But it also plans to expand its detection work to include emissions from other major sources, head of the observatory said.



Residents walk near a damaged business centre following a drone attack in Kyiv, yesterday, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

PHOTO: AFP

Blast at central Russian plant kills 10: governor

AFP, Moscow

An explosion at a factory in the central Russian city of Kopeysk killed 10 people and left 12 others missing, the region's governor said yesterday.

Authorities did not say what caused the blast late Wednesday or give the name of the plant, but Russian media outlets reported that it produced explosives for the military.

Videos of the incident on Russian social media showed a ball of flames erupting into the night sky, sending glowing embers in multiple directions.

"According to the latest information, 10 people were killed in the explosion at the plant in Kopeysk," Chelyabinsk region governor Alexei Teksler said on Telegram yesterday.

"The whereabouts of another 12 employees are being clarified," he added. Russian prosecutors said they had opened a criminal investigation into "industrial safety" violations, without elaborating.

Investigators do not believe a Ukrainian drone attack was the cause, Teksler said. Kyiv has targeted Russian industrial sites with drones throughout the nearly four year war.

SPAT WITH MUSK'S X India limits content takedown powers to fewer officials

REUTERS, Bengaluru

The Indian government has reduced the number of officials who can order content to be taken down from the internet, a move that follows a bitter

legal battle with Elon Musk's X that centered around a contentious policy.

X, Musk's social media platform, had been in opposition to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2023 decision to police the internet by allowing thousands of officials to file takedown orders.

In August, Reuters reported that police inspectors were issuing takedown orders on cartoons and satirical posts, sparking one of X's most high-profile legal challenges against a government's content-removal policy.



added in a video published by the foreign ministry.

Tensions between Iran and the IAEA surged immediately after 12-day war, with Tehran suspending its cooperation with the agency over what it described as its failure to adequately condemn the Israeli and US strikes.

In September, Iran and the IAEA agreed a new cooperation framework, but weeks later Tehran deemed that framework invalid after Britain, France, and Germany triggered the return of UN sanctions that were removed under a 2015 nuclear deal.

That deal was effectively torpedoed in 2018 when the US unilaterally withdrew from it during President Donald Trump's first term in office.

বাংলাদেশ সাবমেরিন ক্যাবলস পিএলসি (বিএসসিপিএলসি)
রহমান'স রেগাম সেন্টার (৮ম ও ৯ম তলা)
১১১, তেজগাঁও-গুলশান লিংক রোড, ঢাকা-১২০৮

বিএসসিপিএলসি-এর ১৭তম বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভার নোটিশ

বাংলাদেশ সাবমেরিন ক্যাবলস পিএলসি-এর ১৭তম বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভা বাংলাদেশ স্কিউরিটিজ অ্যান্ড একচেন কমিশন (বিএসইসি) এর নির্দেশনা নং-বিএসইসি/আইসিএডি/এসআরআইসি/২০২৪/৩৮/৮৭, তারিখ: ২৭ মার্চ ২০২৪ খ্রি। এর বিধান মোতাবেক ভার্টুয়াল প্ল্টাফর্ম (লিংক: <https://bscl.com.bd/agm>) ব্যবহার করে আগামী ২৩ নভেম্বর ২০২৪ঠি। তারিখ রোজ রবিবার, সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটকায় কোম্পানির চেয়ারম্যান মহোদয়ের সভাপতিতে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। সকল সম্মানিত শেয়ারহোল্ডারকে ভার্টুয়াল প্ল্টাফর্ম ব্যবহার করে উক্ত সভায় যোগদান করার জন্য বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ করা হলো। সভার আলোচ্যসূচিটি মন্তব্য নিয়ন্ত্রণ:

সাধারণ কার্যাবলী:

- আলোচ্যসূচি-১ : ৩০শে জুন, ২০২৫ঠি, তারিখে সমাপ্ত অর্থ বছরের পরিচালনা পর্ষদের প্রতিবেদন ও নিরীক্ষিত আর্থিক বিবরণী বিবেচনা ও গ্রহণ।
- আলোচ্যসূচি-২ : ৩০শে জুন, ২০২৫ঠি, তারিখে সমাপ্ত অর্থ বছরের জন্য লভ্যাংশ ঘোষণা।
- আলোচ্যসূচি-৩ : কোম্পানির সম্বাদবিধির বিধি নং- ১২০, ১২১ ও ১২২ অনুসারে পরিচালক নির্বাচন।
- আলোচ্যসূচি-৪ : ২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থ বছরের জন্য কোম্পানির বিধিবিহীন নিরীক্ষক নিয়োগ ও নিরীক্ষকের সম্মান নির্ধারণ।
- আলোচ্যসূচি-৫ : ২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থ বছরের জন্য কোম্পানির কম্প্যায়েল অডিটর নিয়োগ ও অডিটরের সম্মান নির্ধারণ।

পরিচালনা পর্ষদের নির্দেশক্রমে,

Zakir Ali

(মোহাম্মদ জাকিরুল আলম)
কোম্পানি সচিব (অতিরিক্ত মার্যাদা), বিএসসিপিএলসি
ই-মেইল: cs@bscl.com

বিশেষ দ্রষ্টব্য:

- যে সকল শেয়ারহোল্ডারের নাম রেকর্ড তেও তথা ২২ অক্টোবর ২০২৫ঠি, তারিখে কোম্পানিতে সংরক্ষিত শেয়ার রেজিস্টারে অথবা ডিপিটিভা রেজিস্টারে লিপিবদ্ধ হবে, উক্ত শেয়ারহোল্ডারগণ বর্ণিত সাধারণ সভায় অনুরোধ করতে পারবেন।
- রেকর্ড তেও তেও ডিপিটিভ সকল শেয়ারহোল্ডারের ই-মেইল টিকানায় বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভার নোটিশ, কার্যপদ্ধতি প্রতিবেদন ও ভার্টুয়াল প্ল্টাফর্ম লিংক ই-মেইলের মাধ্যমে প্রেরণ করা হবে এবং ভার্টুয়াল প্ল্টাফর্মের ব্যবহার ই-মেইল টিকানায় কোম্পানির ওয়েবসাইট লিংক: <https://bscl.com.bd/agm> -তেও পোওয়া যাবে।
- কোম্পানির শেয়ারহোল্ডারগণ প্রয়োজনে তারিখে কোম্পানি অথবা ভার্টুয়াল প্ল্টাফর্মের মাধ্যমে ভার্টুয়াল প্ল্টাফর্মের সিস্টেমে হালনাগাদের নিমিত্ত সিডিএল কর্তৃত ইন্সুলেট সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে সেটআপ সহ ২০ নভেম্বর ২০২৫ঠি, বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটকায় মাত্র cs@bscl.com টিকানায় ই-মেইল প্রেরণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হবে।
- বর্ণিত সাধারণ সভায় অংশগ্রহণের অধিকারী শেয়ারহোল্ডারগণ প্রয়োজনে তারিখে কোম্পানিকে প্রয়োজন করে নিরীক্ষণ কর্তৃত সাধারণ সভা শর্ত ই-মেইল প্রেরণের জন্য কোম্পানির বার্ষিক প্রতিবেদনে প্রদত্ত প্রয়োজন কর্তৃত সাধারণ সভা শর্ত ই-মেইল প্রেরণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হবে।
- বাংলাদেশ সিকিউরিটিজ অ্যান্ড একচেন কমিশন (বিএসইসি) কর্তৃক ২৪ অক্টোবর ২০২৩ঠি, তারিখে জারিকৃত নোটিফিকেশন নং- SEC/CMRRC/2009-193/154 এর নির্দেশনা অনুসারে শেয়ারহোল্ডারগণকে বর্ণিত সভায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোন প্রকার নগদ সম্মানী/উপহার প্রদান করা হবে না। প্রতিবেদিত ব্যাংক হিসেবে লভ্যাংশ প্রাপ্তি ও বিশেষ হারে কর্তৃত সংক্রান্ত আবেদন বিএসসিপিএলসি'র নিকট প্রেরণের নিমিত্ত গত ২২ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫ঠি, তারিখে কোম্পানি কর্তৃক প্রকাশিত মূল্য সংবেদনশীল তথ্য প্রদত্ত নির্দেশনা অনুরোধ করা হবে।

Timely election must for economic stability

IMF's loan disbursement delay is a clear message for govt, political parties

The usual flow of international financing to Bangladesh has suddenly slowed, and the reason is no longer purely economic. It is now mostly political: the upcoming national election is, at least in part, determining the course of foreign fund disbursement. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reportedly signalled a delay in releasing the next tranche of its \$5.5 billion loan programme. Its stance—that it wishes to coordinate with the incoming elected government to ensure continuity of reforms—is a thinly veiled expression of caution that any attempt to defer or derail the election plan will carry an economic cost.

We must remember why Bangladesh turned to the IMF in the first place. The Hasina administration's narrative of economic success concealed deep structural weaknesses. Beneath an appearance of stability lay troubling vulnerabilities: rapidly declining foreign exchange reserves, persistent inflation, chronically weak tax collection, etc. Under the current interim administration, however, the economy has shown tentative signs of stabilisation and recovery, thanks to painful but necessary reforms initiated under the IMF programme. This progress, however fragile, is a hard-earned victory that Bangladesh cannot afford to lose. A reversal now would squander the sacrifices already made. The new government, regardless of who leads it, must stay the course.

For now, what's clearly needed is the timely conduct of a national election, as planned in February, to install a government with a legitimate popular mandate. Any disruption or compromise in this process would compromise the economy itself, among other things. Only a duly elected administration will have the strong political capital needed to complete unfinished reforms.

However, with the election just four months away, major political parties remain locked in disputes over the neutrality of the interim government and the Election Commission. Each side accuses the other of manipulating the administration in the run-up to the polls. The BNP alleges that individuals aligned with Jamaat-e-Islami have been favoured in key administrative reshuffles. Jamaat, in turn, claims that certain advisers are working for a rival party's interests. Meanwhile, the NCP accuses both BNP and Jamaat of dividing critical administrative and police posts among their loyalists. This atmosphere of mutual suspicion and political brinkmanship only raises concerns about our democratic transition, and of course the election itself, which risks upsetting our investors, lenders, and development partners.

The subtext from global financial institutions is unmistakable: they demand predictability. The current reform agenda—addressing banking inefficiencies, boosting revenue, and removing distorting subsidies—is painful but essential. A timely election would reassure the IMF, the World Bank, and foreign investors that Bangladesh remains a stable and credible bet. Conversely, a disrupted or delayed election would only erode confidence. The IMF programme could stall altogether, jeopardising the remaining \$1.9 billion. Beyond the immediate financial implications, domestic unrest would deter foreign direct investment and threaten Bangladesh's hard-won reputation as a reliable manufacturing hub.

Political parties must, therefore, rise above zero-sum partisan battles and recognise the election as a cornerstone of national economic resilience. The government, for its part, must remain resolute in ensuring that the election proceeds as planned.

Enhance the fire service's capacity

Firefighters must be properly trained and equipped

The fire service's poor performance in controlling the three recent major fires has once again exposed its limited capacity to respond to large-scale and chemical-related incidents. These fires—at Dhaka airport, the Chattogram Export Processing Zone, and a chemical warehouse in Mirpur—each burned for more than a day, taking between 24 and 27 hours to be brought under control. Reports indicate that the long time taken to douse the flames was due to a combination of factors, including inadequate fire safety measures, poor inter-agency coordination, and weak emergency response systems. Moreover, the poor response in these incidents revealed a critical shortage of essential tools and vehicles required to tackle fires involving hazardous chemicals.

While the absence of basic safety measures in the buildings, even in critical structures at Dhaka airport, made these operations difficult, weak preparedness and administrative complications reportedly also caused delays in the response. There were major weaknesses in the initial response, alarm systems, and water supply, all of which are essential components of effective fire management. Experts have also raised questions as to why it took so long to bring the fire under control in Dhaka Airport's cargo village, despite having its own fire service unit.

According to fire safety officials, the capacity required to deal with general fires and chemical fires differs significantly, and our firefighters have severe shortcomings in this regard. They have neither the tools nor the training required to tackle chemical fires effectively. They need specialised vehicles such as Hazmat tenders—emergency response vehicles designed to handle hazardous materials—for each divisional city and for stations located near land, river, and airport areas, along with other essential equipment. Moreover, our firefighters often have to work with minimal safety gear, risking their lives. The fire at a warehouse in Tongi's Sahara Market on September 22, in which three fire service officials lost their lives while tackling the blaze, revealed the critical need to ensure adequate safeguards and protection for firefighters.

All things considered, it is evident that our fire department urgently needs modernisation. The government must equip the fire service with necessary tools and training to tackle chemical fires effectively. It should also ensure that joint drills between the fire service and relevant agencies are conducted regularly. Moreover, KPI areas such as airports and EPZs should remain under constant surveillance for fire hazards. Last but not least, proper investigations into these fire incidents are essential to find other causes of response failure so that any loophole can be fixed.

Yunus, Charter, and Our Future

Can the vision for 'New Bangladesh' ignore the poor, farmers, workers, youth, women, or employment and climate crises?



THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher of
The Daily Star:

MAHFUZ ANAM

When Professor Muhammad Yunus agreed to take charge of the interim government, the people of Bangladesh heaved a sigh of relief. We really got the best man available, we thought. Yes, he may not have had the experience of running a government, but he founded the Grameen Bank, which also received a Nobel Prize along with the professor himself. I mention it because when an organisation gets the Nobel Prize, it must reflect the highest standards of internal governance, sustainability, ethical operation, compliance with staff rights, audit, and numerous other things. A man who could set up and run such an institution for decades, and later survive Sheikh Hasina's vicious and intense search for non-compliance of any sort—especially financial—across more than 40 business and non-profit bodies, does justify our confidence in him.

However, his running of the government for the last 14 months has raised serious questions, doubts, and uncertainties.

To start with, he could have picked a better team, and his error was not to recalibrate it, except for reshuffling one or two portfolios, that too due to special circumstances. Most heads of government reshuffle their cabinet, especially when the mandate is wide and the time available is limited. However, Professor Yunus remains an acceptable choice—perhaps with far less support than when he began—to head the government.

Recently, he proudly announced the signing of the July National Charter (JNC), which is the outcome of a glorious student-led uprising that freed us from a highly oppressive regime and is supposed to give us a new vision for Bangladesh—a Bangladesh that will have overcome all its flaws to ensure a future of rights, non-discrimination, freedoms, and democracy. He termed it as coming out of "barbarism" into civilisation." He repeated it more than once. If he had specified the period of our "barbarism"—say, the tenure of the last regime—then the meaning of his statement would have been clearer. As it stands now, it has every chance of being interpreted as saying that all 54 years of our independent Bangladesh were like living under "barbarism." Can any proud Bangladeshi accept it? As a freedom fighter, and as someone who has lived throughout this period,

Prof Yunus claimed that the charter shows the world what the youth did in Bangladesh and what they will do for both Bangladesh and the world. Surprisingly, there are no specific recommendations in the JNC about the special and urgent needs of the youth—their education, training, leadership skills, better job prospects, etc—forgetting that it was the job quota issue that pushed the youth to rebel in the first place.

I cannot accept such a sweeping condemnation. What sort of people does it make us out to be? What global impression does it give of us? Yes, we have had our failures, but to be "barbaric"?

During his speech, he paid tribute to the heroes of the July uprising—to which we enthusiastically add our voice, as we always do and will continue to—and said that the "young" will give leadership not only to Bangladesh but to the world. It has now been almost 15 months since the uprising. Have we become

an example for ourselves, let alone the world? Doubt still exists about a peaceful, free, and fair election, which is a fundamental prerequisite of any democracy.

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Then there is not a single recommendation about poverty alleviation in the JNC. How can Bangladesh have a vision for the future in which poverty is not a focus?



The July National Charter, signed on October 17, 2025, has not addressed many crucial issues facing Bangladesh, including poverty alleviation, youth employment and the climate crisis.

FILE PHOTO: PRESS WING OF CHIEF ADVISER

that people wanted the most—as the police were instrumental in killing most of the July demonstrators. Only recently, the process for the formation of an independent police commission has begun, which is a commendable move.

The NCC spent a total of eight months discussing with 30 political parties, including two alliances, all led by men. There were no women even in the party teams, except in maybe one or two instances. The NCC could have convened a special session just for women, as they are registered voters and have an inalienable right to express their views in a process that is shaping Bangladesh's future.

The NCC report points out that, except for the recommendation of the Constitution Reform Commission, lists of easily implementable recommendations from the other commissions were separately submitted to the interim government. This was done in February 2025—more than seven months ago. Why has nothing been done about any of those recommendations? When asked, the standard answer has been "we are working on them." Even the relevant reform commission members do not know the implementation status of these recommendations, let alone the media or the general public.

What have the advisers been doing all this time? Wasn't it a betrayal of the interim government's own professed goals? Would it be unfair to ask if the government is at all serious about any reforms while they speak of it all the time?

We concur with Prof Yunus when he says that achieving consensus among our diverse political parties—and that too on 84 issues covering different aspects that need redirection—is no mean feat. The interim government and the consensus commission deserve our sincere appreciation

for this achievement. However, the lack of implementation, save a few exceptions, on the government's part has already reduced public confidence in it. However, yesterday's in-principle approval of a separate secretariat of the Supreme Court is a welcome step.

Meanwhile, we already notice some disturbing developments among political parties, which will likely further corrode the already dwindling public confidence. As of last Wednesday, BNP has demanded that the interim administration adopt the caretaker government formula before the election, the NCP wants a reconstitution of the Election Commission, and Jamaat demands a total change of administrative personnel as, according to them, it is now filled with partisan bureaucrats.

We want to underline the point that, out of the 84 recommendations, total agreement among all political parties exists on 40, which can be implemented by executive orders or ordinance. Therefore, we urge the Yunus government not to waste any more time, proceed with the recommendations that have received complete and unambiguous agreement, and implement them. This will clearly show that the nation

did gain some reforms through the interim government.

To construct a new Bangladesh, our vision for the future must include the poor, the women, the youth and, of course, the environment. We must have a clear, well-identified, and easily implementable plan for our young, who, as Prof Yunus says, are our future. We must move from the rhetorical to the practical. Whether we like it or not, we will be seriously affected by the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is already conquering the world and is operational in Bangladesh to a limited extent—and growing by the minute. To keep pace with the changing world, we must elevate our education to a higher standard. Technology provides an unbelievable opportunity to fill the quality gap in our education through the use of IT, the internet, pre-recorded lessons, and totally reformed curricula. Self-taught skilled workers earn millions for us through outsourced work, which can be a huge source of income. Sadly, the reforms we are fighting for deal with the past and the present. None of them deals with the future—the fast-changing reality that will totally transform our world.

As we aspire to build a new Bangladesh, we need to think outside the box and not confine ourselves only to reforming the box. Let us not fill ourselves with hatred on one side and overconfidence on the other. Rhetoric does not advance a nation, but humility does. The former is a trap that blinds us to reality, while the latter allows us to be fully aware of our inadequacies, the gaps in our knowledge and skills, and makes us conscious of the enormity of the task. There are many traits of ours that need self-examination, including the fact that we do not like self-examination. We prefer to blame others for all our faults and never admit a single one of ours. That is where our real reforms must start.

'HSC-SSC results serve as a wake-up call for education reform'

Prof Siddiqur Rahman, former director of the Institute of Education and Research (IER) at Dhaka University, speaks with Mahiya Tabassum of The Daily Star about the recent HSC results and what they reveal about the state of Bangladesh's education system.

This year's HSC pass rate plummeted to 57.12 percent—the lowest in 21 years. Many are calling it a "return to reality," with some education board officials admitting that previous years' results were artificially inflated through a "sympathetic approach" to grading. As an expert, how do you interpret this shift?

Over the years, we've witnessed a persistent tendency to award grace marks to help students pass. There were even instructions to award marks simply for attempting an answer, regardless of whether it was correct. This practice, to a considerable extent, depended on directives from exam controllers and senior officials, and it led to the inflated results we saw for years.

There's an acceptable threshold for liberal grading. When we cross that, it might benefit individual students in the short term, but it causes far greater harm in the long run. Students fail to prepare themselves for meaningful societal contribution when the evaluation process is corrupted.

There's also been a concerning trend to manipulate grades by exploiting personal connections, especially in practical exams, which often results in suspicious gaps between theory and practical marks. This indicates deeper corruption within the system. We need a comprehensive overhaul in the system. However, change often causes disruption, but stakeholders, including relevant authorities, are not always willing to endure the process and relevant challenges.

Earlier this year, we witnessed the same outcome following SSC exams. Do you think this shift to strict evaluation will rebuild credibility in public examinations, or will it discourage students and parents long accustomed to inflated grades?



Siddiqur Rahman

PHOTO: COURTESY

It will definitely have a positive impact. It is only fair that a student achieves the grade they deserve. This year's SSC and HSC results both serve as a wake-up call to take a critical look at our education system. At the same time, the evaluation process, starting with setting exam questions, must be "valid," "reliable," and "applicable." If any one of these characteristics is missing, the system loses credibility. Reliability is crucial. We check the reliability of a question paper by running tests and retests, where a student is evaluated more than once based on the same question paper and performs similarly each time. It shows consistency and proves the reliability of the question paper.

Question papers must meet certain quality standards, and the exam hall environment is equally crucial. The evaluation process loses validity if the proper code of conduct is not maintained in the exam hall. Currently, we're not in a good place with our evaluation process. This is primarily because the people responsible for preparing question papers have limited expertise. In different countries, examination specialists are specifically appointed to education boards for this purpose. We don't rigorously follow that practice here.

The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) introduced revised syllabi aimed at promoting analytical thinking.

Have these reforms reached classrooms meaningfully, or do they remain limited to paper and policy?

I was directly involved in revamping the curriculum in 2012. It was revised in 2021, again in 2022 when I served as a chief consultant, and in 2023. The curriculum we have today is essentially a refurbished version of the 2012 framework. There are a few issues with the existing curriculum, and one of them is the massive gap between the prescribed version and the implemented version. I've supervised three research studies at Master's and PhD levels at Dhaka University, which specifically examined this disconnect. There are several reasons for this failure in implementation.

First, teachers often lack commitment and sincerity. Second, there's an acute shortage of adequate educational resources. Third, institutional administration fails to provide teachers with the necessary resources and opportunities to adopt curricula introduced by NCTB. Fourth, there's a lack of effort from government bodies. There should be regular audits and actions by relevant government agencies to facilitate implementation—for example, classroom visits and constructive feedback based on observations. They're extremely reluctant to follow through on these responsibilities.

For years, Bangladesh recorded high pass rates and record numbers of GPA-5 achievers, yet the graduate unemployment rate remains alarmingly high. Do you think the inflation of results contributed to this disconnect between education and employability?

I don't think high pass rates and record GPA-5 numbers directly cause graduate unemployment. The reality is that there's only a limited scope for white-collar jobs in our country. Such positions aren't being created in proportion to the number of fresh

graduates we produce every year. This is one of the two aspects of this issue. The second one is that many graduates who get recruited fail to meet the required skill levels.

Bangladesh doesn't have a 100 percent graduation rate, and it does not need to. We need people across a diverse range of sectors. Therefore, education should be compulsory and facilitated only up to a certain level, say secondary or higher secondary. Beyond that, students should be channelled into pathways that align with their skills and interests—whether academic, vocational, or technical—so that their education leads to meaningful outcomes. This approach would also accelerate economic progress.

But no matter how much we improve our education system, we cannot guarantee employment for every graduate. Hence, we must diversify both our education pathways and job sectors, placing far greater emphasis on vocational and technical education.

What specific reforms do we need to transform the trajectory of secondary and higher secondary education?

We must ensure foundational education up to a certain level, then allocate higher education opportunities based on merit and aptitude. We need some fundamental changes to our curriculum, including a shift away from the memorisation-based system.

We also need to ensure the quality of our educators. People who are meritorious and genuinely passionate about teaching need better facilities and incentives so they're motivated to choose this profession. Educators must become more proactive in classrooms, enabling critical and creative thinking among students.

We cannot rely on a memorisation-based system anymore. If we fail to ensure quality education, we cannot expect to produce better students or even an efficient workforce.

The fires we choose to cry for

Maisha Islam Monamee
recently graduated from the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) at the University of Dhaka and is a contributor at The Daily Star.

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Last week, a fire broke out in a garment factory in Mirpur. A chemical explosion in an adjacent warehouse tore through the factory building, killing 16 workers. By midday, the images had already begun to circulate—flames devouring the structure, smoke rising over the narrow lanes, and people running, desperate and disoriented. News outlets covered the incident throughout the day. Yet, within a week, ripples of outrage dulled and a collective moment of mourning disappeared. The story had vanished from conversations.

We treat industrial fatalities as background noise because our hearts have been numbed by repetition. Over the past decades, workplace death in Bangladesh has become tragically routine. In 2013, the Rana Plaza collapse killed over 1,100 garment workers, marking one of the deadliest industrial accidents in history. The fire at Tazreen Fashions in 2012 killed more than 117 workers, exposing the lethal risks baked into our industrial model. Despite following safety audits, building inspections, and international pressure, the baseline danger persists. In 2023, the Occupational Safety,

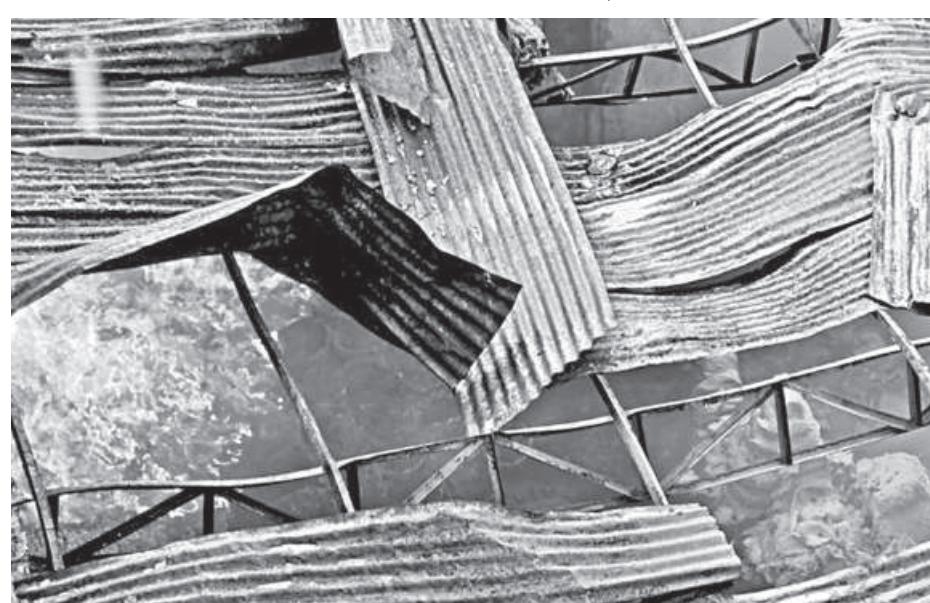
Health and Environment (OSHE) Foundation recorded 1,432 workplace deaths, among them 1,103 in non-institutional settings and only 329 in institutional workplaces. In 2024, at least 758 workers died in 639 workplace accidents nationwide, according to the Safety and Rights Society (SRS). Within the first six months of 2025, 422 workers lost their lives in 373 accidents across sectors. These statistics are not sterile; they are lives erased, families shattered, and dignity denied.

Yet we remain unmoved. Because we have practised selective empathy. We praise Bangladesh as a model of cheap labour with a comparative advantage in global supply chains. We boast export numbers, foreign investments, and industrial growth. But we seldom factor in the real cost of lives that are considered negotiable and expendable. We are comfortable as long as our own security is intact. It is not difficult to notice that our moral compass has long been conditioned by class. We mourn selectively, grieve in categories, and rage only when the tragedy feels familiar. A fire in a restaurant unsettles us because we have been there and we can

imagine ourselves trapped inside. A factory fire, on the other hand, remains distant, unimaginable. It belongs to a different Bangladesh, one that we benefit from but do not belong to. And so, our sympathy falters.

Unfortunately, we belong to a society where even death has a hierarchy. The intensity of our sorrow depends on the postcode of the tragedy, and the value of a life is measured by where it was lost. We tell ourselves that this is

how the poor die, that this is the natural order of things. But there is nothing natural about indifference. The workers who die in these accidents are the invisible architects of our comfort. They sew the clothes that line our wardrobes, they assemble the garments that keep the economy running, they sustain a global industry that we take pride in. How long can we pride ourselves on cheap labour without paying for it?



Even as everything else becomes more expensive, we refuse to let labourers' lives rise in value.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

Even as everything else becomes more expensive, we refuse to let labourers' lives rise in value. We pass wage increases only after a long struggle, while safety remains voluntary. We negotiate trade deals and foreign investment on the backs of those whose lives are easily discounted. This is a failure of the collective conscience where we have mastered the art of selective outrage. And that, perhaps, is our deepest moral failure. Not our inability to act, but our inability to feel. We normalise a world where the poor die invisibly. It is time we stop treating these deaths as mere incidents. They are indictments. They scream at us of moral inertia, institutional cowardice, and social amnesia.

If prices rise for food and rent, then labourers' lives must also rise in protection and dignity. The cost of clothing should reflect the true cost of its creation. The price of fashion should include the price of safety. Without that shift, we will remain comfortable in the illusion of progress while we tolerate the quiet genocide of the working class. It is not the fire that should frighten us anymore; it is our silence. And silence is not the absence of noise, but the presence of consent. When we remain unmoved by the suffering of others, we consent to a system that will, eventually, consume us all.

So this month, 16 families will sit in silence, facing the unfilled absence left behind by their dead. Their grief will not trend. Their names will not echo through our streets. And the rest of us will sleep through another night, certain that the fire has nothing to do with us. But it does.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Minimum amount
- 2 French article
- 33 - acid (aqua fortis)
- 6 Very serious
- 35 Deeply impressed
- 11 Winfrey of TV
- 38 Toil away
- 12 Madrid month
- 39 One of the "Bridgerton" sons
- 13 Beach setting
- 40 Banish
- 14 TV role for Guy Williams
- 41 Correct, as text
- 15 Platitude
- 42 Was partisan
- 17 Back muscle, for short
- 18 How- - (handy books)
- 19 Pillbox poker
- 22 Low digit
- 23 Under control
- 24 Plague
- 25 Verbose
- 27 Cal. pages
- 30 Before
- 31 Singer Rita
- 32 - acid (aqua fortis)
- 33 French article
- 34 Deeply impressed
- 35 One of the "Bridgerton" sons
- 36 Show for which Gillian Anderson got an Emmy
- 37 Indian dress
- 38 Toil away
- 39 Show for which Michael Chiklis got an Emmy
- 40 Banish
- 41 Correct, as text
- 42 Was partisan
- 43 - acid (aqua fortis)
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- 61 Banish
- 62 Correct, as text
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Understanding the cinema of convenient TRUTHS AND PERFECT PROPAGANDA

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Cinema has always been a mirror, but particularly in the last decade, it has started holding that mirror at a rather flattering angle. The reflection now has a bit more nationalism, a bit less nuance, and sometimes, an entire political manifesto playing in the background. The trailer for *The Taj Story*, which asks whether the Taj Mahal might once have been a temple, does not merely invite curiosity; it stages curiosity as corrective history. It is the newest actor in a growing ensemble of movies that treat doubt like doctrine and cinema like a courthouse. And while we once saw filmmakers wrestle with moral ambiguity, in present times, the only ambiguity lies in whether you are watching entertainment or an election campaign.

The easiest way to spot propaganda on screen is to notice who is being saved, and from whom. Every story needs a villain, and Bollywood has made an art out of villainising entire communities, ideologies, or centuries of history. In films like *The Kashmir Files* or *The Kerala Story*, the narrative is not satisfied with exploring tragedy as it must assign guilt, draw blood, and wave a flag while doing it. They claim to be based on true story, but so do most fairy tales. The truth, in such cases, is less about facts and more about feelings; the kind of feelings that make people clap in theatres and seethe on social media. The packaging, of course, is patriotic. Consider *Madras Cafe*. Ostensibly a political thriller about India's covert dealings in Sri Lanka, it wore the researcher's coat and won praise for restraint, even as Tamil groups accused it of caricaturing insurgents and reconstituting complex violence into tidy patriotism. The film worked because it largely respected cinematic

craft; its danger was not crude lies but selective emphases and excisions that made certain conclusions feel inevitable.

Then there are films that are less coy but more effective because they are emotionally dexterous. *Rang De Basanti* organised youth outrage into a cinematic narrative that made civic anger feel heroic and performative; its impact spilled beyond screens into public marches and moral conversation about corruption. The film did not spoonfeed doctrine; it anthropomorphised a political awakening, which made its persuasion

feel like a personal epiphany rather than an instruction manual. That is the point: persuasion that feels volunteered is far harder to interrogate. Some movies wear national pride like a coat of arms. For example, *Uri: The Surgical Strike* refused to call itself propaganda; it called itself inspirational.

Hindi cinema has plenty of nuanced cases that complicate the binary of propaganda versus art. *Raajneeti* staged politics as Greek tragedy: the family becomes a state, and vice versa, inviting viewers to see corruption as spectacle rather

than policy. *Madras Cafe* posed ambiguity while still attracting heat for its representation. The lesson here is that subtlety is not the absence of intent.

For decades, powerful states have used cinema as soft power, and Hollywood practically wrote the manual. During World War II, American studios churned out films glorifying the Allied cause, sometimes with the direct involvement of the Pentagon. *Top Gun* was so effective at boosting military recruitment that the US Navy famously set up booths outside theatres.

Even Bangladesh is not immune to this phenomenon. Recent biopics and documentaries about national leaders crystallise state narratives into celluloid hagiography. *Mujib: The Making of a Nation*, directed by Shyam Benegal and released amid carefully staged screenings and institutional promotion, was treated by many as a national event where memory management met mass entertainment. *Hasina: A Daughter's Tale* offers another, more intimate example of how documentary form can be used to consolidate personal and political

narratives.

The danger, however, is not only in what these films say but in what they simplify. The problem is that films love their countries. The problem is that they increasingly love their governments too. So, a film that questions authority is considered anti-national. One that flatters it is historic. Everyone gets the cinema they deserve, and lately, we seem to deserve lectures disguised as entertainment.

The line between art and propaganda is never just drawn by the artist, but by the one who pays for the paint. The more these films claim to speak truth to power, the clearer it becomes that they were funded by it. What used to be state censorship has evolved into state sponsorship. In some ways, it is more efficient because why would you ban what you can bankroll? A good propaganda film does not shout; it sentimentalises.

Of course, there is nothing new about political cinema. Art has always taken sides. But the best political films question power; propaganda films serve it. One challenge: the other comforts. And somewhere along the way, we stopped wanting to be challenged. We just wanted to feel righteous for two hours, and maybe buy popcorn with a discount coupon from a state-sponsored screening. The irony is that the most dangerous propaganda films rarely announce themselves as such. They arrive wrapped in tricolour, scored with swelling violins, insisting they are just showing the real story. Maybe *The Taj Story* will be another one of these, but the bigger story is not about any one film. It is about a cinema culture that increasingly confuses emotion for evidence and applause for truth. And while cinema may not rewrite history, it certainly reshapes it — in 4K, with patriotic subtitles.



NEWS

Youth killed in crude bomb explosion

FROM PAGE 12

to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared him dead around 4:30am, said Inspector Md Faruk, in charge of the DMCH Police Camp.

Ujjal claimed Zahid was not part of the clash and had gone out with friends when he got caught in the violence.

Kazi Rafiq, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station, said

they received information early in the morning about multiple crude bomb explosions. "We heard both versions of whether Zahid was hit on the rooftop or on the ground. We'll investigate and verify," he said, adding that a police team was dispatched immediately, but the situation had calmed down by then.

Meanwhile, Kallu, 28, a resident of a Mirpur Bihari camp, was injured while allegedly making crude

bombs at a house in Geneva Camp's Sector 7 yesterday afternoon, locals said, adding that he was receiving treatment at a private hospital.

OC Rafiq said additional forces have been deployed in the area to prevent further untoward incidents, adding that a drive to arrest the culprits in the camp began around 5:00pm and around 13 people were detained till the filing of this report at 12:30am.

Meantime, Kallu, 28, a resident of a Mirpur Bihari camp, was injured while allegedly making crude

Spatial Planning Ordinance, 2025.

The advisory council also approved a proposal to change the existing practices and procedures in the post-handover management of residential plots or flats developed by the Ministry of Housing and Public Works and various authorities or organisations under it, with the aim of simplifying services and eliminating corruption.

It also approved another proposal to set up Bangladesh's new Consulate General Office in Detroit, Michigan, USA.

Israel won't annex West Bank

FROM PAGE 12

Gaza, as the Rafah border crossing remains shut despite the ceasefire deal, reports Al Jazeera online.

In a separate incident, at least two air attacks were conducted by Israeli army warplanes on the outskirts of Hermet, in the far north-eastern corner of Lebanon.

The Israeli army confirmed it carried out attacks, claiming without evidence that it targeted a production site for "precision missiles" owned by Hezbollah.

Israel has been carrying out regular attacks on Lebanon despite a nearly year-long ceasefire between it and Hezbollah. No casualties have so far been reported in these most recent strikes.

An organisation representing international media in Israel and the Palestinian territories expressed disappointment yesterday after Israel's top court postponed ruling on a petition to grant immediate access for foreign journalists to Gaza.

Since the Gaza war began in October 2023, Israeli authorities have prevented foreign journalists from entering the devastated territory, taking only a handful of reporters inside on tightly controlled visits alongside its troops.

Hand the highest punishment to Hasina

FROM PAGE 12

Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder said the verdict would be delivered after November 13.

Mozumder assured that justice would be delivered "fairly, transparently and beyond all questions".

"Even though some quarters will raise questions, it does not matter. We will not be swayed by who says what. Justice will be done at any cost -- for both sides," he said.

Referring to global precedents, Asaduzzaman said rulers elsewhere had been tried for crimes against humanity.

"We stand today to move Bangladesh towards a higher stage of civilisation. If we fail to deliver justice for these crimes, we shall remain symbols of cowardice to future generations."

He warned that acquitting the accused would embolden future

perpetrators.

Responding to critics questioning the fairness of the process, Asaduzzaman said: "Those who say these accused are not getting justice -- do you only want justice for the killers? Over 1,400 people were killed and around 30,000 others were wounded in 36 days. Don't they have the right to justice? Doesn't the state deserve justice?"

The absconding accused in the case was closely following the proceedings and issuing instructions to obstruct the trial, he said.

Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam told the tribunal that the accused had shown no remorse and instead threatened witnesses that they would destroy their homes, dump their bodies in the Bay of Bengal and sow divisions among state institutions.

"They even tried to provoke the army, asking, 'Why aren't you standing up when your officers are

being tried?' -- attempting to incite a civil war. But Bangladesh's patriotic army and people did not fall into that trap."

Referring to the state-appointed defence lawyer Md Amir Hossain's claim that the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act lacks the provisions of the Evidence Act and the Code of Criminal Procedure, Tajul said the ICT Act was a special law enacted because no other legislation in Bangladesh had jurisdiction to try such crimes.

"The act is protected by the constitution and was later amended to align with international standards. It is now fully compatible with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court," he said.

At this stage, the tribunal chair cautioned against remarks undermining the justice system.

"I too want justice, and I believe my clients will be acquitted if justice is ensured," Hossain told the court.

Govt okays draft to free the judiciary

FROM PAGE 12

Adviser Asif Nazrul said that there was a long discussion on the draft of the ordinance.

"Some issues still need further discussion -- especially since the ordinance involves financial aspects, the opinion of the finance adviser is necessary, but it was not taken during the drafting process. Besides, there is also a need to consult with the Ministry of Public Administration."

Asif Nazrul said, "We have been talking about the separation of the

judiciary for about 25 to 30 years. Around 2006 there was a good attempt, but it was not possible to make the law."

On November 1, 2007, the Supreme Court cleared the way for the separation of the judiciary from the executive in its judgement in the Masdar Hossain case (Civil Appeal No. 79/1999), upholding article 22 of the constitution.

Draft ordinances previously approved in principle include the Anti-Corruption Commission (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025; the July Uprising Memorial Museum Ordinance, 2025; and the

Spatial Planning Ordinance, 2025. The advisory council also approved a proposal to change the existing practices and procedures in the post-handover management of residential plots or flats developed by the Ministry of Housing and Public Works and various authorities or organisations under it, with the aim of simplifying services and eliminating corruption.

It also approved another proposal to set up Bangladesh's new Consulate General Office in Detroit, Michigan, USA.

Debapriya deplores

FROM PAGE 12

that the interim government has carried out some reforms and left others undone. "The country will remain, the people will remain, and so reforms must continue."

To this end, Debapriya believes it's crucial that the new government maintains this continuity. "We urge political parties to recognise this issue and reflect it in their manifestos."

He said politicians are now facing citizens and acknowledging past failures. "We expect them to act on the

promises they make to the people." Debapriya further said reforms are indispensable to building a new Bangladesh and moving the country to a middle income status. "To break the anti-reform coalition that has formed, planned initiatives will be necessary."

The programme was attended by leaders from political parties, including BNP, Jamaat e Islami, Communist Party, and NCP, alongside representatives of civil society and professionals.

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2 CCC officials suspended over fraud

FROM PAGE 12

some employees, more officials may be involved, and the container depots themselves are the beneficiaries of this "criminal offence."

According to sources in the ACC, the 2016-2017 holding tax of the two container depots -- Eshak Brothers Industries Limited and Incontrade Limited -- was assessed at Tk 26.38 crore and Tk 25.67 crore, respectively.

During the primary investigation, the ACC found evidence that employees in the CCC's Revenue Department fraudulently erased the first digit (2) from each figure, reducing the holding tax for the two depots to Tk 6.38 crore and Tk 5.67 crore.

Both companies denied any wrongdoing, and said the assessment figures themselves were questionable and that they had appealed to the CCC for reassessment several years ago.

CCC sources said the alleged fraud occurred during the appeal review board hearings for the 2017-18 financial year's tax assessments. The digit "2" was erased from the presentation forms before the hearings. Incontrade Limited's hearing was on December 24, 2020, and Eshak Brothers Industries

Limited's hearing was on June 13, 2021.

CCC's own investigation detected the tax irregularities, and they authorities suspended Tax Officer Nurul Alam and Deputy Tax Officer Joy Prakash Sen on Wednesday. Three accounts assistants -- Manzur Morshed, Rupshi Rani Dey, and Ahsan Ullah -- were also relieved of their duties, officials said.

Contacted, CCC CEO Sheikh Muhammad Towhidul Islam said they are cooperating fully with the ACC.

"The issue of irregularities regarding holding tax has already been discovered through an internal investigation. As soon as we received the probe report, we took punitive measures against those involved," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He added that they handed over their report to the ACC for further investigation.

Md Saiful Islam, executive director of Incontrade Limited, said the issue dates back to the 2016-17 fiscal statement.

"At that time, we informed them [CCC] through our association that holding tax is determined based on the property, not on the financial statement," he said. "Later, they reassessed the property at

Tk 5 crore and demanded holding tax accordingly, which we again appealed.

"Following the appeal, the amount was reduced to Tk 58 lakh, and we paid 14.4 percent tax as per the revised assessment. We did not make any manipulations ourselves."

He said the allegation that the revenue amount was reduced through undue means is "completely baseless".

Ruhul Amin Shikder, general manager of Eshak Brothers, said his company's valuation was fixed at Tk 12 lakh in 2016, but in 2017, the CCC increased it to Tk 26 crore.

"We then appealed to the CCC to reduce the valuation, and the CCC authorities fixed it at Tk 6 crore. But that too was too high and we appealed again," he told The Daily Star.

According to him, the CCC fixed the valuation at Tk 2 crore in 2021. "I can't understand where these talks are coming from after so many years."

CCC Mayor Shahadat Hossain told The Daily Star last night that there would be no question if the holding tax were re-evaluated and reduced genuinely. "But the probe committee found tampering of documents. As soon as I received the report on October 19, I have ordered action against the accused officials."

NEWS

Trapped in charity, deprived

FROM PAGE 3
reinforcing the idea that disability is a welfare issue, not a constitutional right.

Ten-year-old Sakib Ahmed from Kapasia, Gazipur, who has a neurological disorder, illustrates the system's failings.

Officially enrolled in a local government primary school, he has no access to trained teachers or adapted learning materials.

"I teach him at home," his mother said. "School is just a place for him to see the outside world — it doesn't actually help him learn."

According to the 2021 National Survey on Persons with Disabilities by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics with Unicef, 60 percent of children with disabilities aged 5-17 are out of school. Only 76 non-government schools serving these children receive monthly pay order (MPO) benefits.

"The problem is structural," said Md Jahangir Alam, senior coordinator at the Centre for Disability and Development.

"Education ministries see persons with disabilities as Social Welfare's responsibility. Children are pushed into segregated schools, isolated from peers. These institutions — set up in the 1960s — now function like disconnected 'prisons,' with no scope for social integration." He said a lack of trained teachers, poor infrastructure, and rigid curricula continue to exclude children from mainstream education.

Women with disabilities face even greater challenges. They have lower literacy rates and limited access to training and jobs — only 0.13 percent join vocational training and 3.13 percent hold formal jobs. Their labour force participation rate is just 11.34 percent, compared with 41 percent for men, according to the Access Bangladesh Foundation.

Yet the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs has no targeted or inclusive programmes for women and children with disabilities," said Ashrafunnahar Mishti, executive director of the Women with Disabilities and Development Foundation.

"If a woman with a disability becomes pregnant or needs nutritional support for her child's first 1,000 days, she is often excluded because she already receives

a disability allowance," she said. "That allowance is only Tk 850 — barely enough for medicine or basic needs. Students face the same issue, as receiving an education stipend makes them ineligible for the allowance. Unless all ministries share responsibility, women with disabilities will remain excluded."

Meanwhile, essential therapies — physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and clinical psychology — are also provided by the National Disabled Development Foundation, which operates under social welfare instead of health ministry.

"This raises concerns about quality," said Jahangir Alam. "Therapy professionals remain outside the mainstream health system. Even the planned Rehabilitation Council is under social welfare instead of health ministry."

Mishti said identifying disabilities requires medical expertise. "Administrative officers can only detect visible disabilities. Autism, cerebral palsy, or mental health conditions require doctors. Most upazila health complexes lack neurologists, therapists, or psychologists, so early intervention becomes impossible," she said. "This is not just a welfare issue; it's a public health issue."

The National Skills Development Programme (NSDP) reserves five percent of training seats for persons with disabilities, but the policy remains largely symbolic.

"Many centres are physically inaccessible and lack sign language interpreters, materials for visually impaired trainees, or specialized instructors," said Dr Nafeesur Rahman, a disability development specialist.

"Responsibility lies only with Social Welfare, so the system cannot deliver meaningful results," he said.

Sports for persons with disabilities also remain neglected. The National Sports Council under the sports ministry has taken little initiative, leaving the matter to, again, social welfare ministry.

"We held a stakeholder meeting on September 14 and submitted a resolution to the ministries to implement these measures," said Social Welfare Additional Secretary Bijoy Krishna Debnath, also managing director of the National Disabled Development Foundation.

"Revising the Allocation of Business requires coordination among ministries. This is a long-term process. If each ministry fulfills its duties under the 2013 Disability Rights Act, persons with disabilities will finally enjoy their rights fully," he said.

Md Habibur Rahman passes away

CITY DESK

Md Habibur Rahman, a freedom fighter of Sector 9 during the Liberation War, passed away on October 20 in Dhaka. He was 76, said a press release.

Experts stress that disability inclusion, like gender or child budgets, should be integrated across all ministries.

"Unless responsibilities are formally assigned through the Allocation of Business, no ministry will act," said Saidul Huq, executive director of Blind Education and Rehabilitation Development Organization (BERDO) and an Ekushey Padak recipient.

"Every ministry should have a disability section with a dedicated officer. Revising the Allocation of Business won't solve everything, but it will make ministries accountable," he added.

When the UNCRPD came into effect in 2007, recommendations were made to revise the Allocation of Business to share responsibilities. Although 24 ministries agreed, the Cabinet later blocked the proposal, fearing similar demands from other groups. A renewed attempt in 2012 was also rejected.

After the formation of Disability Rights Watch, a five-member team met Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus in November last year with proposals to implement the 2008 recommendation and rename the Ministry of Social Welfare to the Ministry of Social Development and Empowerment to promote a rights-based approach.

In May, the interim government asked for documents, and the Social Welfare Ministry was tasked with reviewing the proposals.

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A space near parliament and a under-construction 12-acre sports complex in Savar are both managed by the National Disabled Development Foundation.

"Social Welfare alone

cannot develop sports or bring in international coaches," said Dr Nafeesur.

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A space near parliament and a under-construction 12-acre sports complex in Savar are both managed by the National Disabled Development Foundation.

"Social Welfare alone

cannot develop sports or bring in international coaches," said Dr Nafeesur.

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"Every ministry should have a disability section with a dedicated officer. Revising the Allocation of Business won't solve everything, but it will make ministries accountable," he added.

When the UNCRPD came into effect in 2007, recommendations were made to revise the Allocation of Business to share responsibilities. Although 24 ministries agreed, the Cabinet later blocked the proposal, fearing similar demands from other groups. A renewed attempt in 2012 was also rejected.

After the formation of Disability Rights Watch, a five-member team met Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus in November last year with proposals to implement the 2008 recommendation and rename the Ministry of Social Welfare to the Ministry of Social Development and Empowerment to promote a rights-based approach.

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THE CALL OF MAASAI MARA



ARUN DEVNATH



Arun Devnath
is a reluctant traveller who is more at home in the pages of a travelogue than in any actual land of wonder. Journalism is his chosen trade.



Want to share your travel experiences with us? Please send your stories to holiday@thedadlystar.net

PHOTO:
ARUN DEVNATH

The journey begins in the dust. Fine, red ochre dust that plumes behind our safari vehicle, coating everything in a thin film that smells of ancient earth. It's the dust of the Maasai Mara, the pulse of Kenya's wildlife. The journey is a reminder that we are visitors to a land that does not officially belong to us, but is, arguably, the ancestral home of all humankind.

Travel in the wilderness dissolves barriers. We were nine strangers forged into a temporary tribe. Our Kenyan guide was our anchor, reading the land like a storybook, decoding the tales of predator and prey. The Maasai Mara is Africa's wild heart, distilled into 1,510 square kilometres of primal drama.

Here, a powerful duality unfolds each year. It is the stage for the Great Migration, where between July and October, over 1.5 million wildebeest, zebra, and gazelle are driven by a

climax. The African sun cast a high-contrast light transforming the grasslands into a sea of gold and throwing acacia trees into stark relief against a sky of impossible blue. Yet the true revelation wasn't the triumphant sight of lionesses on a hunt, nor even the raw, silent spectacle of a cheetah with its kill -- though those moments would come later. It was the feeling of smallness -- an unkind truth that life is a single, brief breath in a greater timeline.

The first day was a short, dazzling initiation. As the sun began its glorious descent, our guide Kelvin brought our vehicle to a halt under the ragged canopy of a lone acacia tree. The engine cut, and the world fell quiet. Into this silence came a pleasant surprise. Pranav, who had journeyed from India, produced a white box from Artcaffé, a Kenyan gourmet brand. Inside was a perfect chocolate cake, a sweet secret meant to celebrate his wife Sowmya's birthday. We stood there in the middle of the Mara and sang. "Happy Birthday."

As the sun vanished, Kelvin turned the vehicle towards our campsite, a cluster of canvas tents arranged along a concrete path. The dining area was a vortex of noise and light, a stark contrast to the silent darkness pressing in from all sides. It was alive with the clatter of cutlery and the animated chatter of other tourists. We were hungry in a way only a day in the open air can make you. We piled our plates high with rice, stewed beef, or chicken, a simple, hearty fuel that tasted like a feast.

After dinner, we retreated from the communal buzz into the silence of the African night. The path to our tent was dimly lit. The tent was surprisingly sturdy, but it was still just canvas and mesh. Inside, the final ritual was a careful scan with a flashlight for any intruder before the metallic zip of the tent sealed us in. That first night, the thin canvas felt like a flimsy curtain against the immense, breathing wilderness outside.

The next day, we awoke at first light. The morning was a monochrome of grey. In the distance, a mountain ridge emerged like a phantom, silhouetted against the brightening sky. A hushed urgency filled the camp;

we were getting ready for the game drive in intense anticipation. After a hurried breakfast of coffee, toast and eggs, we boarded the safari-modified Land Cruiser, Kelvin shepherding us with focused energy. As we moved away from the cluster of tents, past a line of quiet Maasai houses and towards the park gate, the sun rose over the horizon.

Our vehicle pushed deeper through the rolling landscape. And then, we saw them. Not in a dramatic charge, but in a scene of quiet power: a pride of lions, sprawled in the tawny grass. The sighting did not bring shouts, but a chorus of excited, subdued gasps and the frantic, whispered click of cameras. The hunt for wonder had begun, and it had delivered its first prize before the day had even properly started.

Then, on the other side of the track, a lone lion loomed. It moved with a fluid, powerful grace; its fur glowed in the morning light. With majestic disregard for our awestruck silence, it passed by and settled into the tall grass.

The sun climbed, and the hours began to melt into the rhythm of the savanna itself. Much of the day was measured in the gentle, recurring sightings of zebras, grazing families of antelope that lifted their heads as we passed, and the hulking presence of wildebeests. And then, the cheetah. The moment of the kill was a hushed, solemn ritual. The heavy panting of the predator, the dead gazelle with exposed guts, the silent audience of safari vehicles -- everyone filming. It was a scene that felt both brutal and sacred, a necessary transaction in the economy of survival. In that silence, we confronted the raw contract of existence.

But the Mara's lessons are not only written in the hunt; they are also etched into the flow of waters.

Kelvin guided our vehicle to the bank of the Mara River, where the brown, churning water carved a path through the earth. There, two large pods of hippos were lazing like great, slick boulders, their occasional grunts and snorts echoing across the water. In expert tones, a park guide described how a crocodile, despite its fearsome jaws, is no match for the territorial fury of a two-tonne hippo, and how the mothers are ferociously protective, positioning their vulnerable cubs in the centre of the pod.

From there, we headed to a perfect spot for lunch in the shade of a lone, sprawling acacia tree, beyond the invisible line between Kenya and Tanzania. As we passed around paper boxes of grilled chicken, bread and fruits, new guests arrived: two Marabou storks. Then one more. They stood like prehistoric undertakers, their bald, pinkish heads and strong beaks giving them an air of grim authority. The next morning, we visited a nearby Maasai village. We were welcomed with a rhythmic, jumping dance, a display of vibrant energy and communal strength. Afterwards, we spoke with the villagers, and the conversation turned to tradition. One warrior, proud and straight-backed, boasted of having killed a lion, a rite of passage that once defined Maasai courage. As a reward, he explained, he had been gifted a second wife.

All journeys of convergence must, inevitably, diverge. My eleven-year-old son, Aayush, who had navigated the wilderness with wide-eyed wonder, was overcome with emotion. The prospect of parting with his own tribe of fellow travellers, his first true comrades of the road, was a weight too heavy to bear. Tears welled in his eyes. "It won't be the same," he whispered to me. "A new bond with a new group won't be possible."

After hours of sharing awe and fear and joy, the end arrived on a rain-drenched roadside. Then came a gesture that turned the moment from one of loss into one of grace. Leo Wang, a student from an American university, a member of our makeshift family, saw Aayush's heartbreak and presented him with his own set of binoculars.

Three of us left one safari vehicle for another, bound for the alkaline shores of Nakuru, about 200km away. The Kenyan landscape rolled by, green and lush after a sudden rain. Aayush, subdued, stared out his window. As the droplets streamed down the glass, he lifted a finger and traced two perfect, sad faces -- their downturned mouths and hollow eyes. I saw it from the corner of my eye and felt a lump rise in my own throat. I stared straight ahead, granting him the privacy of his sorrow. There are some griefs, even small ones, that must be felt alone to be understood.

We go to Africa for the animals. We go for the photographs, for the checklist of the Big Five, for the story to tell when we return home. But we leave having encountered something we did not expect to find: a deeper, quieter version of ourselves. This is the continent's great secret, its primal magic. It doesn't simply show us things; it pulls us inwards.



Soumya, Saif show how it's done



Credit must be given to their openers, especially at the beginning. It's been a tough ask for the batters in general in this series, but you have to give credit to those who came out and really showed that impetus at the start.

Shai Hope, West Indies captain

they finished on 296-8. Bangladesh then ensnared the West Indies in a spin trap, bundling them out for just 117 in 30.1 overs to complete a 179-run win -- their second biggest ever in ODIs in terms of runs -- to take the three-match series 2-1.

Nasum Ahmed and Rishad Hossain took three wickets each while Tanvir Islam and Mehidy Hasan Miraz shared the remaining four wickets. With this win, Bangladesh also secured their first ODI series triumph after four consecutive series defeats.

On a surface where most batters struggled, Soumya and Saif stood

Bangladesh won the third ODI against the West Indies by 179 runs -- their second biggest win in the format in terms of runs.

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

A sense of disbelief was palpable at the press box at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur after Bangladesh openers Soumya Sarkar and Saif Hassan unleashed a batting carnage against the West Indies in the series deciding third ODI yesterday.

The Mirpur wicket, which came

under heavy criticism during the opening two matches, appeared to have made a complete U-turn when the two openers tore into the visiting bowlers during their record-breaking 176-run stand off 152 balls.

The wicket, notably, was the same one that was used for the opening ODI on October 18, on which the hosts were bundled out for just 207.

The same black soil pitch that frustrated batters earlier suddenly turned into a batters paradise. However, once both openers departed -- Saif for 80 off 71 balls and Soumya for 91 off 86 -- the Mirpur track seemed to return to its usual state.

The remaining batters managed only 120 in the second half of the innings, as

apart with their intent, composure, and fearless stroke-making, effectively exorcising the Mirpur demons.

On a wicket offering turn from the very first over, both batters adopted contrasting yet effective approaches.

Saif punished loose deliveries with authority, while Soumya started cautiously -- scoring only 10 off his first 17 balls -- before breaking free with a six off Roston Chase in the sixth over.

Once settled, both openers rotated the strike smartly while finding boundaries regularly, leaving the West Indies bowlers bereft of ideas.

Their aggression forced skipper Shai Hope to turn to pace-bowling all-rounder Justin Greaves in the 10th over, abandoning the all-spin approach that had worked in the second ODI. But it had no effect as Soumya and Saif continued their assault.

Soumya reached his 14th ODI fifty off just 48 balls, while Saif brought up his maiden ODI half-century in 44 deliveries.

They put together the first century opening stand for Bangladesh in ODIs after 45 innings -- the last one being the unbeaten 102-run stand between Litton Das and Tamim Iqbal against Ireland in Sylhet in March 2023.

The pair also surpassed Bangladesh's previous best opening stand against West Indies -- 144 between Tamim and Soumya in Dublin in 2019. The 10 sixes struck by the two openers helped Bangladesh equal their highest number of sixes in an ODI innings (14), a record previously set against Zimbabwe in 2020.

Although the rest of the batters failed to follow suit, Soumya and Saif's innings serves as a reminder that with intent, confidence, and clean stroke-play, it is possible to succeed even on the much-maligned Mirpur wicket.

Bangladesh edge Nepal in volleyball thriller

SPORTS REPORTER

Hosts Bangladesh recorded a hard-fought 3-2 sets victory over Nepal in their second match of the CAVA (Central Asian Volleyball Association) Cup at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur on Thursday.

With their second win in as many matches, Bangladesh moved to the top of the six-team table, alongside Turkmenistan, who earlier in the day defeated Sri Lanka 3-1. In another fixture, Afghanistan swept past Maldives with a straight-sets win (25-17, 25-20, 25-12).

Fresh from a commanding 3-0 victory over Maldives, Bangladesh made a flying start against Nepal, clinching the first two sets 25-23, 25-20. However, Nepal fought back strongly to claim the next two sets 25-23, 25-16, forcing the contest into a decider. In a tense fifth set, the men in red and green held their nerve to edge out Nepal 16-14.

SPORTS REPORTER

Peter Butler will look to prepare his charges for the challenges of next year's AFC Women's Asian Cup as Bangladesh women's football team take on a strong Thailand side in the first of two international friendly matches today.

The match is scheduled to kick off at 4:00pm (Bangladesh time) at the Bangkok Thonburi University Football Training Centre.

Following three weeks of intensive training at KEPZ in Chattogram, the women in red and green arrived in Bangkok on Tuesday and trained over the past two days to acclimatise to the local weather. They are now ready to face a Thai side ranked 51 places above Bangladesh in the FIFA Women's Rankings.

Goalkeepers Rupna Chakma and Swarna Rani Mandal expressed optimism about performing well and aiming for a positive result against the hosts.

"We have been training as instructed.

First Thai test for Butler's charges today



Now we are prepared for tomorrow's match, and we'll certainly try to give our best to win," said Rupna in a video message.

Swarna added that everyone was "serious and focused" during the final training session as they aim to secure victory against the Thais.

While the players are eyeing a win against Thailand -- who, despite featuring in the AFC Women's Asian Cup final

rounds 17 times, failed to reach the finals this year -- coach Peter Butler seems more focused on gaining experience and rebuilding his side for future competitions.

Before the team's departure for Bangkok, Butler said: "You can't go there with a win-at-all-costs mentality. You have to be realistic and put things into context of what you want from the game. What I want is a competitive performance."

'I don't have much faith in hand timing'

Promising swimmer Samiul Islam Rafi has once again been named the best male swimmer at the recently concluded National Swimming Championships -- his third consecutive title. The 21-year-old set six individual records -- on way to winning 11 gold and one silver medal. Since making his senior debut at the 2021 Bangladesh Games, the Rajbari-born swimmer has never looked back -- amassing more than 30 gold medals. The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman caught up with the Rajbari-born swimmer to talk about his journey, progress, and aspirations. Following are the excerpts:

DS: It's nothing new for you to break or set records at the national swimming championships. What new things did you experience this time?

Samiul Islam Rafi (SIR): This time I tried a few new events and managed to succeed, even setting new records in some of them. Creating six individual records was beyond my expectations, although I had challenged myself to go further than before.

DS: Where do you think you stand in South Asia in terms of your timings?

SIR: The 50m events are my main focus. The timing I achieved in the 50m backstroke this time is comparable to South Asian standards and quite close to the Asian level. If I can continue according to plan, I believe I can achieve something special at the South Asian Games.

DS: Do you see noticeable improvement in your performance after training in Thailand for an extended period?

SIR: Of course. I've improved in various skills and techniques through training in Thailand. I feel I've developed a lot, though there are still

areas where I can get better.

DS: How do you feel about competing under hand timing instead of electronic timing?

SIR: To be honest, I don't have much faith in hand timing -- it always leaves me a bit uncertain. Still, I can recognise my improvement even with hand timing. I previously clocked 26.90 seconds, and now it's 25.90 seconds, which is a huge improvement.

Many universities abroad offer swimming scholarships, but they don't accept hand-timed results. So, I think the federation should prioritise electronic timing to create more opportunities for swimmers to earn overseas scholarships.

DS: Where do you think Bangladesh swimming is facing stagnation?

SIR: There are a lot of limitations in Bangladesh, but I think the lack of long-term training programmes is the main issue holding us back. Even during the short training stint under Egyptian coach Saeed Magdy, we saw great improvement -- setting 20 new national records in one championship is rare! If long term training continues, I believe we could surpass India within a year and a half.



What to WATCH

T SPORTS
ICC Women's World Cup
Sri Lanka vs Pakistan
Live from 3:30 pm (Saturday)

STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
Premier League
Leeds vs West Ham
Live from 1:00 am

(Saturday)

Skipper Litton returns for WI T20Is

BANGLADESH SQUAD

Litton Das (captain), Tanzid Tamim, Parvez Hossain Emon, Saif Hassan, Tawhid Hridoy, Jaker Ali, Shamim Hossain, Nurul Hasan Sohan, Mahedi Hasan, Rishad Hossain, Nasum Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Tanzim Sakib, Taskin Ahmed, Shariful Islam.

SPORTS REPORTER

Regular skipper Litton Das returned to lead the Tigers as the Bangladesh Cricket Board on Thursday announced a 15-member squad for the opening two T20Is against West Indies.

The 31-year-old wicketkeeper-batter has been sidelined for over a month after sustaining a side strain during the Asia Cup last month. The injury forced him to miss Bangladesh's final two Asia Cup fixtures, as well as the subsequent T20I and ODI series against Afghanistan in the UAE, and the ongoing home ODI series against the West Indies.

All-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin, who featured in both the Asia Cup and the T20I series against Afghanistan, has been left out of the squad.

Meanwhile, Soumya Sarkar, who was named in the previous T20I squad but couldn't take part in the Afghanistan series due to visa issues, has also missed selection for the first two games.

The three matches will be played at the Bir Shrestha Shaheed Flight Lt Motiur Rahman Stadium in Chattogram on October 27, 29, and 31.

SHORT CORNER

Short, Connolly help Australia seal India series

A composed 74 from Matt Short and a maiden half-century by Cooper Connolly steered Australia to a two-wicket win over India on Thursday, sealing the three-match one-day series with a game to go. After India made 264-9 at a sold-out Adelaide Oval on the back of Rohit Sharma's 73, the hosts reached their target with 22 balls remaining.

South Africa thrash Pakistan to draw Test series

South Africa beat Pakistan by eight wickets in the second Test in Rawalpindi on Thursday to draw the series 1-1 with Simon Harmer taking a maiden five-wicket haul. South Africa beat Pakistan by eight wickets in the second Test in Rawalpindi on Thursday to draw the series 1-1 with Simon Harmer taking a maiden five-wicket haul.

Boys bag bronze in youth kabaddi

Bangladesh boys bagged bronze medal at the 3rd Youth Asian Games after thrashing hosts Bahrain 106-17 in their sixth and final group match at the Isa Sports Complex in Bahrain on Thursday. It was the second medal for Bangladesh, who earlier saw the women's youth kabaddi team also grab bronze medal on Tuesday.

*For full stories, visit The Daily Star website



RESULTS

Athletic Club 3-1 Qarabag

Galatasaray 3-1 Bodo/Glimt

Monaco 0-0 Tottenham

Atalanta 0-0 Slavia Praha

Chelsea 5-1 Ajax

Frankfurt 1-5 Liverpool

Bayern Munich 4-0 Club Brugge

Real Madrid 1-0 Juventus

Sporting CP 2-1 Marseille

Teenage dreams lit up Stamford Bridge as Chelsea's young trio -- Estevao Willian, Marc Guiu, and Trique George -- each netted their maiden Champions League goals in a 5-1 rout of Ajax on Wednesday. Estevao, aged 18 years and 181 days, sprinkled Brazilian flair to become Chelsea's youngest-ever scorer in the competition. It also marked the first time in Champions League history that three teenagers scored in the same match. Meanwhile, in Germany, Bayern's 17-year-old Lennart Karl (17 years and 242 days) found the net to become the club's youngest scorer in the tournament.

PHOTO: REUTERS



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GREEN FACTORY AWARD 2025



DHAKA METRO RAIL PROJECT

Proud
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Debapriya deplores the reform drive losing steam

Urge parties to include reform commitments in manifestos

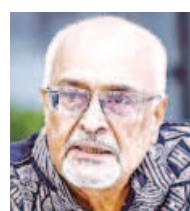
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Eminent economist Debapriya Bhattacharya yesterday expressed regret that the chief adviser's initial enthusiasm for reform initiatives lost steam before it could build the momentum many had anticipated.

"The chief adviser's enthusiasm...was not carried forward by his associates or the bureaucracy."

Debapriya, a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), made the remark while talking to journalists after a regional consultation meeting organised by the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, in Sylhet.

Acknowledging that reform is a continuous process, Debapriya noted



SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Govt okays draft to free the judiciary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The advisory council yesterday approved in principle the draft Supreme Court Secretariat Ordinance, 2025, aimed at ensuring full separation of the judiciary from the executive branch of the state.

Once enacted, the ordinance will vest all authority over the transfer, posting, promotion, and discipline of lower court judges, ending the law ministry's control. It will also grant the apex court financial independence, allowing it to manage and utilise its own budget, including development expenditures.

The approval came at yesterday's weekly meeting, chaired by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at his Tejgaon office.

The draft ordinance will be presented again to the council for final approval.

Later, while briefing reporters at the Foreign Service Academy, Law

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Israel won't annex West Bank

Says US VP Vance; no reduction in Gaza hunger since truce: WHO

AGENCIES

US Vice President JD Vance said yesterday that Israel would not annex the West Bank, the day after Israeli lawmakers voted to advance two bills paving the way for the territory's annexation.

"If it was a political stunt it was a very stupid political stunt and I personally take some insult to it," Vance said as he wrapped up his visit in Israel.

"The West Bank is not going to be annexed by Israel, the policy of the Trump administration is that the West Bank will not be annexed by Israel, that will continue to be our policy," he added.

Israeli foreign minister Gideon Saar said that Israel is committed to working towards the success of the Trump plan for Gaza, adding that Hamas and Islamic Jihad must lay down their arms, reports Reuters.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio earlier said that the Israeli Knesset's move towards the annexation of the West Bank would threaten Trump's plan to end the conflict in Gaza, which has produced a shaky ceasefire so far.

"I mean, that's a vote in the - yeah, that's a vote in the Knesset, but obviously I think the president's made clear that's

not something we'd be supportive of right now, and we think it's potentially threatening to the peace deal," Rubio told reporters late on Wednesday before leaving for Israel.

➤ Rafah border crossing remains shut despite ceasefire deal

➤ UN urges Israel to allow 15,000 in Gaza to receive treatment abroad

➤ Israel again bombs 'missile sites' in eastern Lebanon

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) said yesterday there had been little improvement in the amount of aid going into Gaza since the ceasefire took hold - and no observable reduction in hunger.

It also said 15,000 Palestinians, desperately in need of medical treatment, are awaiting medical evacuation from

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

TK 40CR TAX SCAM 2 CCC officials suspended over fraud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Chattogram

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday raided Chattogram City Corporation's Revenue Department and seized documents related to an alleged scam worth about Tk 40 crore by two of its revenue officials, ACC and CCC officials said.

The anti graft body also launched a formal investigation into the alleged fraud dating back to 2020-2021, through which two container depots were given under tax waiver by forging documents.

Contacted, ACC Assistant Director Sayed Alam said, "During our raid, we found evidence of reducing the holding tax through tampering of documents. We have seized the documents from the city corporation's Revenue Department."

The ACC official added that while the CCC has taken action against

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Trump hits Russia's oil giants with sanctions

Says talks with Putin about Ukraine war 'don't go anywhere'; EU bans Russian LNG

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump slapped sanctions on Russia's two largest oil companies on Wednesday, complaining that his talks with Vladimir Putin to end the Ukraine war "don't go anywhere."

The EU countries also formally adopted a 19th package of sanctions against Russia for its war against Ukraine that includes a ban on Russian liquefied natural gas imports. World oil prices surged five percent yesterday.

"Every time I speak with Vladimir, I have good conversations, and then they don't go anywhere," Trump said in response to a question from an AFP journalist in the Oval Office.

But Trump added that he hoped the "tremendous sanctions" against Russian oil giants Rosneft and Lukoil would be short-lived. "We hope that the war will be settled," he said alongside Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky hailed the "strong and much-needed" message sent by US sanctions on Russia's energy sector.

"We waited for this. God bless it will work and this is very important," Zelensky told journalists at an EU

summit in Brussels yesterday, saying Washington had sent "a good signal to other countries in the world to join the sanctions".

➤ Zelensky hails move as 'strong' message

➤ Russia says it is immune to new oil sanctions

➤ World oil prices surge 5%

➤ China opposes new US sanctions on Russian oil

Russia said that new US sanctions on its oil industry risked hurting diplomatic efforts to end the Ukraine war, and that it had developed a "strong immunity" to them.

Former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev said it was now absolutely clear that the United States was Russia's adversary and that US President Donald Trump's recent steps on Ukraine

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Scientists discover new species of flesh-eating dinosaur



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Imaging technology has revolutionized palaeontology, enabling scientists to study fossils buried deep within rock or too small to handle.

Two recent studies highlight the potential of these tools, including one that identified a new dinosaur species that towered over other carnivores it lived alongside hundreds of millions of years ago.

In the first study, researchers examined an impression of a fossil jawbone originally described in 1899 as possibly belonging to a dinosaur. Due to its age—203 million years—the specimen gained significance as a potentially unusually large early flesh-eating dinosaur.

Dinosaurs originated during the Triassic period, between 252 and 201 million years ago. During this era, carnivorous species typically measured less than three metres in length and weighed no more than an Alsatian dog.

However, the 1899 specimen, found in the late Triassic deposits near Cardiff in south Wales, revealed parts of a jaw and flesh-eating teeth that may have belonged to a creature five metres or more in length.

The specimen had received little attention since its discovery, as it consisted only of impressions in rock.



A STUDY IN PINK
A pink sea fan, or pink gorgonian coral, sways gently in the Bay of Bengal off Saint Martin's Island -- a living lacework of colour and resilience. It thrives in shallow waters, 10-100 metres deep, clinging to rocky reefs across the Indian and Pacific oceans. These soft corals feed by filtering microscopic plankton drifting through the currents. Listed as Vulnerable by the IUCN, they face grave threats from pollution, trawling, and warming seas that trigger mass die-offs. As coral ecosystems worldwide approach a tipping point -- with bleaching, acidification, and rising temperatures ravaging once-vibrant reefs -- protecting them is no longer a choice. It is a shared and urgent duty to keep the oceans alive.



Youth killed in crude bomb explosion at Geneva Camp

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth was killed and several others were injured in crude bomb blasts during a late-night clash between two groups over control of the drug trade in Geneva Camp in the capital's Mohammadpur area early yesterday.

The deceased, Zahid, 20, lived in the camp and worked at a mobile servicing shop in Kalyanpur, said his brother-in-law Md Ujjal.

Locals said the clash between groups led by Bhuiyan Sohel and Par Monu broke out around 2:00am and continued till 5:00am, with around 100 people involved.

A neighbour of the victim and a witness to the incident, preferring anonymity, said, "Zahid was on the rooftop of a six-storey building when a crude bomb exploded around 3:30am. He fell off the building and suffered critical injuries."

He was first taken to the Trauma Centre and later

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