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## Metro's 2nd pad fall rings alarm

Kills one, sparks service halt, Dhaka-wide traffic chaos; experts raise safety concerns

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

A pedestrian was killed and two others injured yesterday when a bearing pad from the metro rail pillar fell and struck them in the capital's Farmgate area.

The incident occurred just 13 months after another bearing pad fell from the metro line near the same location, raising concerns about the safety of this highly technical mode of transport.

Metro rail authorities suspended operations around 12:20pm following the incident, citing safety concerns and causing significant sufferings for thousands of commuters. The incident also triggered severe traffic congestion across several parts of Dhaka.

Although services resumed on the Uttara-Agargaon section by 3:00pm, the Agargaon-Motijheel route remained suspended till the filing of this report around 9:00pm. Operations on the Motijheel-Shahbagh section resumed at 7:15pm. But the direct line between Motijheel and Uttara remained suspended.

Contacted by this newspaper around 10:15pm, Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL) Managing Director



BEARING PAD

Commuters jostle to get onto an already packed bus on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue at the end of office hours yesterday afternoon. There was a huge rush on the road as metro rail services were suspended for hours, following a tragic incident in which a bearing pad fell from a pillar near the Farmgate metro station, killing a pedestrian around noon.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## What will this Tk 5 lakh do?

Asks wife of the deceased, demands accountability

SHAEEN MOLLAH, and JAHID HASAN from Shariatpur



Azad

Wife of Abul Kalam Azad, who was killed after a bearing pad of a metro rail pillar fell on him, said her husband was killed due to negligence of the authorities concerned.

"This was no accident. This was murder! And it happened due to the negligence of the metro rail authorities," said Irene Akhter, her voice trembling with fury and grief.

Azad, 35, was killed on the spot near Farmgate station.

Speaking to this newspaper from Tejgaon Police Station, Irene demanded justice, saying, "Compensation or a job will not be enough. I want accountability. I want a proper investigation. And I want those responsible to be punished."

Irene's voice broke as she spoke of her two young children now left fatherless. "My son is four. My daughter is three. They have just lost their father. Tell me, how do you compensate for that?"

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Faruk Ahmed said work on the pier will continue overnight, after which a trial run will be conducted today. "If all goes well, we will announce when operations will resume."

The deceased was identified as Abul Kalam Azad, 35, from Naria upazila in Shariatpur. Azad worked at a travel agency and commuted regularly from Chashara in Narayanganj to his office in Uttara, according to his relatives.

One of the injured was identified as Amir, a shopkeeper, while the identity of the other injured person could not be confirmed.

Meanwhile, a senior metro rail official said two bearing pads fell, but only one could be traced.

On elevated structures such as bridges and metro rail lines, bearing pads are placed between the viaduct and the pier. In this case, four bearing pads were installed on each pier. Experts said these pads transmit loads from the superstructure to the piers and absorb vibrations caused by the movement of metro trains.

On September 18 last year, one of the four bearing pads fell from pier no-430, disrupting metro rail services on the Agargaon-Motijheel section for around 11 hours. However, no casualties were reported.

Yesterday, the bearing pad fell from pier no-433 -- just two piers away from the previous incident and adjacent to Farmgate Metro Station.

Champa Akhter, a nearby shopkeeper and eyewitness, said she first heard a loud noise. "I then saw the object

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The commission is set to submit its much-discussed recommendations to the interim government today, outlining possible strategies for implementing the July charter.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Consensus Commission is set to submit its much-discussed recommendations to the interim government today, outlining possible strategies for implementing the July charter.

According to sources at the commission, it will urge the government to first issue a July Charter Implementation (Constitutional Reform) Order to formally initiate the process of implementation.

This would then be followed by an ordinance to hold a national referendum seeking public endorsement for the charter.

Under the proposed framework, the next parliament would serve a dual role for its first 270 days, functioning both as a legislature and as a Constitution Reform Council tasked with debating and approving the charter's constitutional reform proposals.

The commission will leave it to the interim government to decide whether the implementation order will be issued by the president or the chief adviser, and whether the referendum will be held on the day of the national election in February or earlier.

Commission sources said the referendum question is expected to be: "Do you approve

the July National Charter (Constitutional Reform) Implementation Order, and do you support the implementation of the constitutional reform proposals of the July charter?"

Referendum not to include question on notes of dissent

Timing of referendum left for govt to decide

No questions will be included regarding any notes of dissent attached to those recommendations, commission sources said yesterday.

One of them said, "Since notes of dissent will not be included, if the 'Yes' vote wins, the reform proposals will be implemented exactly as drafted by the commission, and dissenting views will carry no weight."

Prof Ali Riaz, the commission's vice-president, told journalists yesterday evening, "We have nearly finalised the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

It's up to the army' ICT prosecution on 15 accused officers' job status

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) could not clearly state the current service status of the 15 "serving" army officers against whom formal charges have been pressed in two cases over enforced disappearances and another over killings during the July uprising.

Asked yesterday about their status under the amended ICT Act -- which stipulates that once formal charges are pressed, the accused's service automatically ends -- ICT Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim said, "What the law states is the legal interpretation. It is now up to Army Headquarters to decide when to apply the law. Until it is applied, they can be considered serving officers."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



A battery-powered van crammed with schoolchildren makes its way down a rural road. Too far to walk and too remote for formal transport options, students, parents and teachers rely on these unregistered vehicles for both the morning commute and the journey home. The photo was taken in the Kakonhat area of Godagari upazila in Rajshahi recently.

PHOTO: AZAHR UDDIN

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## Bangladeshi shot dead 'by Indians' at Sylhet border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

An 18-year-old Bangladeshi was shot dead allegedly by some Khasi people on the Indian side of the border across Sylhet's Kanaighat upazila yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Shakil Ahmed of Momtajganj Prantichara area.

Lieutenant Colonel Md Zubayer Anwar, commanding officer of the Zakiganj Battalion of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), confirmed the incident, citing Shakil's companions.

Quoting them, the BGB official said Shakil was shot by the Khasi people about 500 metres inside Indian territory around 5:00pm after he, along with several others, had crossed the border illegally.

They entered the Indian side to collect and smuggle betel nuts, said Abdul Awal, officer-in-charge of Kanaighat Police Station.

His companions carried him back to the Bangladesh side, but he died on the way to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, the police officer said.

An autopsy will be conducted at the medical college, the OC added.

## Advisory council

FROM PAGE 12

is going to announce the minimum wage for journalists by next week and is working on formulating ordinances to protect journalists' rights and regulations for private television channels and OTT platforms.

He said the rate of government advertisements in the media will be doubled, with the condition of implementing a minimum basic salary for working journalists. "A journalist's salary of Tk 12,000-15,000 is unacceptable."

Announcing that the actual circulation of newspapers will be published soon, Mahfuj said the irregularities of falsifying the circulation numbers must stop.

"We want to increase benefits for the existing media outlets. We will increase the advertisement rate from public funds, but in return, we want ethical journalism and better pay for journalists."

If journalists are not given this basic salary, the benefits will not be extended for that particular outlet, Mahfuj said. "Low pay creates a moral crisis for journalists."

"We've completed a list of the newspapers that are not published regularly or use the same content under different names. If you [journalists] give us your support, we will take action against them."

"Our goal is not to shut down media... rather, we want new media to emerge and create competition. The good will survive in the market, and the poor will be left behind," Mahfuj said, urging media companies to improve reporting quality and good content to remain competitive.

Replies to a query, Mahfuj said, "A permanent media commission's work will be extensive, which may interfere with the work under several divisions of the ministry... We will have our recommendation for the elected government," he added.

## Army recovers

FROM PAGE 12

searched a specific coach of the train and recovered the items, the ISPR said.

No casualties or damage occurred during the operation, it added.

"The weapons and explosives were handed over to Dhaka Railway Police Station, and legal steps are underway," said Jaynal Abedin, officer-in-charge of the station.

## What will this

FROM PAGE 1

Azad was from Shariatpur's Naria upazila. Azad finished his studies at Jagannath University. He was working at a travel agency in Dhaka's Uttara. His family lives in Chashara, Narayanganj.

Azad's brother-in-law, Sohag Ahmed, said, "Azad was in Malaysia for some time. He got married six years ago and started a family here."

Azad's body was found between metro rail pillars 432 and 433. Two others were injured in the incident. Azad was carrying his passport, which helped identify him.

Talking to our Shariatpur correspondent, Azad's cousin, Abdul Gani Chowdhury, said, "I heard that an adviser of the interim government announced Tk 5 lakh as compensation for Azad's death. What will this Tk 5 lakh do? This can never be compensation for a human life."

For work purposes, he regularly commuted from Narayanganj to Farmgate."

"My brother has a four-year-old son named Mohammad Abdullah and a three-year-old daughter named Suraiya Akhter. How will his wife take care of these two children alone?" he asked.

Through journalists, he wanted to make a request to the government. "Please ensure a good future for Azad's children. The government must take their responsibility."



Visiting Chairman of Pakistan's Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza pays a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna.

PHOTO: PID

## 'Pakistan keen on strengthening ties'

Its Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee chairman tells Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, visiting chairman of Pakistan's Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, paid a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna on Saturday.

During the meeting, they discussed a wide range of issues concerning Bangladesh-Pakistan relations, including growing importance of bilateral trade, investment, and defence cooperation, said the chief adviser's press wing.

Emphasising the shared historical, cultural, and people-to-people ties between the two countries, General Mirza expressed Pakistan's desire to strengthen cooperation in multiple sectors. He noted the vast potential for expanding trade, connectivity, and investment between Bangladesh and Pakistan.

"Our two countries will support each other," General Mirza said, adding that a two-way shipping route between Karachi and Chittagong has already begun operations, while a Dhaka-Karachi air route is expected to open within months.

Both sides also underscored the need to de-escalate tensions in the Middle East and Europe. They exchanged views on the growing challenge of misinformation and the misuse of social media by non-state actors to undermine peace and stability across various regions.

"Fake news and disinformation have flooded social media. It is being used to sow chaos. There must be a concerted global effort to combat this menace," Prof Yunus remarked.

National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman, Senior Secretary and SDG Coordinator Lamiya Morshed, and Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Imran Haider were present during the meeting.

## Metro's 2nd pad fall rings alarm

FROM PAGE 1

[bearing pad] bounce off the street and strike the man [Azad] on the neck from behind," she told this correspondent at the scene.

"He [Azad] immediately collapsed on the pavement, and blood started coming out of his nose and mouth... He went silent within seconds."

After hitting Azad, the bearing pad bounced again and hit a nearby shop, shattering its glass, she added.

According to officials of Tejgaon Police Station, both of the injured received primary treatment.

Visiting the site, Road Transport and Bridges Ministry Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan said a five-member committee has been formed to investigate whether the accident resulted from a technical fault or sabotage. The committee has been instructed to submit its report within two weeks.

He added that the family of the deceased will receive Tk 5 lakh, and an eligible family member will be offered a job at the DMTCL. The government will also bear the treatment costs of the injured.

The Agargaon Karwan Bazar portion of the country's first metro rail line was constructed by a Japan-Bangladesh joint venture comprising Takken Corporation, Abdul Monem Ltd, and Abenikko.

### EXPERTS, OFFICIALS SAY

DMTCL Managing Director Faruk Ahmed said the bearing pad may have fallen due to jerking of the line caused by train movement, though the exact cause will be determined through investigation. He added that there might be a construction issue or a design flaw, but this cannot be confirmed without a thorough probe.

Responding to a question, he said corrective measures were taken following the previous incident, but yesterday's occurrence will be thoroughly examined to assess whether it resulted from a design flaw.

or other underlying issues.

Contacted by The Daily Star last night, transport expert Prof Shamsul Hoque of Buet said two such incidents in quick succession strongly suggest a compromise in the metro system's construction.

"The design was made considering all possible risks, and this science has matured globally over a hundred years. The design followed those standards -- so the issue likely lies in the construction.

"It's too early for a bearing pad to fall due to a lack of maintenance."

He added that the consultants brought in from Japan to oversee construction may not have done their job properly.

"We must conduct an independent safety audit of all vulnerable components across the entire 21km line. If we don't, the fear that has emerged among the public will only grow."

Another senior civil engineer of a government agency said elastomeric bearings are generally installed on pier caps without mechanical anchorage, relying on the compressive force from the superstructure's dead load to generate adequate friction and resist lateral movement under service conditions.

"Any instance of bearing displacement on a metro rail viaduct warrants a thorough forensic investigation to identify the underlying cause -- whether from unexpected loading, poor specification, material degradation, or design deficiencies," he said, seeking anonymity.

Abdul Baqee Miah, director (Planning and Development) of DMTCL and head of the probe committee formed after the previous incident, said they had made several recommendations, and some corrective measures were implemented.

"But I don't know whether all of

our recommendations were carried out."

### QUESTIONS OVER PROBE BODY

Some experts and engineers have questioned the neutrality of the probe committee, noting that Bridges Division Secretary Mohammad Abdur Rouf was appointed as its chief.

They pointed out that Rouf was serving as the managing director of DMTCL when the previous incident occurred and was later promoted to secretary of the Bridges Division under the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry in February this year.

Brig Gen (retd) Md Abdul Wohab, the current project director of Mass Rapid Transit Line 6, was made a member of the committee, while Asfia Sultana, deputy secretary of the Road Transport and Highways Division, will serve as member secretary.

The two other members of the committee are Prof ABM Toufique Hasan of Buet's mechanical engineering department and Lt Col Md Jahidul Islam, associate professor of civil engineering at the Military Institute of Science and Technology.

Prof Shamsul Hoque said there would be a significant lack of neutrality in the committee, as it was formed with the former managing director and representatives from the ministry and the company as members.

Asked about the matter, Adviser Fouzul said appointing Rouf as the committee head would not affect neutrality, as external members had also been included.

"Besides, Rouf was not managing director of DMTCL when the line was constructed," he said.

However, when this correspondent pointed out that Rouf was the company secretary during the construction, the adviser said, "I don't think so," adding, "We will be monitoring the investigation, so there will be no issue."

## Rally behind the chosen or face consequences

FROM PAGE 1

for each constituency. Tarique joined via video conferencing from London.

Nomination seekers from Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal, Sylhet, and Rajshahi divisions have been invited for meetings today.

During the meeting with leaders from Chattogram and Rangpur yesterday, Tarique delivered a nearly 40-minute speech, while Standing Committee members Jamiruddin Sircar, Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury and Salahuddin Ahmed spoke among others.

Salahuddin warned that if the aspirants do not accept the party's decision, they will face strict action, according to Sheikh Md Mohiuddin, a nomination seeker from Chattogram-I constituency.

"At that time, Tarique Rahman stated that Salahuddin is correct, but he [Tarique] does not want expulsion to be the only solution," Mohiuddin told The Daily Star.

Najmul Mostafa Amin, who is seeking nomination for Chattogram-15, said, "Tarique Rahman told us that he will be forced to take organisational action if anyone goes against the party's decision; but he does not want to do this, and does not like it."

Mostafizur Rahman, who is seeking nomination for Chattogram-13, also said Tarique and other central leaders warned them against not supporting the candidates chosen by the party.

At the meeting, Tarique also instructed those getting the party ticket not to hurt others' feelings by celebrating or distributing sweets in their areas once they get the confirmation.

The nominated individual must visit the homes of those who missed out on the ticket and seek their cooperation in the polls campaign, Chattogram South District BNP said.

"People have trust in BNP. In his speech, Tarique Rahman asked us to maintain this trust, no controversial step should be taken. We have all committed to working for the candidates nominated by the party," said Aminur Rashid Yasin, a nomination seeker from Cumilla-6.

At a separate meeting with nomination seekers from Cumilla (proposed), Faridpur (proposed) and Mymensingh divisions, Tarique

Convener M Idris Mia said, citing Tarique.

The upcoming election will be challenging, and everyone must work united to secure victory for the paddy sheaf symbol, said Idris, a nomination seeker from Chattogram-1.

"We have been given the message to love the party like our own child and mother," said Belayet Hussain, former joint convenor of Chattogram North BNP.

If the party can come to power in the future, everyone will have the opportunity to be established within the party, said Belayet, a nomination seeker from Chattogram-3.

Earlier, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said that the party will evaluate those who do not receive nominations.

Nurul Amin, former joint convenor of the Chattogram North District unit and a nomination seeker from Chattogram-1, said, "To save the country and the party, there is no option but to win the upcoming election for BNP. For this, we must all remain united."

At a separate meeting with nomination seekers from Cumilla (proposed), Faridpur (proposed) and Mymensingh divisions, Tarique said that the BNP aims to engage in politics with all parties, and for this reason, party leaders must work in that direction.

At the end of the meeting, the leaders raised their hands and pledged to support the candidates nominated by the party.

"People have trust in BNP. In his speech, Tarique Rahman asked us to maintain this trust, no controversial step should be taken. We have all committed to working for the candidates nominated by the party," said Aminur Rashid Yasin, a nomination seeker from Cumilla-6.

Under a recent amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act, 1973, anyone formally charged in such cases is automatically disqualified from holding or contesting public office, even before the tribunal takes cognisance.

The tribunal rescheduled hearings in the two enforced disappearance cases to November 23, instead of November 20, and fixed November 24 for the Rampura killings case, previously set for November 5, following prosecution petitions seeking more time for preparation and citing personnel problems.

Deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her former defence adviser, Major General (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, are accused in both the enforced disappearance cases.

On October 8, the tribunal issued arrest warrants against 32 accused -- including 25 serving and retired army officers -- after taking cognisance of the formal charges. Fifteen of the officers were produced before the court on October 22.

Meanwhile, the tribunal granted a two-month extension for the ICT

## Commission may ask govt to issue order

FROM PAGE 1

recommendations on implementing the charter.

"The commission hopes to submit the recommendations to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus by tomorrow [today]."

The commission plans to hold another meeting in the morning to finalise the recommendations and submit them to the chief adviser by afternoon.

Legal experts consulted by the commission yesterday opined that once approved in the referendum, implementation of the reform proposals would become mandatory for the next parliament.

The commission is prioritising this approach, though it is still considering whether any additional guarantees can be provided.

Contacted, one of the legal experts consulted by the commission told this newspaper yesterday that the draft order clearly states that within 270 days, the necessary measures must be taken to implement the proposed reforms, thus imposing an obligation for the next parliament.

"However, we haven't specified what will happen if it's not done. There were discussions on the matter, but no final decision has been made," said the expert, adding, "It's very

difficult to predict what may or may not happen in future."

Commission sources said the implementation order will contain the full text of the 84 reform proposals as an annex, with some provisions taking effect immediately. Others will be activated later, with specific timelines mentioned for each clause. Half of these 84 proposed reforms require constitutional changes.

Among the key proposals under discussion is the introduction of a bicameral parliamentary system. The commission prefers that the new structure be adopted within the next parliament's term, though the mechanism for creating an upper house before completing the constitutional reform remains unresolved.

If the referendum

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Work with integrity, dedication

Army chief tells corps of engineers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Army Chief General Wakeruz Zaman yesterday expressed hope that army engineers will continue to play a vital role in the country's development with honesty, integrity, and dedication.

He was addressing the "Annual Commanders' Conference 2025" of the Corps of Engineers at the Engineer Centre and School of Military Engineering (ECSME) in Qadirabad Cantonment, Natore, according to a press

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3



Police intercept and detain a group of graduates with disabilities at Shahbagh yesterday as they march towards the chief adviser's residence, Jamuna, to press home a five-point demand, including employment opportunities. The protesters, under the banner of 'Chakri Pratyashi Protibondhi Graduate Parishad', have been demonstrating for inclusive and sustainable development for all job-seeking graduates with disabilities.

PHOTO: STAR



Rezaur Rahman passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Renowned scientist Rezaur Rahman passed away at LabAid Hospital in Dhaka yesterday. He was 81.

Rezaur left behind his wife, retired teacher Halima Rahman, and two daughters, Nilanjana Rahman and Manjulika Rahman.

Family sources said Rezaur suffered a severe heart attack at his Dhammondi residence on October 13 and was admitted to LabAid Hospital that night. He underwent open-heart surgery on October 15 and was being treated in the ICU. His condition worsened again from October 22.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

**JATIYO CHHATRA SHOKTI**  
**'Rebranding for returning to resistance roots'**

Central convener Baker pledges to revive anti-establishment student politics

**TIMELINE****Oct 4, 2023:** Gonotantrik Chhatri Shokti launched, focusing on campus safety, democratic rights**August 5, 2024:** Fall of AL govt**Sept 14, 2024:** Gonotantrik Chhatri Shokti dissolved**Feb 26, 2025:** Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatri Sangsads (BGCS) launched**Oct 23, 2025:** BGCS announced its rebranding as Jatiyo Chhatri Shokti, with plans to shift towards anti-establishment politics

under the banner of Gonotantrik Chhatri Shokti, opposing the then-ruling Awami League and its student wing, Chhatri League. We always promoted pro-Bangladesh and centrist politics, and that is what we aim to strengthen now with Jatiyo Chhatri Shokti," he said.

Gonotantrik Chhatri Shokti

was formally launched on October 4, 2023, in front of the Ducusu building, with Akhter Hossen as its convener and Nahid Islam as member secretary. Akhtar is now member secretary of National Citizen Party (NCP), while Nahid is convener.

Gonotantrik Chhatri Shokti's founding manifesto focused on campus safety, democratic rights, and rebuilding student politics to ensure a better educational environment.

However, within hours of its inauguration, its activists were attacked by members of the now-banned Chhatri League while returning from a rally at TSC.

At that rally, leader Akhtar declared that Chhatri Shokti would fight to reclaim students' rights from a culture of fear imposed by the ruling quarters.

"We had been preparing since 2020 through research, study circles, and activism," Baker recalled.

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Don't make proposals that could risk govt legitimacy

Salahuddin Ahmed urges NCP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed yesterday urged the National Citizen Party to refrain from making proposals that could later cast doubt on the legitimacy of the interim government.

"My brothers have formed a new political party, the NCP, and made various statements. But those must be grounded in reality," Salahuddin said at a discussion marking the fourth anniversary of the Gono Adhikar Parishad, held at the Diploma Engineering Institute in Dhaka.

Urging all political parties to stay within legal boundaries, the BNP leader said, "Many people, driven by emotion, claim

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

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a Pubali Bank apps**2,307 dolphins found in the country's rivers****Says survey by Wildlife Conservation Society**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite pollution and the widespread use of gill nets shrinking their habitat by nearly 30 percent, a recent survey has found 2,307 Gangetic river dolphins across Bangladesh's river systems.

Experts revealed the findings at a discussion yesterday, organised by the Forest Department in the capital's Agargaon, marking International Freshwater Dolphin Day.

The baseline survey, conducted by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and funded by the World Bank, covered 45,893km of 45 rivers between 2024 and 2025.

Experts said dolphin numbers are very low in some rivers, particularly those flowing around Dhaka city, due to severe pollution.

"Dolphins in these rivers are mainly facing a food crisis. They are surviving on sucker fish," said Dr Zahangir Alom, country director of WCS, who led the survey.

The survey identified 25 dolphin hotspots, some of which require immediate conservation, he added.

**KEY ISSUES**

Study covered 45,893km of 45 rivers in 2024-25

Dolphins face food crisis, mainly surviving on sucker fish, especially in Dhaka's polluted rivers

25 dolphin hotspots identified, with urgent conservation needed in some areas

Voluntary networks to be formed in districts to support wildlife protection efforts

The team surveyed 305km of the Buriganga, Turag, Bongshi, Surma, and Kalni rivers, where they found a total of 27 Gangetic dolphins, despite heavy pollution. They recorded seven dolphins in the Bongshi, five in the Turag, three each in the Kalni and Buriganga, and nine in the Surma rivers.

Speaking as chief guest, Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan said dolphins are vital indicators of river health, and their survival is closely linked to that of rivers and people.

"When river water becomes polluted, it threatens both dolphins and humans. Keeping rivers clean is crucial for the survival of both," she added.

The adviser also said, "A voluntary network will be formed in every district to support the Forest Department so that quick action can be taken in rescuing and protecting wildlife."

She said protecting wildlife requires not only laws but also psychological and behavioural change.

**Suicide prevention needs multi-pronged efforts: experts**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mental health experts at an event yesterday emphasised the need for a multi-pronged approach to suicide prevention, including restricting access to lethal means, promoting responsible media reporting, improving care for high-risk groups, and strengthening mental health services at the primary level.

They also recommended that films, dramas, and similar productions should not portray suicide as a solution but instead depict it negatively.

The remarks were made at a programme titled "Dissemination Programme: Resource Book on Suicide Prevention for Filmmakers and Others Working on the Stage and Screen in Bangladesh," held at a city hotel.

The event was organised by the National Institute of Mental Health and Hospital (NIMH) in association with the World Health Organization (WHO).

In his keynote presentation, Muntasir Maruf, associate professor at NIMH, said that according to WHO data, 4,714 people died by suicide in Bangladesh in 2021.

However, local estimates suggest that the actual SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

**LIFE IN BARISHAL STEAMERGHAT POLICE OUTPOST****On a damp floor, under a leaky roof**

SUSHANTA GHOSH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Water leaks through the tin roof during every rainfall, leaving the floors damp for days, while foul-smelling water overflows from the drains around the compound. This is the daily reality for police personnel at the Steamerghat Police Outpost in Barishal.

Located within the boundary of the Barishal deputy commissioner's office, the outpost was established in the 1960s, when the launch terminal area, known as Steamerghat, was the

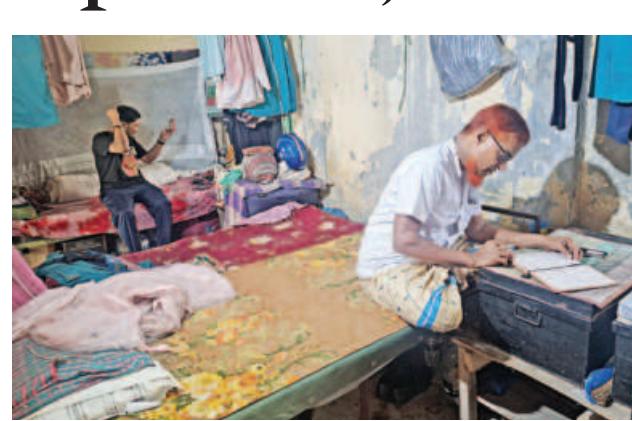


PHOTO: TITU DAS

busiest part of the city, bustling with passengers day and night. It was built to ensure the safety of launch and steamer travellers, but over the years, it has become a neglected post, plagued by dampness, filth, and decay. A visit to the outpost recently revealed a dismal scene. The entrance was waterlogged, with dirty water

pooling in front of the building and garbage piled in the open space nearby. The outpost consists of two tin-shed rooms situated on low-lying ground. The main structure, roughly 70 to 80 feet long and about 20 feet wide, is divided into four rooms. The central room serves as the main barrack, with 12 beds placed close together. During the day, some officers were resting

while others ate their meals sitting on the cots.

The adjacent room functions as both a storeroom and a living space, while the remaining two are used as the office and the room of the in-charge.

Behind the main building, another tin structure, measuring about 30 feet by 8 feet, stands with rainwater leaking SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Safety of all citizens govt's key priority  
Says CA's press secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government is giving the utmost priority to ensuring the safety of all citizens, including people of all religions and minority communities, said Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam yesterday.

When approached by The Daily Star, the press secretary urged everyone not to be misled by any kind of propaganda.

Recently, several Islamist groups held nationwide protests on Friday demanding a ban on the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), accusing it of murder, abduction, and anti-state activities.

The demand came after  
SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

## Restructure interim govt, make it non-partisan: CPB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) has called for the immediate restructuring of the interim government in a non-partisan manner to ensure a free, fair, and impartial national election.

The demand was made at CPB's three-day central committee meeting, according to a press release issued yesterday by Luna Noor, a member of the committee.

The meeting decided that in order to create a conducive environment  
SEE PAGE 9 COL 3



Market waste dumped in the middle of the road at Gollamari Bazar intersection, Khulna, is blocking traffic, bothering pedestrians, and spreading a foul stench, despite a nearby sign urging people not to leave garbage.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Century-old pond being filled up in Ctg

SIFAYETULLAH, Ctg

A portion of a century-old pond in the Farider Para area has been illegally filled in violation of existing environmental laws.

The pond, locally known as Afiar Baper Pukur, covers an area of around 52 decimals. Khorshed Ali, a student of Chittagong University and a local resident, said people have long used the pond's water for domestic purposes, and it also serves as a source of water for firefighting activities in the area.

Around three weeks ago, a portion of the pond on its southern side was filled with sand and enclosed with bamboo fencing to prevent water flow, causing the rest of the pond to dry up. The dumping of domestic waste by locals further deteriorated its condition.

A team from the Department of Environment (DoE) has already visited the site and found evidence of the illegal filling of the

waterbody.

According to the DoE and locals, the filled portion of the pond belongs to two individuals - Khorshed Alam and Tayeb. Another local, Anowar Hossain, had signed an agreement with Tayeb to purchase a portion of the pond and fill it with sand.

Khorshed, however, denied the allegation of filling up his portion of the pond, while Tayeb could not be reached despite repeated phone calls.

According to the Environment Conservation Act and the Natural Water Reservoir Conservation Act, filling up a waterbody is a punishable offence, carrying up to five years' imprisonment, a fine of up to Tk 50,000, or both.

Saiful Islam, assistant director of the DoE's Chattogram city office, said, "We have served notices to the individuals responsible, asking them to explain their actions. Legal measures will be taken based on the outcome of the hearing scheduled for this week."

Contacted, Anowar admitted that he had dumped 5-6 truckloads of sand there. "I had made an advance agreement

After confirming the allegations, the DoE's Chattogram city office issued notices to the individuals involved, asking them to appear for a hearing.

Contacted, Anowar admitted that he had dumped 5-6 truckloads of sand there. "I had made an advance agreement

to purchase three decimals of land from Tayeb. He assured me of helping with filling up the portion with sand. However, after some legal complications arose, I cancelled the agreement and took back the advance money from Tayeb," he said.

Khorshed, however, denied the allegation of filling up his portion of the pond, while Tayeb could not be reached despite repeated phone calls.

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## Jamaat objects to BNP's proposal on polling officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar has expressed concern over a BNP proposal to the Election Commission not to appoint officials from certain institutions allegedly linked to a "right-leaning party" as polling officials in the upcoming national election.

In a statement yesterday, Porwar said BNP's October 23 proposal to exclude staff of Islami Bank, Al-Arafah Islami Bank, Islami Bank Hospital, and Ibn Sina Hospital from election duties was "politically motivated, irrational, and unacceptable."

He claimed those institutions are non-political and service-oriented, providing services to people of all faiths with honesty and efficiency. Their neutrality, he added, has never been questioned.

Porwar warned that such "baseless allegations" could create uncertainty and chaos over the election and urged the EC not to consider BNP's proposal.

BNP recently submitted several recommendations to Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin seeking a level playing field.

## Four more die of dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least four dengue patients died, while 1,143 others were hospitalised, in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday morning.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, among the deaths, two were reported from Barishal division, one each from DSCC and Rajshahi division.

Now the total number of deaths rose to 263, while total cases rose to 65,440 this year.

## Violence erupts over burial of man killed in B'baria clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Rival groups engaged in a fresh round of violence in Birampur village under Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila yesterday over the burial of a man killed in a clash on Saturday.

Several houses were vandalised and set ablaze during the latest flare-up after rivals allegedly obstructed the burial of Nasir Uddin, 65, said police and locals.

Nasir was killed and at least 30 others were injured in a clash between supporters of former union parishad chairman and local BNP unit president Harunur Rashid, and followers of local businessman Sachhu Mia.

As Nasir's family members took his body to the village graveyard for burial yesterday morning, rival men allegedly prevented them from digging the grave, sparking the clash between the two groups, said locals.

At noon yesterday, Nasir's body remained inside a freezing van in front of his house, while his relatives waited anxiously.

Nasir's family members alleged that men loyal to Harunur Rashid publicly declared they would

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

## Plaintiff assaulted on court premises at BNP leader's 'direction' Alleges his family

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A plaintiff and his family were allegedly assaulted by some junior lawyers, who are also supporters of BNP's city unit convener, Advocate Shakhawat Hossain Khan, at the Narayanganj District Court premises yesterday.

The victims claimed that Shakhawat directed the attackers to carry out the assault.

Four people were injured in the incident: plaintiff Md Irfan Mia, 42, a sanitary goods trader; his wife Razia Sultana, 47; and their two sons, Muhammad Jidan, 18, and Abdullah, 5. Irfan was seriously injured and is undergoing treatment at Narayanganj 300-Bed Hospital, police said.

Anwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Fatullah Model Police Station, said Razia Sultana later filed a written complaint regarding the attack.

"Police are investigating the matter, and legal action will be taken following the investigation," he added.

In her complaint, Razia said that her husband, Irfan, is owed Tk 25 lakh by another businessman, Ismail, for sanitary products he had purchased but never paid for. Instead of settling the debt, Ismail allegedly threatened Irfan. A few months ago, Irfan filed a case over the matter with a Judicial

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



SAARC AGRICULTURE CENTRE (SAC)  
BARC Complex, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh

## Calling for Hiring Individual Consultant

SAARC Agriculture Centre invites applications from competent consultants having experience to develop a full proposal on Climate smart agriculture (CSA) with Climate smart livestock and fisheries. The applications with proposal may be submitted to the Director, SAARC Agriculture Centre (director@sac.org.bd) latest by 10 November 2025. The terms of reference are available at: [www.sac.org.bd](http://www.sac.org.bd).

Director

GD-2252

## On a damp floor, under a leaky roof

FROM PAGE 3

through its rusted roof. Officers cover the holes with old signboards to shield themselves.

Inside, a constable was found studying for his ASI examination.

"During rain, water drips everywhere. We have to hold umbrellas or use polythene sheets to protect ourselves," he said, requesting anonymity.

Around the outpost, overflowing drains have turned the entire area into

a swamp.

"Whenever it rains, the drains overflow and the whole place becomes flooded," said ASI Abdul Kaiyum of the outpost.

"We've informed the city corporation five times, but nothing has been done. Even the current administrator visited, yet no improvement has been made."

Constables stationed there said the constant dampness and unhygienic conditions often make

them ill.

"The tin roofs leak, the floors stay wet, and many of us suffer from fever and colds," said another police constable at the outpost.

"We've informed the higher authorities, and they are aware of it."

Currently, about 25 police officers are stationed at the outpost. Due to space shortages, some have to share beds. Some others live in rented houses nearby but must stay at the outpost during

duty hours. Meals are arranged through the police mess.

"When we're off duty, we eat mess food – whatever is available. Today's meal was rice with local chicken," said a constable with a faint smile.

Sub-Inspector Golam Hossain Nasim, in charge of the outpost, admitted to the poor condition of the facility. "This outpost is in bad shape, especially because of the stagnant, dirty water all around. We

have informed the higher authorities," he said.

Barishal Metropolitan Police Commissioner Md Shafiqul Islam told The Daily Star that the problems of all outposts had already been reported to senior officials.

"Under Kotwali, there are three outposts -- Steamerghat, Alekanda, and Bogura -- while Amanatganj outpost falls under Kaunia Police Station. Each accommodates about 100

to 125 members," he said.

The First Private University in Bangladesh



## FACULTY SEARCH: SPRING 2026

North South University

Center of Excellence in Higher Education

The First Private University in Bangladesh

## FACULTY POSITION

Applications are invited for faculty member positions in the following areas:

## SCHOOL OF BUSINESS &amp; ECONOMICS (SBE)

- Accounting (PhD only)
- Finance (PhD only)
- Data Science (Master's/PhD)
- Business Analytics (PhD only)
- AI in Business (PhD only)
- Business Intelligence (PhD only)
- Management Information System (PhD only)
- Supply Chain Management (PhD only)
- Business Statistics (PhD only)
- Operations Management (PhD only)
- Engineering Management (PhD only)
- Business Math (PhD only)

## SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES &amp; SOCIAL SCIENCES (SHSS)

- Law (Master's/PhD)
- English (Master's/PhD)
- History (Bangladesh History and World Civilization)
- Philosophy
- Public Policy/Political Science
- Anthropology

## SCHOOL OF HEALTH &amp; LIFE SCIENCES (SHLS)

- Biostatistics (PhD only)
- Microbiology (PhD only)
- Biochemistry (PhD only)

Required Qualifications: Candidates will be considered eligible if they have obtained their degrees from globally reputed universities. A Master's degree is required for Lecturer and Senior Lecturer positions, while a Ph.D. or higher qualification is required for Assistant Professor and above positions. Please note that only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Benefits: NSU offers a comprehensive benefits package that includes 50% house rent allowance based on the basic salary, medical allowance, festival bonuses, leave encashment, transport allowance, gratuity, provident fund, and insurance coverage. Salary packages are negotiable for outstanding candidates.

Application Process: Interested applicants are requested to visit the NSU website and submit their applications by the deadline of Wednesday, November 12, 2025, through the following link for faculty positions in the relevant academic field or area. Link: <https://jobs.northsouth.edu/>

Vice-Chancellor  
North South University  
Bashundhara, Dhaka-1222  
[www.northsouth.edu](http://www.northsouth.edu)

## Nepal interim PM adds youth figures to cabinet

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's Prime Minister Sushila Karki yesterday expanded her interim cabinet which was formed in the wake of youth-led uprising last month, inducting two ministers seen as popular among young people.

President Ram Chandra Paudel administered the oath of office to the new members of Karki's government: Youth and Sports Minister Bablu Gupta, and Sudha Sharma, who was made minister of health and population.

Gupta, 28, is known for his work with a volunteer organisation called 100's Group which supports underprivileged communities through food drives and education programmes.

Sharma, a doctor by profession, is also an author known for her leadership in maternal and child health policy.

## Russian drone strikes hit Ukraine's Kyiv 3 killed, 31 hurt

REUTERS

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky called for new strong sanctions against Russia and its allies after Russian drones killed three and injured 31, including six children, in an overnight air attack on Kyiv.

The attack destroyed two high-rise apartment buildings and Kyiv's Mayor Vitali Klitschko said on the Telegram messaging app that seven of the injured, including two children, were taken to city hospitals.

Debris from destroyed Russian air weapons fell onto a nine-storey apartment building in Kyiv's leafy Desnianskyi district, sparking a fire that engulfed several storeys, the mayor said.

"Every Russian strike is an attempt to inflict as much damage as possible on ordinary life," Zelensky said on Telegram.

"Of course, additional tariff and sanctions restrictions are needed against Russia and all those helping it stay afloat," he said. Ukraine's state emergency service said 13 people were rescued from the building's upper floors.

Kyiv and its surrounding region were under air raid alerts for about 1 1/2 hours before the air force called them off at around 0030 GMT.

## ANTI-TARIFF TV AD

## Trump raises tariffs on Canada by 10pc in retaliation

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump said on Saturday he was increasing tariffs on Canada by an additional 10 percent "above what they're paying now," as he reacted again to an ad by Canada's Ontario province, a day after it was aired during the World Series broadcast.

Trump on Thursday ended trade talks with Ottawa over the tariff-related ad, which Trump said was misleading.

Trump announced the higher tariffs in a Truth Social post on Saturday referencing the ad, which features a video of former president Ronald Reagan, a Republican icon, saying that tariffs cause trade wars and economic disaster. The ad had already been running for some days before Trump first reacted to it on Thursday night.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford said on Friday that after discussions with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, Ontario would pause the US ad campaign on Monday so that trade talks could resume.

The advertisement aired Friday during the broadcast for Game 1 of Major League Baseball's World Series, in which the Toronto Blue Jays are facing off against the Los Angeles Dodgers.

"Their advertisement was to be taken down, IMMEDIATELY, but they let it run last night during the World Series, knowing that it was a FRAUD," Trump posted.

"Because of their serious misrepresentation of the facts, and hostile act, I am increasing the Tariff on Canada by 10 percent over and above what they are paying now," he wrote.



Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and leaders of other Asean member states walk on stage at the 47th Asean Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## CENTRAL GAZA Israeli forces conduct 'targeted strike'

One Palestinian killed, four hurt; tanks shell eastern areas of Gaza City

### AGENCIES

Israeli forces carried out a "targeted strike" on an individual in central Gaza who was planning to attack Israeli troops, Israel's military said earlier yesterday.

A US-backed ceasefire is in force between Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas just over two years since the war in the Gaza Strip began, but each side has accused the other of violations.

Israel said it had targeted a member of Islamic Jihad. Yesterday, the Palestinian group said in a statement that the Israeli

- ↗ Palestinian group denies allegation of planning to attack Israeli troops
- ↗ Israel insists it calls shots in Gaza despite truce
- ↗ Israel allows Egyptian officials into Gaza to help locate the bodies of hostages

military's claim of a planned attack by the group was a "mere fallacious allegation".

At least one Palestinian has been killed. It did not say whether



one of its members was killed in the Israeli strike.

Witnesses told Reuters they had seen a drone strike a car and set it ablaze. Local medics said four people had been wounded, but there were no immediate reports of deaths, reports Reuters.

Witnesses said separately that Israeli tanks had shelled eastern areas of Gaza City, the Gaza Strip's biggest urban area. The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Several Israeli media sites said Israel, in a reversal of a policy of barring entry to foreign forces, had allowed Egyptian officials into the Gaza Strip to help locate the bodies of hostages taken captive in the Hamas-led attack on Israeli

that triggered the war.

As part of the ceasefire agreement, Hamas has said it will return all the hostages it abducted, but the remains of 13 are still in the enclave.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said US officials are getting input on a possible UN resolution or international agreement to authorise a multinational force in Gaza and were set to discuss the issue in Qatar yesterday.

However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday that Israel alone would decide which countries it would allow to join a planned international security force in Gaza.

He also said Israel does not need approval to strike foes.

India, China resume direct flights as ties improve

AFP, Kolkata

India and China resumed direct flights yesterday after a five-year suspension, a move important both for trade and a symbolic step as Asia's giants cautiously rebuild relations.

The neighbours -- the world's two most populous nations -- remain strategic rivals competing for regional influence, but ties have eased gradually since a deadly Himalayan border clash in 2020.

India's government said the resumption of flights will boost "people-to-people contact" and aid the "gradual normalisation of bilateral exchanges".

Warming relations with Beijing come as India's ties with key trade partner Washington struggle, following US President Donald Trump's order of punishing 50 percent tariffs. Trump's aides have accused India of fuelling Russia's war in Ukraine by buying Moscow's oil.

India's carrier, IndiGo, operated the first daily flight to mainland China, departing Kolkata at 10:00 pm (1630 GMT) yesterday for Guangzhou. There are already regular flights between India and Hong Kong, while additional services from New Delhi to Shanghai and Guangzhou will begin in November.

## Pakistan reports border clashes during talks with Afghanistan

REUTERS, Karachi

Five Pakistani soldiers and 25 militants have died in clashes near the border with Afghanistan, the military said yesterday, as delegations from both countries met to try to defuse tensions after the deadliest fighting in years.

The militants tried to cross over from Afghanistan on Friday and Saturday in Kurram and North Waziristan districts, rugged areas along Pakistan's northwestern frontier, the Pakistani military's media wing said.

It said the attempted infiltrations cast doubt on the intentions of the government in Afghanistan in "regards to addressing the issue of terrorism emanating from its soil".

In Afghanistan, the Taliban government's chief spokesman and the defence ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the reported attacks. The Taliban denies accusations of sheltering militants and says Pakistan's military operations violate Afghan sovereignty.

Officials from both countries are meeting in Istanbul to prevent a relapse into conflict after clashes between their armies earlier this month.

That fighting erupted after Pakistan demanded the Taliban rein in militants it says operate from Afghan sanctuaries, prompting heavy exchanges of fire and Pakistani airstrikes. Both sides reached a truce in Doha last Sunday.

## Trump headlines Asean summit Oversees trade deals, Thailand-Cambodia ceasefire

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur

The leaders of Thailand and Cambodia signed an expanded ceasefire deal yesterday watched over by US President Donald Trump, who landed in Malaysia for the Asean Summit and to oversee a series of pivotal trade talks.

Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul and his Cambodian counterpart Hun Manet signed the agreement at a ceasefire ceremony in front of a backdrop covered in US insignia and the words "Delivering Peace", building on a truce signed three months ago.

"This declaration, if fully implemented, will provide the building blocks for a lasting peace, but more importantly, it will begin the process of mending our ties," Hun Manet said.

"Our border communities have been divided by conflict, and innocent civilians have suffered immense losses."

Trump helped broker an end to the five-day conflict in July by calling the then-leaders of the two countries and urging them to end hostilities, their worst fighting in recent history, or risk their respective trade talks with Washington being put on hold.

"The United States will have a robust commerce and cooperation, transactions, lots of them, with both nations, as long as they live in peace," Trump said.

On arriving in Malaysia, Trump was greeted by Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and a troupe of ceremonial dancers at Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

## LOUVRE MUSEUM Two suspects arrested in jewel heist

AFP, Paris

French authorities have detained two of the suspected robbers believed to have stolen precious crown jewels from the Louvre in a museum heist that stunned the world, officials said yesterday.

A swarm of investigators had been mobilised to track down the thieves who robbed the world-renowned museum in broad daylight on October 19, making off with jewellery worth an estimated \$102 million in just a few minutes.

Paris prosecutor Laure Beccau said they had "carried out arrests on Saturday evening".

"One of the men arrested was about to leave the country" from Paris-Charles de Gaulle airport, Beccau said.

A source close to the case told AFP the man was about to board a plane for Algeria.



Federal agents detain a man in a parking lot in Chicago's Avondale neighbourhood following a confrontation during immigration raids. The incident occurred after US President Donald Trump ordered increased federal law enforcement presence to assist in crime prevention, in Chicago, Illinois, US on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Ensure adequate resources for police

### Reliance on donations for vital tasks risks compromising integrity

It is deeply troubling that the police force has become so under-resourced that it is getting increasingly reliant on private donations. An investigation by this paper has revealed that it is still a common practice for police stations to establish special funds to cover expenses, bridging the gap between official allocations and the actual costs of investigating crimes or even providing meals to suspects in custody. At a recent roundtable organised by this paper, a member of the Police Reform Commission also drew attention to the issue of resource shortages. He said, "At the thana level, if a police officer finds a dead body, they must cover transport costs themselves and are reimbursed a year later."

Reportedly, officers entrusted with investigating grave crimes—including murder or the recovery of an unidentified body—are often provided with as little as one fifth of the necessary expenses. As a result, a practice has taken root of collecting money as "donations" from influential individuals, which risks compromising the force's integrity; one can imagine the outcome of an investigation if it involves one of those donors. Equally troubling is the practice of soliciting money to process or fast track bail bonds to top up police stations' special funds, a method bordering on extortion in uniform. The authorities must review and prohibit such practices, ensuring that law enforcement operations are funded exclusively through legitimate public resources.

One may recall that infamous remark of the then AL state minister for information at the height of the 2024 July uprising that their stock of rubber bullets would not run out even if police continued firing at protesters non-stop for five years. This statement laid bare the misplaced budgetary priorities of the past, with more funds allocated to weaponry while ignoring investigative capacity and maintenance of police stations at an acceptable and decent standard. Our report also highlights that reimbursements for expenses incurred by officers to meet urgent investigative needs can take nearly a year. This absurd bureaucratic practice must be replaced, and necessary budgets must be made instantly available to duty bearers.

When the interim government announced its commitment to reform key state institutions, police reform was rightly listed as a priority. Yet, there has been little meaningful follow-up on the commission's report or its recommendations. While some civil society representatives have expressed reservations about certain proposals—such as the modalities of creating a permanent independent police commission as a watchdog—there should be no hesitation in adopting its recommendations to increase operational resources.

Providing financial independence to police superintendents for essential investigative expenses is not a luxury but a necessity. The government must ensure that the police have adequate, transparent, and accountable funding so that pursuing justice is not compromised by resource constraints or dependence on private generosity.

## Regulators must start house cleaning

### Liquidate, remove 'zombie' companies from stock exchanges

A silent, creeping malaise has infected the nation's key capital market for years. Dozens of companies—collectively referred to by analysts as "zombie firms"—have been languishing in the Dhaka Stock Exchange's (DSE) ignominious "Z" category for five years or more. This cannot be a mere administrative oversight; it reflects regulatory inaction threatening the integrity of the entire stock market. These firms have been plagued by years of losses, non-payment of dividends, negative net worth, and often a disregard for basic governance such as holding annual general meetings or even maintaining functional contact details. Despite such toxic fundamentals—accumulated losses for 27 of these firms stood at Tk 27,000 crore until June 2024—their shares continue to trade. This is a glaring example of dysfunction that fosters and rewards pure speculation.

The core of the problem lies in the regulatory philosophy adopted by both the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) and the DSE. Their long-held stance is one of non-intervention, arguing that the "Z" category label serves as a sufficient warning and that investors must bear responsibility for their speculative choices. However, this hands-off approach is ill-suited to the realities of Bangladesh's market, where financial literacy is often limited. Simply moving a failing company into a "junk" category and leaving it to fester creates a playground for market manipulation and allows financially distressed entities—which "owe more than they have"—to continue posing as legitimate investment vehicles.

We concur with industry experts who argue that allowing these financially deceased firms to operate is tantamount to "letting zombies roam the market." As one succinctly put it, if a regulator determines a firm has "no chance of being a going concern," it should be liquidated and delisted. Delisting, therefore, is a necessary process of market hygiene. The companies that have been in the red for a decade or more demonstrably fail the "going concern" criterion and have forfeited their right to access public capital. In this regard, the regulators' hesitation—that forced exit "ultimately" harms general investors—is misguided, as the greater harm lies in allowing failed firms to absorb retail investment that should be directed towards productive, healthy companies.

The solution is not complex. The DSE must enforce existing rules to remove companies failing to hold annual meetings for three consecutive years or pay dividends for five. For its part, the BSEC must proactively support any delisting moves initiated by the DSE. Regulators must also ensure accountability by penalising top executives where failure stems from malfeasance by sponsors and directors. We cannot build a trustworthy capital market without this long-overdue house cleaning.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Sadat and Menachem get peace prize

On this day in 1978, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin were awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace for negotiations that produced the Camp David Accords.

# EDITORIAL

## Why a logistics commission, not an authority, aligns with our realities



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

AHAMEDUL KARIM CHOWDHURY

Last month, a private sector think tank proposed establishing a National Logistics Authority under the framework of the National Logistics Policy. The proposal initiates a discussion on the institutional framework best suited to serve Bangladesh's logistics future.

Recent developments illustrate the complex interactions within our logistics ecosystem. These include the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA)'s temporary suspension of permission for several French shipping giant CMA CGM's vessels following surcharge decisions, a warning to the Mediterranean Shipping Company for similar adjustments, and the brief truckers' strike that prompted CPA to review and postpone new entry fee measures. These skirmishes reflect the challenges of coordination among diverse actors in a fast-evolving trade environment. They underscore the need for a permanent, neutral platform that can align interests, mediate disputes, and uphold predictability across the entire logistics chain.

Bangladesh stands today on the threshold of a logistics transformation. The government's intent to reform policy, improve efficiency, and align infrastructure investment with trade facilitation remains a national priority. However, whether another "authority"—created within a single ministry—can truly manage such a multidimensional ecosystem remains a question. The word authority conveys decisiveness, but it also implies hierarchy. In a system as vast as logistics, which spans ports, customs, railways, roads, river transport, aviation, and private terminals, hierarchy without coordination may struggle to deliver results.

Logistics in Bangladesh is administered by a mosaic of agencies: National Board of Revenue (NBR), Bangladesh Railway, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), Roads and Highways Department (RHD), Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), and the Chittagong, Mongla and Payra port authorities, alongside hundreds of private logistics operators. Each has its own statute, budget, and administrative hierarchy. A ministry-led authority may coordinate some of these, but it cannot command them all. The outcome risks being partial

compliance and parallel systems—the very fragmentation we hope to resolve.

This fragmentation already exacts a measurable economic toll. Bangladesh spends as much as 16 percent of its GDP on moving goods from factories to customers, far above the global average of 10 percent. The country thus ranks 88th of 139 countries in the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index. Exporters face costly port dwell times; importers endure unpredictable charges; truckers and freight forwarders confront multiple permits, inspections, and levies. The



FILE PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

**'Logistics in Bangladesh is administered by a mosaic of agencies, each with its own statute, budget, and administrative hierarchy.'**

issue is not the absence of policy, but the absence of a single accountable body to oversee performance across the entire supply chain.

What Bangladesh needs now is not another authority, but a national logistics commission—an independent, statutory institution created by parliament and accountable to the nation. It would not replace existing agencies, but serve as a coordinating and regulatory platform that harmonises them. The precedent exists: US's Federal Maritime Commission that oversees competition and transparency in maritime transport without controlling the ports or the lines themselves. A similar model can guide Bangladesh, ensuring fairness, data-driven oversight, and strategic coherence.

A commission would unify the six pillars of the World Bank's performance framework—customs, infrastructure, and

shipments, logistics competence, tracking and tracing, and timeliness—under one dashboard. Its first mandate could be to publish a national logistics performance index, updated quarterly, showing key indicators such as port dwell time, customs clearance hours, and corridor reliability. Transparency is the foundation of accountability; what gets measured, gets improved.

Another key reform should be licensing integration. Today, a logistics company must maintain separate licenses for terminal operator, berth operator, ship handling operator, shipping agency, freight forwarding, customs clearing and forwarding agent, trucking, and warehousing, each requiring different renewals and subject to overlapping inspections. This encourages inefficiency and rent-seeking. A single digital nationwide licence, administered by the commission and valid across all modes, would drastically reduce bureaucracy

can plan around known costs; they cannot plan around uncertainty. The commission's role would not be to fix tariffs but to enforce advance notification, disclosure, and fair review of all charges—from port handling to emergency surcharges. Such oversight would replace reactive decision-making with institutional dialogue.

Bangladesh's infrastructure boom, from bridges, ports to upgraded highways and rail links, has expanded the country's physical logistics capacity. Yet, it lacks the rules, data, and accountability mechanisms to ensure efficiency. A national logistics commission would provide that missing layer of governance.

To make such a commission effective, collaboration between the public and private sectors is crucial. Key institutions such as the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) and NBR must coordinate with private sector stakeholders, including trade organisations and sector-wise associations. Think tanks, supported by development partners, can help draft the legislation and define measurable standards. This alignment would transform logistics governance from fragmented supervision into unified accountability.

The commission could also serve as a collaborative forum—a permanent roundtable where all logistics actors can deliberate before disputes arise. Before any tariff adjustment, for example, it could host consultative hearings among port authorities, shipping lines, and trade associations to ensure clarity and fairness.

Critics may worry that creating another body risks bureaucratic expansion. A well-designed commission would do the opposite: streamline oversight by consolidating overlapping functions, eliminating duplication, and publishing unified metrics. Its legitimacy would come not from coercive power but from credibility, transparency, and dialogue.

Ultimately, Bangladesh's logistics story is one of competitiveness. Every hour lost at a port gate, every redundant licence, and every conflicting directive erodes the nation's export potential. As the country aspires to become a regional manufacturing and trade hub, efficient logistics will determine whether it climbs or stalls in the global value chain.

A commission offers a pragmatic and forward-looking solution. Bangladesh already has the infrastructure, the enterprise, and the intent. What it needs now is a single institution that ensures coordination without confrontation, progress without disruption, and regulation without rigidity. The question is no longer whether Bangladesh can afford to establish such a commission, but whether it can afford not to.

## Bangladesh must get the basics right to ride the AI wave



Nazmus Sadat is a sustainability and circular economy specialist and a former USIP Generation Change Fellow.

NAZMUS SADAT

There's a proverb that says, "When the winds of change blow, some build walls, others build windmills." As the global storm of technological transformation swirls ever faster, driven by AI, climate imperatives, and geopolitics, Bangladesh must decide what it wants to build, not metaphorically, but quite literally: infrastructure, institutions, and interoperability. These are essential to unlocking better jobs, resilient growth, and national relevance in a digitally reoriented world.

Notably, the recent years have brought a wave of infrastructure and legislative developments in the country. Grameenphone and Robi switched on 5G in September 2025.

The SEA-ME WE6 cable system has a total design capacity of approximately 126 terabytes per second (Tbps) and is expected to be ready for service in 2026. The national operator, Bangladesh Submarine Cables PLC, crossed 4 Tbps of live international bandwidth in August 2025. Rooftop solar is finally scaling, reaching around 245 MW in June 2025. Bain's 2025 technology analysis underlines the stakes: the world is reorganising around AI agents, dependable compute, and data

sovereignty. The question is no longer "Will this affect us?" but "How prepared are we to shape it into progress?"

Consider power. Bain estimates that AI compute alone could drive global electricity demand towards 200 GW by 2030, requiring nearly \$500 billion a year in new data centre investment. Bangladesh is laying small but meaningful bricks. Yet, the challenge lies in scale and smart integration. Can our energy strategy explicitly link AI power needs to renewables, efficiency benchmarks, and transparent performance reports? That is how we can move from promises to green computing.

Connectivity is evolving, strengthening the backbone of our digital infrastructure. But resilience requires redundancy, not just speed. We must ask: when one cable breaks, does our national bandwidth collapse with it? Thus, Bangladesh's digital future also depends on backup routes.

Inside companies, AI has become a system that thinks ahead and works across programmes. Bain cautions against chasing isolated wins; the bigger value lies in rewiring entire workflows. Controlled trials show developers using GitHub Copilot

completed tasks 55.8 percent faster. Yet faster coding matters only if it shortens delivery timelines or improves quality. Procurement must evolve too with specifying outcome-based KPIs, such as time-to-cash and first-pass yield, and requiring open agent interfaces so that vendors can compete within the same workflow.

Then comes trust. The Cyber Security Ordinance, 2025, has been gazetted, and the draft Personal Data Protection Ordinance (PDPO) 2025 has been approved. A sensible middle path is needed where sensitive personal data will be stored within Bangladesh, while using global cloud services under clear rules and oversight. We must balance trust with connectivity, especially in healthcare, banking, and exports. Striking the balance is now a core policy design challenge.

Big systems need big funding. Citigroup projected that AI-related infrastructure spending by tech giants will surpass \$2.8 trillion through 2029. Locally, Bangladesh secured \$650 million from the World Bank for the Bay Terminal, part of an \$850 million package signed in April 2025 to modernise trade and social protection.

What is needed next is targeted seed funding—public-private investment in backup cable stations, efficient data centres, and AI-powered export ventures—to signal seriousness and attract private capital.

Technical standards may sound dull, but they form the backbone of the digital economy. Whoever controls the connections controls the value. Google and Anthropic are developing systems that let different AI tools work together, while Microsoft is building

such capability into Windows 11, and Google is expanding it to payments. This is relevant for Bangladesh because our work spans banks, ports, factories, and government offices. To avoid dependency on single vendors, major buyers and public agencies must demand interoperable systems—ones we can swap out when better options arise.

Finally, exports. Competing on "cheap code" no longer works when software can write software. The consultancy McKinsey & Company estimates the global generative-AI impact at \$2.6-4.4 trillion a year. The winners will not sell labour hours—they will encode domain insight into agent workflows. With 5G live, a third subsea route pending, Bay Terminal financed, and rooftop solar scaling, Bangladesh can tell a credible story if it aligns energy, networks, and regulation to how agentic systems actually function.

Experts suggest the need for a nationwide, accelerated "AI skills for export" bootcamp that covers prompt engineering, AI-assisted moderation, curation, and data stewardship. It will help workers move from data entry to higher value, AI-augmented services. Freelancers are already advancing into 3D modelling and complex writing. The infrastructure already exists; what is missing is the execution muscle to turn intent into export earnings.

Many companies might abandon AI experiments within two years for lack of returns. That must not be a reason to wait. If we become known for steady power, resilient networks, and trustworthy governance, we will not just ride this wave; we can help steer it.

# There's nothing like having an independent country!



Mamun Rashid  
is a former banker and economic analyst.

MAMUN RASHID

Some years ago, during a discussion on leadership and national transformation, one participant asked a question that has stayed with me ever since: what would have happened if we had lost the 1971 war?

That question still makes me pause and think aloud, especially now that this defining moment in our history is being compared with the July 2024 uprising.

What really would have happened if we had lost our War of Liberation? The massacre and havoc would surely have been far greater; countless more people would have been killed by the occupying forces and their local collaborators. Many would have been drifting endlessly in search of safety, much like the Palestinian people who have been forced to wander without a home. India, already overwhelmed by nearly 10 million refugees from what was then East Pakistan, might have cracked under the burden.

I remember a speaker once saying at a dialogue at Brac University that it was a blessing the war lasted only nine months; had it continued much longer, the economy might have been in ruins and recovery would have taken decades. The comment made sense, yet to me it did not capture the full magnitude of what independence made possible.

Today, in 2025, Bangladesh stands transformed in many ways. The country has produced thousands of entrepreneurs,

professionals and diplomats. It is recognised for its social progress, women's empowerment, greater access to education and an economy that, despite its struggles, has remained resilient. When Bangladesh emerged in December 1971, it was one of the world's poorest nations; since then, it has lifted millions out of poverty and built an economy worth more than \$460 billion. Per capita income has risen to around \$2,820 in the current fiscal year. However, growth has slowed to about four percent, which reminds us that independence does not end challenges; it merely allows us to confront them on our own terms.

Our diplomats carry the national flag in capitals around the world, millions of Bangladeshis work abroad and most are respected for their honesty and discipline. Global corporations now employ a new generation whose parents once lived through the trauma of war. The "Made in Bangladesh" label appears in stores across the globe, while our ready-made garments industry has become one of the world's largest. Members of Bangladesh's peacekeeping forces serve from Africa to the Middle East and are admired for their professionalism. The success of micro-credit continues to inspire others, and the idea of social business, introduced by Professor Muhammad Yunus, is part of global development thinking.

Despite its imperfections, Bangladesh has

often been cited as a functioning example of a Muslim-majority democracy; policymakers and investors around the world increasingly recognise that it is possible to generate both profit and growth here. All this has happened because independence allowed us to take ownership of our own path.

None of these achievements would have been possible had we lost the war in 1971. Most decisions would have been taken in

should never stop asking what would have happened if we had lost. The question itself reminds us of the price and value of freedom.

Much has changed since I first thought about this more than a decade ago. Bangladesh is preparing to graduate from the United Nations' list of least developed countries. The economy has shifted from agriculture to manufacturing and services, while new sectors such as technology,

e-commerce, is reshaping the domestic economy and building a bridge to the digital future.

Yet the challenges are greater too; climate change threatens crops and cities alike. For example, a recent World Bank study estimated that heat-related losses alone cost the country nearly \$1.8 billion in 2024. But we can design our own response to these crises because we are an independent country.

Yet independence is not static; it has to be renewed through accountability and courage. On August 5, 2024, the world watched as mass student protests and a popular movement led to the fall of a long-standing government and on August 8, they saw the installation of an interim administration headed by Professor Muhammad Yunus. That transition was not without pain or controversy, but it reminded us that democracy and independence are living processes. The spirit of 1971 was never only about winning a war; it was about ensuring that power remains accountable to the people. The events of 2024 showed that Bangladeshis still hold that spirit close to heart, even when the path is uncertain.

There is truly nothing like being an independent country. The victory of 1971 opened the door to self-determination and development; if we had lost, our history would have been one of dependency and denial of our identity, rights, and freedom. But victory is never the final chapter; it is only the beginning. The years ahead will demand that we protect democracy, strengthen institutions, embrace innovation, face climate change with resilience and share the fruits of growth more equitably.

Independence gave us the right to dream; transformation will depend on how wisely we use that right. Let us continue to honour those who fought for our freedom by making sure the nation they created remains worthy of their sacrifice.



FILE ILLUSTRATION: BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

West Pakistan; most high offices would have been theirs, not ours. Unemployment among the educated would have been higher and the coffers on our side much thinner.

Many of my friends believe that victory in the war was inevitable because the cause was just and the nation stood united. I am less certain of inevitability; history could easily have turned the other way. That is why we

pharmaceuticals and light engineering are gaining ground.

There are other areas where we have progressed. Our foreign policy has matured; Bangladesh now negotiates trade and peace on its own terms, manages regional tensions and balances relationships between larger powers. The entrepreneurial energy of our youth, especially in start-ups, fintech and

## How Bangladesh can institutionalise social enterprises



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TAHMID HASAN

Bangladesh stands out globally for its two seminal contributions to social innovation: BRAC's model of enterprise-based development and Professor Muhammad Yunus's concept of social business. Both showed how market mechanisms can be used to achieve social objectives. Yet, despite influencing global practice in social impact, Bangladesh has struggled to build momentum in expanding and supporting social enterprises. The very country that inspired much of Asia's social enterprise thinking has failed to institutionalise it at home.

As traditional development aid declines and donors such as USAID scale back, Bangladesh faces a widening gap between community needs and available funds. But this is not simply a story of shortage. It is a story of unused strength. For decades, ordinary Bangladeshis have stepped up where bureaucracy faltered, by organising relief after floods, pandemics, and fires, contributing to informal neighbourhood charities, and giving generously during crises. The habit of helping each other is part of who we are. What we lack are the public structures that can turn this energy into lasting, organised impact through social enterprises that meet people's needs when the government cannot.

While definitions of social enterprise vary globally, the World Economic Forum notes that social enterprises exist to address social and environmental challenges. They prioritise purpose over profit, earn part of their income through trading, and reinvest the majority of their surplus towards their mission.

To understand why social enterprise flourishes in some countries but stagnates in others, we can turn to Janelle A Kerlin's macro-institutional social enterprise framework. Kerlin argues that cross-country variation in social enterprise arises from the interaction of a nation's formal and informal institutional structures. The framework identifies four key institutional pillars: government, economy, civil society, and culture. Together, these pillars shape how social enterprise evolves within each country. Bangladesh aligns with Kerlin's terms of the "individual self-sustainability model," where weak state capacity and limited markets lead individuals and civic groups to create community-based enterprises supported by microfinance and aid. These ventures arise from necessity and rely on trust and informal networks rather than policy or market incentives.

Bangladesh's social enterprise ecosystem

remains fragmented and largely driven by private and development actors. The only national survey, conducted by the British Council in 2016, found that while the sector is growing and creating jobs, most ventures operate without clear recognition or policy support. Since there is no official definition or single regulatory framework, the term "social enterprise" is used broadly to cover NGOs, charities, social businesses, and small community initiatives.

Organisations such as the Yunus Centre, YY Ventures, Startup Bangladesh, and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have supported promising initiatives in areas like sustainable fashion, waste recycling, health, and renewable energy. Yet these remain scattered, with no national strategy to coordinate them. No government body oversees funding, training, or research, and there is no registry to distinguish genuine social enterprises from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects or charities. Most organisations still depend on donations and grants and face familiar barriers, including limited access to capital, a lack of fiscal incentives, skill shortages, and low public awareness. According to the Doing Good Index 2024 by the Centre for Asian Philanthropy and Society, Bangladesh offers limited and sector-restricted tax incentives for social-purpose organisations and also requires more time and clearances for registration than the regional average, which discourages formalisation as well as public-sector linkages such as social procurement.

British Council estimates suggest that around 150,000 organisations, including SMEs and NGOs that fit social enterprise criteria, are active across the country.

Bangladesh's broader impact and startup ecosystem have drawn nearly \$950 million in investment and generated over 15 lakh jobs since 2013, while SMEs account for around 25 percent of GDP, which shows that enterprise-led growth is already shaping the country's economic future. However, this potential is neither recognised nor scaled for public good since social enterprises remain outside formal policy frameworks.

Across Southeast and East Asia, several countries have done what Bangladesh has not yet managed to do. They have made social enterprise part of state policy rather than leaving it to private initiatives. Malaysia has integrated social enterprise into national planning through its Social Entrepreneurship Blueprint 2030 and an accreditation system run by the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre. This connects social enterprises to funding, training, and procurement, embedding them within the country's entrepreneurship strategy.

Thailand's Social Enterprise Promotion Act (2019) established a national fund, tax incentives, and a clear legal identity for social enterprises. The government moved from treating social entrepreneurs as charitable actors to recognising them as part of the formal economy capable of generating jobs and addressing inequality.

Taiwan's Social Innovation Action Plan (2018) goes further. By linking ministries, corporations, and universities under a single platform, Taiwan has tied social enterprise directly to its innovation and growth strategy and aligned it with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

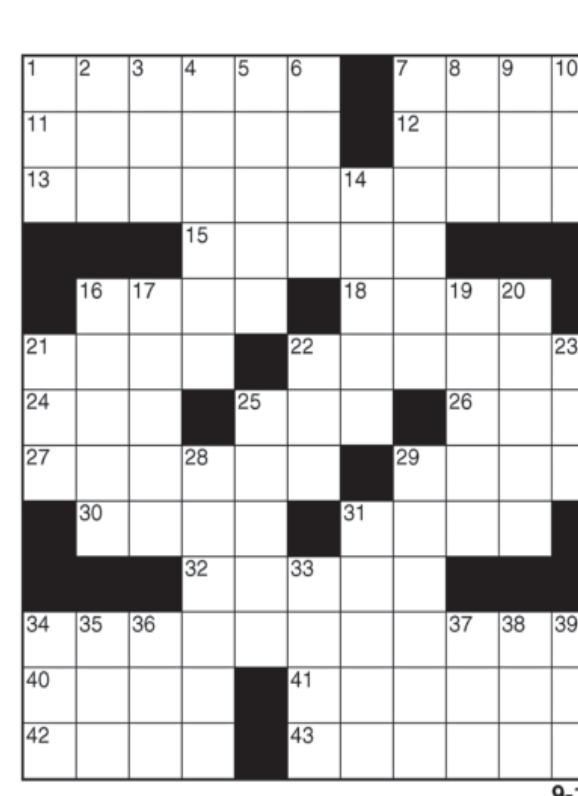
Even smaller countries have made progress. Sri Lanka's 2016 SME Policy recognises social enterprise as a tool for local

development, backed by the British Council, UNDP, and Oxfam. Indonesia integrates Islamic cooperative and zakat traditions into government plans, merging religious giving with enterprise and welfare goals.

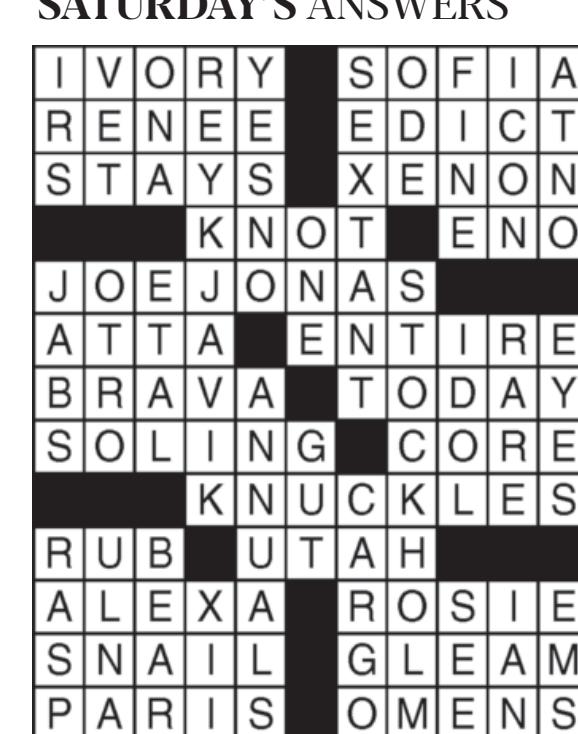
Bangladesh can learn from these examples. First, our government should develop a national social enterprise strategy that defines legal identity, accreditation, and support mechanisms, linking social enterprise to national development priorities. Second, a social enterprise fund, which could provide blended finance to de-risk innovation and attract private investors, should be established. Third, social enterprises should be included in SME and social protection policies so they can access government assistance alongside traditional businesses. Finally, systematic data collection on giving and social entrepreneurship is crucial for designing evidence-based policies. Partnerships with religious trusts and philanthropic organisations could also help channel faith-based giving into accountable, enterprise-driven impact.

Bangladesh does not need to import ideas from the West; the solution lies within reach. The country's greatest resource has always been its people: inventive, generous, and resilient in the face of crisis. This capacity for collective action already provides a cultural and moral foundation for social enterprise. The government's task now is to match that human potential with institutional formalisation. If microcredit was the innovation that defined Bangladesh's first generation of social change, social enterprise could be the innovation that defines the next, but only if the state is willing to build the structures that allow it to grow.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Pill type
  - 7 Life stories, for short
  - 11 St. Francis's home
  - 12 Take apart
  - 13 Quick to take offense
  - 15 Supermarket section
  - 16 Low card
  - 18 Automaker Benz
  - 21 Satyr's kin
  - 22 Furniture layer
  - 24 Tattoo setting
  - 25 Sleep spot
  - 26 Like many
  - Pride Parade participants
  - 27 Poet Frost
  - 29 Job for Holmes
  - 30 Fare carrier
  - 31 Sudden shock
  - 32 Misbehave
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  - 40 Dispatched
  - 41 Glacial period
  - 42 Sacred chests
  - 43 Real brat
  - DOWN
  - 1 Purr producer
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  - 3 Letter before omega
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  - 6 Polynesian idol
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  - 17 Cuban dance
  - 19 Majestic
  - 20 Minimum amount
  - 21 Way off
  - 22 Old soldier
  - 23 Reuben base
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  - 39 German article



### SATURDAY'S ANSWERS



WRITE FOR US, SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO [dsopinion@gmail.com](mailto:dsopinion@gmail.com).



Chanchal and Farin coincidentally met in Kolkata for the same project

Chanchal Chowdhury and Tasnia Farin recently travelled to Kolkata to attend a special screening of *Swarthapar*, hosted by actress Koel Mallick. After the event, both actors were scheduled to meet noted filmmaker Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury regarding his upcoming project – though neither knew the other had been invited for the same reason.

"None of us knew that we were both going to meet for the same project – it was purely coincidental," Chanchal shared. "I came here to meet Tony da (Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury) about a film, and Farin also came for the same reason. We ran into each other and were surprised to learn we were here for the same purpose."

When asked if they will share the screen, Chanchal said, "Nothing is confirmed yet, but discussions are ongoing. Hopefully, we'll work together." Farin echoed similar sentiments, keeping details under wraps. Fans now await official confirmation of their collaboration.



FAIZA RAMIM

Tucked away on the first floor of a quiet building in Banani II, Tara Books has gradually become one of Dhaka's most intimate cultural sanctuaries. What began as a small independent bookshop has evolved into a rare space for film enthusiasts in the city's otherwise commercial northern neighborhoods. Managed by Arfun Ahmed, the shop now doubles as a micro-cinema, hosting regular weekend screenings that have turned into a refuge for conversation, curiosity, and community.

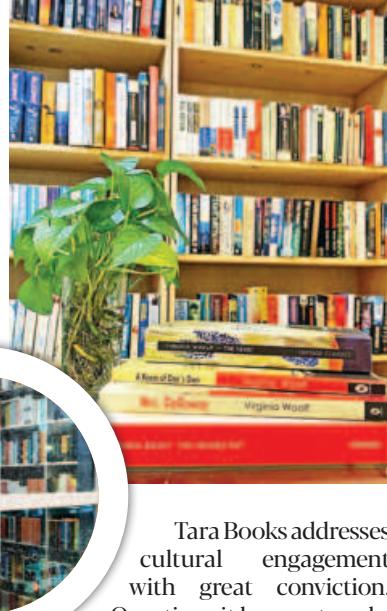
For the past two years, Tara Books has hosted film screenings almost every weekend. The setup is modest yet intentional; a projector positioned between a bookshelf and a narrow corridor, encircled by a handful of cushions and low seats for ten or twelve viewers. Tickets are sold on the spot for Tk 200, just enough to cover the electricity bill. "There is no profit," Arfun explains. "The ticket price is mostly to keep the lights on and the community alive."

The films selected for screening are personally curated by Arfun Ahmed, reflecting a distinct and thoughtful vision. Instead of following trends or commercial appeal, the selections emphasise cinema of depth, culture and conscience and a high aestheticism. Over the past two years, Tara Books has screened films such as *Chinatown*, *Ikiru*, *La Grande Illusion*, *Quatre Nuits d'un Rêveur*, *The Man Without a Past*, *Millennium Actress*, *Barfi!*, *Just 6.5*, and *Ghashiul* – a cross-section of world cinema spanning Japanese humanism, French poetic realism, American neo-noir, and South Asian social narratives.



TARA BOOKS

PHOTOS: COLLECTED



Tara Books addresses cultural engagement with great conviction. Over time, it has nurtured a small yet cohesive community of regular visitors who come not only to watch films but also to engage in thoughtful discussions afterward. The shop has additionally hosted musical performances by Gonje Feresta and premiered Akram Khan's *Ghashiul*; the first Bangla film screened there – with the director himself in attendance.

My visit to Tara Books confirmed what makes this place extraordinary. I attended a screening of *Singin' in the Rain*, and by a stroke of coincidence, it began to rain outside just as the film was about to start. Before the screening, the projector played Debabrata Biswas's Rabindra Sangeet on rain, setting an atmosphere that felt both cinematic and deeply Bengali. The sound of rainfall blended with Biswas's voice; together, they cast a meditative spell across the room. The shelves glowed softly under the light, lined with literary classics, essays, and poetry collections untouched by the sensationalism of modern social media publishing. The experience was so immersive that it reminded me art can still exist as a shared encounter rather than mere background noise.

If you ever find yourself in Banani on a quiet or rainy evening, climb the narrow staircase to the first floor. Bring Tk 200, silence your phone, and take a seat between the books and the wall. As the projector hums to life, you may realise that this small corridor, lit by flickering images and shared attention, carries forward a tradition larger than itself: a continuation of community, reflection, and the most ordinary yet enduring human act – watching a film together.



Alimuzzaman and Raihan Rafi receive Fazlul Haque Memorial Award 2025

Journalist Alimuzzaman and filmmaker Raihan Rafi have been honoured with the Fazlul Haque Memorial Award 2025. The award, instituted by noted writer Rabeya Khatun, was presented at a grand ceremony held at the Channel i premises.

The event was attended by filmmaker Matin Rahman, Director General of the Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy, poet Rezauddin Stalin, and veteran actor Alzal Hossain, along with several journalists, writers, publishers, and directors.

It is worth mentioning that the Fazlul Haque Memorial Award has been presented for the past 22 years in memory of the late Fazlul Haque, the founding editor of the country's first film magazine, Cinema and the maker of Bangladesh's first children's film, *Son of Pakistan*.

## WHAT'S THE HAPS?

## 'Charukola Animation Festival 2025'

The Charukola Animation Society presents the *Charukola Animation Festival 2025* – a three day celebration of imagination and innovation in animation. Uniting artists, studios, and storytellers from across Bangladesh, the festival will showcase screenings, workshops, live art jams, cosplay, and dynamic discussions shaping the country's fast-growing animation industry.

Date: Tuesday-Thursday | Oct 28-30, 2025  
Time: 11 am-6 pm  
Venue: Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University



## NEWS

## Living conditions appalling

FROM PAGE 12

"I had to wait three months to get a bed on the second floor.. But the living area is stretched beyond its limits," he said.

Russell Sarowar, officer-in-charge (OC) of the station, admitted that the living conditions are appalling.

"The available space is grossly inadequate for the 130 members stationed here," he said, adding that 85 policemen, who are mostly constables, live in the barrack. The others, mainly SIs and ASIs, rent houses and live with their families.

Sarowar said the station faces a shortage of policemen, forcing it to form patrol teams of just two while three to four officials are required for such teams.

The limited living space has forced the authorities to keep the number of policemen at the station low, the OC clarified.

"Senior officials are aware of the situation. They are exploring options for land to build a new complex, but no decision has been made yet," he added.

Conditions are no better at Shah Ali Police Station in Mirpur I. A small three-storey building can barely accommodate the constables.

Golam Azam, the OC of Shah Ali Police Station, said most of the 145 members posted there live on the first and second floors or in temporary sheds. Like Banani, the SIs and ASIs of

Shah Ali have rented houses to live with their families.

The

footpaths outside have been turned into makeshift quarters with tin roofs where constables endure sweltering heat and mosquito attacks in the summer.

"There is no kitchen. We eat at nearby restaurants, spending around Tk 6,000 each month. The cost could have been cut significantly if we could cook," said a constable of the station, requesting anonymity.

Those who do not get space to sleep at the quarters go to a nearby community centre. "When it gets too crowded even there, some end up sleeping on the veranda of an adjacent mosque," he said.

Another constable said the appalling condition hampers their sleep, and eventually impacts their work. "We can't even talk to our families over the phone privately at night," he said.

The OC added that the station has no resting space for reserve police officers. They wait outside until their duty hours begin.

During a visit to the station on October 6, several policemen in uniform were seen waiting on footpaths, parked rickshaws or tea stalls outside.

According to officers, 25 of Dhaka city's 50 police stations operate from

rented buildings, while the rest are on land owned by the force. Many of the stations are in poor condition. Banani and Shah Ali are among the worst.

Police officials said some barracks have recently seen minor improvements following repairs and pest control. Still, for many, living conditions remain a daily struggle.

Several inspectors said it has become extremely difficult for many of them to ensure public security when they cannot rest properly after 12-14 hours of duty.

When contacted on October 6, Sarder Nurul Amin, additional inspector general (development) at the Police Headquarters, said a project has been taken up to develop and renovate barracks in 107 out of 639 police stations across the country.

"Construction and repairs of structures in 52 stations is expected to be completed within this fiscal year, and the rest by the next fiscal year," he said.

On July 2 last year, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) approved a Tk 1,600 crore project for infrastructure development of 107 police stations.

"Besides, we have initiated another project for constructing 116 police outposts. The proposal will soon be sent to the home ministry for placing before ECNEC for approval," he added.

the moment it was signed over four years ago. Now, it wants ASEAN to legitimise a sham election despite the fact that tens of thousands of political prisoners are behind bars, freedom of speech and the press are outlawed and military attacks against civilians continue unabated," he said.

"To recognise the junta's fraudulent election would be to move Myanmar backward and defend the indefensible," Andrews said.

Human Rights Watch Asia Advocacy Director John Sifton said Myanmar's junta has demonstrated neither the intention nor the capacity to organise and hold elections that would even remotely meet international standards.

The military's widespread atrocities in recent years have included crimes against humanity and war crimes, arbitrary detention of opposition politicians and the dissolution and criminalisation of opposition political parties, he said.

"ASEAN and ASEAN partners should categorically reject the idea that free and fair elections can currently be held in Myanmar and refuse to support the elections in any way," Sifton said.

"The military junta has been scoffing at ASEAN's Five Point Consensus since

## BNP seeks symbol sharing

FROM PAGE 12

"But suddenly we saw in the newspapers that even if an alliance is formed, each party must contest with its own symbol. The BNP does not agree with this amendment, and this change is not acceptable to us."

He said the main purpose of forming alliances is to maximise electoral success, and parties should retain the freedom to select their preferred symbol within the coalition framework.

"Until now, symbols have been allocated according to alliance

preferences, and this has never led to any problem. We fail to understand why this well-established system has been changed."

He also criticised the decision for being taken without talking to political parties.

Regarding the issue, EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed yesterday said, "In line with the recommendations of the Election Reform Commission, we have amended everything starting from the RPO to various conduct rules, as

well as all laws and regulations related to election management."

However, Zabihullah said the BNP believes that the amendment to the RPO undermines the democratic rights of political parties.

"The right of allied parties to contest using any of their symbols is a democratic right. The BNP sees no justification for curtailing that right. Therefore, we have written to the Election Commission to take necessary steps to retain the previous provision of article 20."

## At least 37 animals dead or missing

FROM PAGE 12

3,690 acres. Tourist Police Superintendent Nihad Adnan Tayan added that a help desk system is being planned to enhance security.

Meanwhile, official records show that animal deaths have increased in recent years. A lion and a wildebeest died in December 2021; 11 zebras, a tiger, and another lion died between January and February 2022. Ten giraffes were imported from Africa in 2013 and multiplied to 13 through breeding, but all have now died. The park has also been without kangaroos since three died in 2021.

Environment ministry sources said the giraffe's death was not unexpected given the park's ageing population and poor structure, though some new births have occurred. "We don't announce these publicly for security reasons," said a source, preferring anonymity.

Chief In Charge Rahul Pal said the park now houses about 1,300 animals, including tigers, lions, bears, wildebeests, nilgai, chital deer, maya deer, zebras, and nilgai.

Visitors said the once lively park has grown quiet. "People are losing interest since there are no giraffes," said visitor Nazmul Hasan. Ticket sellers also said sales have fallen sharply except on Fridays.

Tarique noted that the park has 30,000 visitors per month.

## CONCERN OVER MISMANAGEMENT

Animal rights activists have blamed poor management and planning for the park's losses.

"The repeated deaths of giraffes represent not an accident but a systemic collapse," said Rubaiya Ahmad, founder of Obhoyoronno Animal Welfare Foundation.

Poor habitat design, lack of professional staff, and outdated equipment, she said, have left veterinarians overworked and animals uncared for.

She added that the park's vast land could have been turned into a model for humane, semi-free wildlife management. "But most of it remains unused due to poor planning and lack of scientific vision."

Rubaiya called the import of exotic animals "ecologically irresponsible", adding that without proper conservation partnerships, it is a misplaced ambition rooted in vanity rather than science.

Conservation biologist Shahriar Caesar Rahman echoed concerns about management but noted that importing foreign species is not inherently wrong. "Such animals thrive elsewhere when provided proper care and habitat design. The problem is not that they're here -- it's that we fail to keep them well."

He urged a focus on native wildlife andrewildlife. "Bangladesh has countless native species people barely know about. Parks should prioritise their rehabilitation."

Meanwhile, Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan said the park should not have been under the Forest Department, which "struggles to manage the forests themselves".

"Running a safari park requires different expertise," she said, suggesting a joint public-private management model where professionals handle operations while the department retains ownership.

Rizwana also opposed importing exotic animals. "If we can't care for our own wildlife, why bring in foreign species? International law under

CITES requires trafficked animals to be returned to their countries of origin, not displayed in captivity."

She said the government is working to overhaul the existing model and amend the Wildlife Act to allow joint management of safari and eco-parks, combining conservation with responsible tourism. The amendment is expected to be placed before the advisory council within two weeks.

## Bias in police postings

FROM PAGE 12

the main was the ongoing efforts to reduce the number of mobile SIM cards used by individuals to curb fraud and crime.

"We want to reduce the number of SIM cards per person gradually, through a process," he said. "Currently, a person can use up to 10 SIMs, but we aim to bring it down step by step. Our target is two SIMs per person, but before the election, we may make it down to seven."

Jahangir mentioned that discussions were held with the IT adviser to tighten controls and monitor SIM ownership.

He also urged the public and businesses to be more vigilant about fire safety, following several major fire incidents in recent weeks. The fire service has been instructed to hold mock exercises to enhance preparedness.

Regarding misinformation, Jahangir called on journalists and citizens to help curb the spread of false reports on social media, which often cause unnecessary panic.

## Rights bodies urge focus

FROM PAGE 12

shortages, human trafficking and drug smuggling.

In a statement, ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR) said civilians in Myanmar face relentless violence, mass displacement and collapsing services, with over 22 million needing aid and 3.5 million displaced by ongoing airstrikes and destruction.

At the same time, more than 1.3 million Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar endure dwindling aid, food shortages and fading prospects for safe return.

APHR Chairperson Mercy Christy Barends said ASEAN can no longer sideline Myanmar and the Rohingya crisis to the margins of diplomacy.

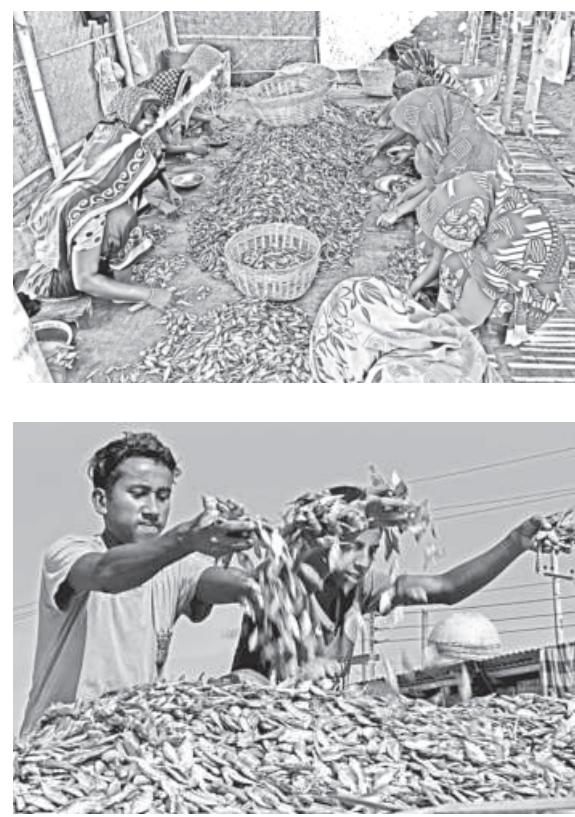
"These are immediate humanitarian and security crises that demand urgent and decisive leadership," Barends said.

Thai MP Rangsima Rome said ASEAN must reject the sham election, which will only deepen the oppression of the Myanmar people, entrench military impunity and erase any remaining prospects for a genuine democratic transition.



Freshwater fish caught from the haors and nearby water bodies of Sunamganj are brought daily to the well-known Lamakazi fish market in the Bishwanath area of Sylhet. This segment of the seasonal dried fish (shutki) industry -- worth several crores and lasting about five months during the dry season -- sustains the livelihoods of around 500 people in the haor communities. Over 300 women work from morning till evening, cleaning, drying, and sorting the golden dried fish that are supplied across the country and abroad. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR



## Bank Asia holds breast cancer awareness event



## CITY DESK

Bank Asia's Human Resources Division organised a 'Breast Cancer Awareness Program' on October 23 as part of its initiative to promote health awareness and early detection among female employees, said a press release.

The day-long programme featured health check-up facilities provided by Sukhee (Grameen Digital Health), a pickle station by Dotline Group, and an awareness session conducted by Dr Sarkar Kamrun Jahan Jhinuk from United Hospital.

During the session, Dr Jhinuk discussed preventive care, the importance of early diagnosis, and maintaining women's health. Bank Asia said the event reflects its commitment to ensuring employee well-being and creating a supportive, health-conscious workplace.

## Suicide prevention

FROM PAGE 3  
number may range from 10,000 to 14,000, he said.

He added that young people, particularly those under 30, and women are more affected in Bangladesh -- a contrast to global trends, where men and people over 45 are typically more at risk.

Suicide prevention in the country faces numerous challenges, including limited research and data, low public awareness, inadequate mental health services, minimal funding, criminalisation of suicidality, and poor-quality media reporting, he explained.

Mental health receives only 0.44 percent of the total health budget, with two major hospitals -- NIMH and Pabna Mental Hospital

-- absorbing 70 percent of that allocation, he said.

Actor and director Shobnom Parvin said that large scale family planning campaigns once brought positive changes in the country, and similar efforts should be undertaken to prevent suicide.

Prof Khair Ahmed Chowdhury, additional director general (administration) of the Directorate General of Health Services, said a few students pursue studies in mental health, while most show interest in other subjects.

He added that awareness campaigns on mental health remain insufficient.

Prof Mahbubur Rahman, director of NIMH, chaired the programme.

## Don't make proposals

FROM PAGE 3

that the will expressed by the people during the July uprising can justify issuing revolutionary orders in its favour. Such statements are emotional."

"To fulfil the people's will, we have all chosen to follow the Constitution," he added. "This government has been formed in accordance with the Constitution and, so

far, is running the state in a lawful and constitutional manner."

Urging caution in political discourse, Salahuddin said, "We often use strong words and issue various directives driven by emotion or political satisfaction, but the foundations of those decisions will inevitably be questioned in the future."

## Restructure interim

FROM PAGE 4

for the upcoming national elections, individuals holding party affiliated positions within the government, as well as those from newly formed political parties, must resign.

At the meeting, chaired by CPB President Sajjad Zahir Chandan, General Secretary Abdullah Kafi Raton presented a political report which was later adopted by the central

committee.

While there has been broad consensus on reforming many practical aspects of the constitution, no compromise can be made on its four core principles. The interim government does not have the authority to hold a referendum or issue constitutional orders on matters where political parties have failed to reach a consensus, said the press release.

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Leaders, including Nahid, Asif Mahmud, and Abdul Kader, played key roles in the Students Against Discrimination movement, which ultimately led to the fall of the Awami League government on August 5, 2024.

Gonotantrik Chhatra Shokti was dissolved on September 14, 2024.

Later, on February 26, 2025, BGCS was formed with Baker as central convener and Kader as DU convener.

## Rebranding for returning to resistance roots

FROM PAGE 3

"Our political philosophy was based on building an inclusive Bangladesh where all citizens enjoy equal dignity. Our initial goal was to dismantle the fascist system, and when the quota movement began, we joined it without hesitation."

Leaders, including Nahid, Asif Mahmud, and Abdul Kader, played key roles in the Students Against Discrimination movement, which ultimately led to the fall of the Awami League government on August 5, 2024.

"By ideological ally, we don't mean a mother party. They will not influence our policies. We will make independent decisions and never compromise on our principles," he said.

## BANGLADESH ELECTION COMMISSION Electoral Training Institute ETI Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.

### Invitation for Tenders

1 Ministry/Division	Bangladesh Election Commission
2 Agency	Election Commission Secretariat
3 Procuring Entity Name	Director General, Electoral Training Institute
4 Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
5 Invitation for	Procurement of Services through Outsourcing (08 manpower of category 1, 4 and 5)
6 Invitation Ref. No. & Date	17.01.0000.109.11.001.25- 485 Dated: 26 October 2025

#### KEY INFORMATION

7 Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
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#### FUNDING INFORMATION

8 Budget and Source of Funds	GoB (Revenue)
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#### PARTICULAR INFORMATION

9 Tender Package No.	ETINCS - 02/2025
10 Tender Package Name	Procurement of Services through Outsourcing (08 manpower of category 1, 4 and 5)

Date	Time
11 Tender Publication Date	27 October 2025
12 Pre-Tender Meeting Date and Time	05 November 2025 12:30 P.M.
13 Tender Last Selling Date and Time	09 November 2025 05:00 P.M.
14 Tender Closing Date and Time	10 November 2025 02:00 P.M.
15 Tender Opening Date and Time	10 November 2025 02:30 P.M.
16 Name & Address of the office(s)	Address
17 Selling Tender Document (Principal)	Assistant Director (Admin) Room No-407, (Floor-4th), ETI Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.

#### NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE, PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

18 Receiving Tender Document	Director (Admin) ,Electoral Training Institute, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207 (Room No-501)
19 Opening Tender Document	
20 Pre-Tender Meeting	

#### INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

21 Eligibility of Tenderer	1. Tender shall have the legal capacity to enter into the contract under the applicable law.
	2. Tenderers shall have to fulfil its obligation/obligations to pay taxes under the provisions of laws and regulations of Bangladesh.
	3. Detail information has been provided in the tender document.

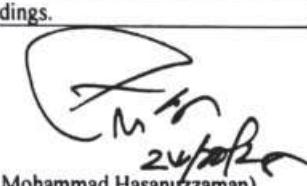
22 Brief Description of Services	Selection of firm for manpower services through Outsourcing (08 manpower of category 1, 4 and 5). Details specified in the Tender Document
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23 Price of Tender Document (Tk.)	BDT 1500.00 (One thousand five hundred taka only) Non-refundable.
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24 Package No.	Identification of Package	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk)	Completion Time in Months
25 ETINCS-02/2025	Procurement of Services through Outsourcing (08 manpower of category 1, 4 and 5)	Dhaka	60,000.00 (Sixty thousand taka only)	12 Months

#### PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

26 Name of Official Inviting Tender	Mohammad Hasanuzzaman
27 Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Director General, Electoral Training Institute
28 Address of Official Inviting Tender	ETI Bhaban, plot E, 14/Z-A, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.
29 Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Telephone: 02-55006504
30 The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all the Tenders or Cancel the Tender proceedings.	

  
( Mohammad Hasanuzzaman )  
Director General  
Electoral Training Institute,  
Dhaka

## Plaintiff assaulted

FROM PAGE 4  
Magistrate's Court in Narayanganj.

The victim's family said that Shakhat was representing the accused, Ismail, in the case.

As it was the date for a court appearance yesterday, the plaintiff and his family went to the court premises around noon.

According to the complaint, they had an altercation with some junior lawyers over the pending case. Upon seeing them, Shakhat allegedly instructed the junior lawyers and assistants to attack the family.

The complaint named Shakhat, junior lawyers Advocate Khurshed Alam, Advocate Al-Amin, and Shakhat's legal assistant (muhuri) Hiron Badshah as the accused.

A video of the incident has since gone viral on social media.

Irfan's son Jidan said, "As soon as my father was spotted, Shakhat started threatening him. Then he ordered his juniors to beat my father. When I tried to stop them, they attacked me too. I am an international-level professional boxing player, and I suffered a serious head

## Work with integrity

FROM PAGE 3

the release issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). Earlier in the day, the army chief was formally inducted as the 9th Colonel Commandant of the Corps of Engineers at a ceremony held at the same venue.

Upon his arrival at ECSME, Waker-uz-Zaman was received by the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Army Training and Doctrine Command, the Engineer-in-Chief of the Bangladesh Army, and the

During the conference, the army chief exchanged views with commanders and officers of the Corps of Engineers on technological advancement, research, professional skill development, and future planning.

In his address, Waker paid tribute to members of the Corps of Engineers who made supreme sacrifices during the Liberation War, as well as all valiant freedom fighters.

Bhola. Hefazat e Islam Bangladesh also staged a protest rally and issued a statement demanding a ban on ISKCON.

Talking to The Daily Star, Shafiqul said that in recent times, various types of protests and discussions have been taking place regarding religious groups or issues, and the government is active in these matters.

"Ensuring religious, social, and peaceful coexistence is one of the government's priorities," he said. The government is calling upon everyone not to be misled by any propaganda, he added.

Following Juma prayers, processions and rallies were held in Dhaka and other cities, including Chattogram, Rajshahi, Gazipur, Rangpur, Kishoreganj, Faridpur, Sylhet, Nilphamari, and

Denying the allegation, Shakhat told this correspondent over mobile phone, "I am a prospective nominee for the upcoming parliamentary election. Some people are trying to create controversy to make me look bad."

Shakhat also claimed that he was not present at the court premises at the time of the incident.

"I may know the people seen in the video, but I was not there. I went to court later," he said.

## Rezaur Rahman

FROM PAGE 3

His body has

## ABBASUDDIN AND NAZRUL'S MUSICAL BOND

## The dawn of Islamic songs in Bengal

**Nazrul Islam kept on writing, and Muslims loved every new song from the Abbasuddin—Nazrul duo. Nam Mohammad Bol, Tribhuboner Priyo Mohammad, Allah Amar Prabhu, and songs of Muharram (Marsia) filled the homes of Muslim buyers. Those who had never bought records earlier now thronged the record shops for more.**

NASHID KAMAL

Abbasuddin Ahmed had taken part in singing Urdu qawwalis that described the richness of Islamic history and the love of Muslims for the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Allah (SWT). He wished that one day he would be able to sing the praises of Allah (SWT) and His last Prophet in Bengali, his mother tongue. The names of the qawwals were Kallu Qawwal and Pearu Qawwal, whose songs impressed him deeply. There were no such songs in Bengal.

He thought of his favourite Kazida, meaning Kazi Nazrul Islam, the great poet.

Abbasuddin hailed from Cooch Behar, which was a princely state in India. He was raised there and had come to Kolkata in pursuit of becoming a singer. Prior to that, he had met poet Kazi Nazrul Islam on two occasions. The first was when the poet was invited to Cooch Behar College as the chief guest. That was his first introduction to Kazi Nazrul Islam, around 1917. The poet heard his songs and showed much appreciation for his inherent talent.

A few months later, Abbasuddin went to visit Darjeeling. He used to visit Darjeeling every year during the change of seasons. There he heard that poet Kazi Nazrul Islam had arrived at an auditorium. He quietly entered and listened as the poet recited his famous poem *The Rebel*. Although Abbasuddin tried to remain incognito, he was spotted by someone who conveyed the message to Kazi Nazrul Islam. After completing his recitation, Nazrul Islam announced

the suggestion. He said, "I can't release such songs; there will be no customers for Islamic songs. In any case, Muslims are hardly interested in buying records." Abbasuddin was crestfallen but did not give up.

A week later, Abbasuddin Ahmed was entering the studio when he found Bhagabati Babu in a very good mood. He was chatting with a senior female artist, Ashcharjyamoyee, and his good humour was evident. Abbasuddin proposed again: "Can we just record a couple of Islamic songs? If they don't sell in the market, you need not record any more." This time, Bhagabati Babu realised Abbasuddin's resolve and gave in. He said, "OK, go ahead," and resumed his conversation with the female artist.

Abbasuddin rushed inside the studios, shouting with joy, "Kazida! Kazida! They've given permission to record Islamic songs!" Kazi Nazrul Islam was busy tutoring Indubala Devi, another famous female artist. He looked at Abbasuddin, then at Indubala. "Indu, I have some important work with Abbas. Today I shall beg leave from you and work

Bibhuti Babu, who worked for Senola Records (a recording company). He asked Abbasuddin to come to his shop. When Abbasuddin went there, Mr Bibhuti called a photographer and had a photo taken of Abbasuddin Ahmed. When he asked why, he did not get an answer.

Abbasuddin went to his native town in Cooch Behar and returned to Kolkata more than fifteen days after Eid. He was riding in the tram when he heard a young man singing *O mon Ramzanei or rozar sheshe* to himself. After his work, he went to the Gorer Math; there too, some young men were singing this song in a group.

Abbasuddin remembered that the song was to be released during Eid. He went to meet Bibhuti Babu, who had printed hundreds of posters with that photograph. He gave seventy or so photographs to Abbasuddin and asked him to distribute them amongst his friends.

Abbasuddin rushed to meet Kazi Nazrul Islam. Nazrul Islam was playing chess with his friends. He was deeply absorbed in his game but abandoned it when he heard the voice

produce records with the Twin Company, whose products were more affordable. Abbasuddin sacrificed his own monetary interests and recorded his songs for the Twin Company. He hoped that less affluent Muslims could at least afford these records and have the opportunity to listen to them.

He approached Kazi Nazrul Islam again. Abbasuddin said to Nazrul, "Kazida, the Muslims of this land are now more drawn to music. You have been giving speeches to the young generation. You must write inspirational songs to further their self-determination and self-worth."

Nazrul Islam wrote several songs that spoke of emancipation, brotherhood, and unity of purpose — *Dike Dike Punoh Joliya Uthiche, Shahidi Eidgahe Dekh Aj Jamayet Bhari, Dhormer Pothe Shoheed Jahara*, to name a few. These songs were also appreciated by the Islamic community. They were played repeatedly in various congregational venues. When Muslims gathered, they sang these songs in chorus, their spirits lifted by the words.

Abbasuddin was deeply moved by this song. It remains a historic moment in which Nazrul Islam specially wrote a song for Abbasuddin. His prayers and earnestness in offering them touched the very core of Nazrul Islam's heart. He respected Abbasuddin and went on to write many more Islamic songs.

Though Muslims of undivided Bengal used to view music and dance as Hindu traditions and distanced themselves from them, they warmly embraced Abbasuddin's Islamic songs written by Kazi Nazrul Islam. From 1932 onwards, they became a celebrated duo. Every month, Muslims eagerly awaited the release of new Islamic songs written by Kazi Nazrul Islam. Abbasuddin sang seventy percent of the songs, while Nazrul Islam also encouraged other singers to lend their voices. Two Muslim singers, K. Mullick and Abdul Latif, lent their voices. As the demand for more songs grew, Nazrul Islam requested his non-Muslim singers to join in.

The Muslims of that time grabbed these records like hot cakes. In every Muslim home, the songs were played over and over again. The messages of Islam, which usually reached Muslims in the Arabic language, became closer and more tangible through their own Bangla tongue. The songs were passed down to the next generation, and every son and daughter knew Nazrul Islam's melodies by heart (Abbasuddin Ahmed, *My Life in Melodies*, 2014).

In 1942, Kazi Nazrul became unwell. He was later diagnosed with a version of Alzheimer's disease called Pug's disease (*Khan, I, Kobi Nôjuler Oshusthota*, 2005). He did not write any more after 1942. He and his family stayed back in West Bengal, India.

In 1947, India was partitioned. Pakistan was to be the homeland for Muslims. Abbasuddin Ahmed migrated to East Pakistan in 1947. He carried with him all his records made for HMV Studios and others. He taught his songs to his students—Sohrab Hossain, Bedaruddin Ahmed, Abdul Latif, and others. They, in turn, taught these Islamic songs to the next generation of music enthusiasts.

When television started in 1964, the Islamic songs of Kazi Nazrul Islam found a special place. The broadcasts would begin with Islamic songs, and songs of Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha were telecast repeatedly.

The Eid-ul-Fitr song became almost a national anthem, recorded by several artists and broadcast every year on the eve of Eid. Through this song, Kazi Nazrul Islam held a lasting place in the hearts of Bengali Muslims. For every religious or solemn occasion, the Islamic *hamds* and *naats* of Kazi Nazrul Islam found their place in television broadcast schedules.

The daughter and son of Abbasuddin Ahmed, Ferdausi Rahman and Mustafa Zaman Abbasi, became renowned musicians and re-recorded all the Islamic songs of Abbasuddin Ahmed. This has created a continuity, reaching the new generation with the songs of Nazrul and unifying various political groups.

None of the tunes of his Islamic songs were changed or distorted. Abbasuddin Ahmed brought with him his Islamic songs and helped preserve them forever.

In 1971, Bangladesh was born. The Islamic songs of Kazi Nazrul Islam, sung by Abbasuddin Ahmed, once again became the foundation for Muslims in independent Bangladesh.

Over time, private television channels emerged alongside the national broadcaster. Islamic programmes on these channels continued to feature the timeless songs of Kazi Nazrul Islam. Not only during Eid, but *sehri* and *iftar* programmes also began with Nazrul's songs. Likewise, in other broadcasts marking Islamic occasions such as *Shab-e-Barat* or *Shab-e-Qadr*, these songs were performed repeatedly. Over the years, they became the foundation of Islamic programming in Bangladesh—a tradition that continues vibrantly today.

Everyone, young and old, knows these songs by heart. The simple messages of Islam, beautifully expressed by Nazrul, have been memorised by millions of Muslims in their native tongue. Through these enduring melodies—especially his *hamds* and *naats*—Kazi Nazrul Islam continues to live in the hearts of Bangladeshis.

**Nashid Kamal** is an academic, Nazrul exponent, and translator.



Abbasuddin Ahmed (October 27, 1901 – December 30, 1959)

with him." Indubala left.

Nazrul Islam called for Dasarath, the man Friday of the HMV studios. He was sent to the shops to get some betel leaf and several cups of tea. The genius was at work. In half an hour's time, he wrote the song *O mon Ramzanei or rozar sheshe elo khushir Eid*. He asked Abbasuddin Ahmed to return at the same time the next day. The following day, he wrote another song in praise of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): *Islam er soudagar loye*. Two songs were needed for one 33 rpm record. He set the tunes and taught them to Abbasuddin. The songs were recorded four days later.

There was a brightness in Kazi Nazrul Islam's face never seen before. He was overjoyed with this recording. He could hardly believe that the administrator at the HMV studios had agreed to the recording of Islamic songs. During those four days, Nazrul Islam had been impatient. He wrote

of Abbasuddin. He hugged him close and exclaimed, "Your songs have been a great success." Abbasuddin felt reassured that the experiment had succeeded. The manager would now be convinced to record Islamic songs.

Nazrul Islam kept on writing, and Muslims loved every new song from the Abbasuddin–Nazrul duo. *Nam Mohammad Bol, Tribhuboner Priyo Mohammad, Allah Amar Prabhu*, and songs of Muharram (Marsia) filled the homes of Muslim buyers. Those who had never bought records earlier now thronged the record shops for more. The songs became immensely popular and were heard in every corner of undivided Bengal. Abbasuddin could only record two songs per month, so he requested other artists to lend their voices to Abbasuddin. The songs were recorded four days later.

Artists Takrim Ahmed and Abdul Latif recorded Islamic songs. Some Hindu artists changed their names



Three generations in one frame, carrying forward the rich musical legacy of Abbasuddin Ahmed — his daughter Ferdausi Rahman, his granddaughter Nashid Kamal, and his great-granddaughter Armeen Musa.

on the microphone, requesting Abbasuddin Ahmed to sing a song. Abbasuddin sang a Nepalese song, *Aju re jau jau, bholi re jau jau*.

A few years later, Abbasuddin gave up his studies and entered the world of music. He moved from Cooch Behar to Kolkata. He recorded two songs written by his friend Sain Ray, which the HMV studios appreciated greatly. He met his *Kazida* again and started recording some of his most recent songs, such as *Anek chilo bolar*. This was followed by several others—*Gange jowar elo phire*, *Besuro beenay*, and more. It was at this point that Abbasuddin met the qawwals, who asked him to sing some Urdu songs in chorus. Those were also recorded by Abbasuddin.

Kazi Nazrul Islam was then busy writing his *Shyama Sangeet* and *Bhajans*, all of which were in great demand. These songs carried both literary value and were celebrated for their unique tunes derived from Indian classical music.

Abbasuddin Ahmed felt the need for Islamic songs in Bengal. He proposed the idea to Kazi Nazrul Islam. Nazrul knew that the administrative officer of HMV studios might not agree to such a proposition. He sent Abbasuddin Ahmed to break the ice. The officer, named Bhagabati Babu, became extremely annoyed at

the songs, and Abbasuddin did not have a chance to make a fair copy. He held the paper at eye level while Abbasuddin read from it and recorded the songs. They were accompanied by harmonium and tabla. The record was to be released two months later, during the Islamic festival of Eid (1932).

Before Eid, Abbasuddin was spending some time in the market, where he met another administrator,

Bibhuti Babu, who worked for Senola Records (a recording company). He asked Abbasuddin to come to his shop. When Abbasuddin went there, Mr Bibhuti called a photographer and had a photo taken of Abbasuddin Ahmed. When he asked why, he did not get an answer.

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He approached Kazi Nazrul Islam again. Abbasuddin said to Nazrul, "Kazida, the Muslims of this land are now more drawn to music. You have been giving speeches to the young generation. You must write inspirational songs to further their self-determination and self-worth."

Nazrul Islam wrote several songs that spoke of emancipation, brotherhood, and unity of purpose — *Dike Dike Punoh Joliya Uthiche, Shahidi Eidgahe Dekh Aj Jamayet Bhari, Dhormer Pothe Shoheed Jahara*, to name a few. These songs were also appreciated by the Islamic community. They were played repeatedly in various congregational venues. When Muslims gathered, they sang these songs in chorus, their spirits lifted by the words.

Abbasuddin was deeply moved by this song. It remains a historic moment in which Nazrul Islam specially wrote a song for Abbasuddin. His prayers and earnestness in offering them touched the very core of Nazrul Islam's heart. He respected Abbasuddin and went on to write many more Islamic songs.

Though Muslims of undivided Bengal used to view music and dance as Hindu traditions and distanced themselves from them, they warmly embraced Abbasuddin's Islamic songs written by Kazi Nazrul Islam. From 1932 onwards, they became a celebrated duo. Every month, Muslims eagerly awaited the release of new Islamic songs written by Kazi Nazrul Islam. Abbasuddin sang seventy percent of the songs, while Nazrul Islam also encouraged other singers to lend their voices. Two Muslim singers, K. Mullick and Abdul Latif, lent their voices. As the demand for more songs grew, Nazrul Islam requested his non-Muslim singers to join in.

The Muslims of that time grabbed these records like hot cakes. In every Muslim home, the songs were played over and over again. The messages of Islam, which usually reached Muslims in the Arabic language, became closer and more tangible through their own Bangla tongue. The songs were passed down to the next generation, and every son and daughter knew Nazrul Islam's melodies by heart (Abbasuddin Ahmed, *My Life in Melodies*, 2014).

In 1942, Kazi Nazrul became unwell. He was later diagnosed with a version of Alzheimer's disease called Pug's disease (*Khan, I, Kobi Nôjuler Oshusthota*, 2005). He did not write any more after 1942. He and his family stayed back in West Bengal, India.

In 1947, India was partitioned. Pakistan was to be the homeland for Muslims. Abbasuddin Ahmed migrated to East Pakistan in 1947. He carried with him all his records made for HMV Studios and others. He taught his songs to his students—Sohrab Hossain, Bedaruddin Ahmed, Abdul Latif, and others. They, in turn, taught these Islamic songs to the next generation of music enthusiasts.

When television started in 1964, the Islamic songs of Kazi Nazrul Islam found a special place. The broadcasts would begin with Islamic songs, and songs of Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha were telecast repeatedly.

The Eid-ul-Fitr song became almost a national anthem, recorded by several artists and broadcast every year on the eve of Eid. Through this song, Kazi Nazrul Islam held a lasting place in the hearts of Bengali Muslims. For every religious or solemn occasion, the Islamic *hamds* and *naats* of Kazi Nazrul Islam found their place in television broadcast schedules.

The daughter and son of Abbasuddin Ahmed, Ferdausi Rahman and Mustafa Zaman Abbasi, became renowned musicians and re-recorded all the Islamic songs of Abbasuddin Ahmed. This has created a continuity, reaching the new generation with the songs of Nazrul and unifying various political groups.

None of the tunes of his Islamic songs were changed or distorted. Abbasuddin Ahmed brought with him his Islamic songs and helped preserve them forever.

In 1971, Bangladesh was born. The Islamic songs of Kazi Nazrul Islam, sung by Abbasuddin Ahmed, once again became the foundation for Muslims in independent Bangladesh.

Over time, private television channels emerged alongside the national broadcaster. Islamic programmes on these channels continued to feature the timeless songs of Kazi Nazrul Islam. Not only during Eid, but *sehri* and *iftar* programmes also began with Nazrul's songs. Likewise, in other broadcasts marking Islamic occasions such as *Shab-e-Barat* or *Shab-e-Qadr*, these songs were performed repeatedly. Over the years, they became the foundation of Islamic programming in Bangladesh—a tradition that continues vibrantly today.

Everyone, young and old, knows these songs by heart. The simple messages of Islam, beautifully expressed by Nazrul, have been memorised by millions of Muslims in their native tongue. Through these enduring melodies—especially his *hamds* and *naats*—Kazi Nazrul Islam continues to live in the hearts of Bangladeshis.

**Nashid Kamal** is an academic, Nazrul exponent, and translator.



Kazi Nazrul Islam (May 24, 1899 – August 29, 1976)

## Tigers ready to step out of comfort zone

SPORTS REPORTER

After an ODI series in Mirpur, where Bangladesh fully capitalised on home advantage against the West Indies, the Tigers are set to embark on a new challenge against the same opponents today -- this time in the T20 format in Chattogram, a venue that offers the closest thing to a neutral setting for both sides.

With around four months left before the next ICC T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka, Bangladesh have only six T20Is scheduled -- three each against the West Indies and Ireland -- and skipper Litton Das wants those matches to be as challenging as possible.

"Honestly speaking, I want our players

» Bangladesh have won four successive T20I series since July this year -- their best ever run.

» Bangladesh have also won their last three T20Is against the West Indies, whitewashing them in a three-match series in the Caribbean in 2024.

» However, West Indies remain slightly ahead in overall head-to-head -- winning nine of the 19 T20Is against the Tigers. Bangladesh won the other eight, with two matches yielding no results.



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

to be challenged in the two series," Litton said about the West Indies series and next month's home series against Ireland at the pre-match press conference on Sunday.

"I want the bowlers to be under pressure when bowling; it would help us in the upcoming World Cup," he added.

Bangladesh enter this series having won their last four T20I series -- against Sri Lanka, Pakistan, the Netherlands, and Afghanistan.

A series win over the Windies would extend their streak to five consecutive series victories. However, the management's decision to abandon their usual approach of maximising

home advantage to ensure 'winning momentum' ahead of the World Cup deserves credit.

It marks a significant change in mindset following the ODI series, which Bangladesh won 2-1, but faced heavy criticism for doing so on the slow, spinning Mirpur surface perfectly tailored to their strengths.

Still, the visitors fought well in the ODI leg, levelling the series 1-1 with a Super Over win in the second match before being blown away by 179 runs in the decider.

Both teams have now travelled south to Chattogram for a three-match T20I series -- a city where, surprisingly, the West

Indies have never played a T20I before.

The Caribbean side have played only three T20I series in Bangladesh, the last one in 2018, which they won 2-1. However, they have never featured at the Bir Shreshtha Flight Lieutenant Matir Rahman Stadium, the venue for this series.

The ground is not entirely unfamiliar to them, though, as the West Indies have played three Tests and two ODIs there, while several of their players have also featured in Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) games at the venue.

Chattogram currently offers arguably the best batting surface in the country, edging out the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, which produced low scores during the latter stages of the recently concluded National Cricket League T20.

Even recent statistics support that claim. Since 2018, in all competitive T20 matches -- including both international and domestic fixtures -- the average run rate in Chattogram stands at 8.41 per over, higher than Sylhet's 8.02.

Facing a West Indies side ranked three spots above ninth-placed Bangladesh in T20Is could truly test the hosts if the wicket plays true, as it usually does in Chattogram.

With skipper Litton back in the fold following an injury and Bangladesh's recent form in the format, the hosts begin the series as favourites -- but they will need to be at their best against the former T20 World Champions.

## Tigresses avoid last-place finish in World Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh avoided a last-place finish in the ICC Women's World Cup as their final league fixture against India was washed out in Navi Mumbai yesterday.

The Tigresses, who needed a win to surpass their 2022 World Cup record of a solitary win, yet again ended their campaign with one victory. They lost five before a no-result yesterday. Their only win came in the opener against Pakistan.

With three points, Bangladesh finished seventh -- above bottom-placed Pakistan on net run rate.

Put into bat in a rain-hit contest, Bangladesh reached 119 for nine in 27 overs after multiple interruptions. Sharmin Akter top-scored with 36 off 53 balls while Sobhana Mostary added 26 off 21 balls, but regular breakthroughs kept Bangladesh in check.

After skipper Nigar Sultana Joty's run-out, a 38-run stand between Sharmin and Mostary steadied the innings before Radha Yadav (3-30) triggered a collapse that saw Bangladesh slide from 91-3 to 117-9. Joty made nine off 24 deliveries.

Chasing a revised target of 126 in 27 overs, India were cruising at 57 without loss in 8.4 overs when rain returned to eventually end play.

## Afif hattrick, Naeem's 11k runs headline NCL Day 2



**Khulna Division's Afif Hossain stole the spotlight on day two of the National Cricket League's (NCL) first-round matches, claiming six wickets, including a hattrick, to bundle out Barishal Division for 126. Elsewhere, Abu Haider Rony's unbeaten ton powered Mymensingh to 401 against Sylhet. Rangpur's Naeem Islam crossed 11,000 first-class runs with his 34th century, while Chattogram's Hasan Murad bagged a six-wicket-haul.**

» Afif finished with figures of 6-31 -- his second five-wicket haul in first-class cricket -- and became the 19th bowler to take a hattrick in Bangladesh's first-class circuit. His best remains 7-66 against Rajshahi in 2018. After enforcing the follow-on, Khulna had Barishal at 119-4 at stumps, still 68 behind in Khulna.

» At the Sylhet Academy Ground, Naeem reached 11,000 runs when he was on 47 and went on to score 111 not out as Rangpur posted 308-8, leading Dhaka by 87 runs.

» Murad's 6-39 helped Chattogram bundle out Rajshahi for 196 before reaching 133-4 at the close of play, extending their lead to 338 runs.

SPORTS REPORTER

As Bangladesh gear up for their second friendly against Thailand, coach Peter Butler acknowledged the hosts' quality but praised his players for their positive attitude and focus in training.

The match kicks off today at 5:00pm (Bangladesh Time) at Bangkok's 72nd Anniversary Stadium.

After criticising his players'

attitude in their 3-0 loss to Thailand on Friday, Butler said he was pleased with their improved mindset during recent training sessions at Rom Sai Football Ground, viewing the encounter as a vital step in their preparation for next year's AFC Women's Asian Cup in Australia.

"I've been pleased with the girls," he said. "I've spoken to a few individually, and I'm happy with their approach and focus -- especially a couple who can be real

match winners but didn't show their true potential the other night."

The coach admitted to tweaking the system slightly but was content with how the team played overall. "We've changed the system a little bit. I thought they actually played the better football, though some elementary mistakes -- like conceding early -- cost us."

When asked about aiming for victory, Butler offered a dose of realism. "Can you tell me the

last time Bangladesh won in Thailand? Maybe sometimes you have to be careful what you wish for. We're building momentum, but we have to be honest -- we're not yet at Thailand's level. They're a very good side, with depth even on the bench."

He added, "We must aspire to their professionalism before dreaming of big wins. I want to win, but I live in the real world, not La La Land."



## BFF'S FIRST YEAR UNDER TABITH

### Achievements vs Pending Issues

The Tabith Awal-led executive committee of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) completed its first year on Sunday since being elected on October 26, 2024. The committee, chaired by President Tabith, convened its 5th meeting at the BFF House yesterday to review its achievements and ongoing agenda, including reforms to the BFF constitution, the election policy, income-and-expenditure comparisons with Singapore, Asian Cup qualifier affairs, and revisions to the U-15 tournament bylaws. "We have spent one year successfully," said BFF Media Committee Chairman Amirul Islam Babu.

#### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN YEAR ONE

- » Lifted FIFA's restricted financial plan for BFF
- » Secured sponsors for the national team and kits
- » Won the SAFF Women's Championship
- » Received AFC President's Recognition Bronze Award for grassroots development
- » Tabith Awal and Mahfuzza Akter Kiron secured positions in FIFA committees
- » Introduced expatriate footballers to senior and U-23 teams
- » Organized coaching and FIFA talent development courses
- » Reinstalled two FIFA-funded artificial turf
- » Boosted engagement on BFF social media
- » Conducted U-14, U-15, beach, and indigenous football tournaments

#### OTHER NOTABLE INITIATIVES

- » Entered international futsal and eFootball competitions
- » Provided overseas training for senior, U-23, U-15, and U-17 teams
- » Renewed contracts for women footballers
- » Secured maiden berths for women's senior and U-20 teams in Asian Cup

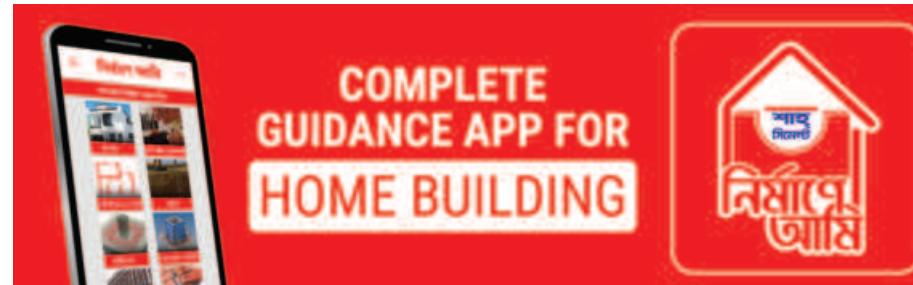
#### PENDING ISSUES FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

- » Dhaka lower-division and district football leagues not yet rolled out
- » Women's football league still pending
- » Promised Tk 1.5 crore for senior women's team not disbursed
- » Alleged betting, match-fixing, and manipulation cases unresolved
- » Senior national team FIFA ranking stagnant (183 to 185, Oct 2024)
- » Partial formation of BFF standing and ad-hoc committees
- » BFF constitution still unreformed
- » Playground and infrastructure crisis remains unsolved





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## Advisory council meetings unlikely after Nov: Mahfuj Info ministry to announce minimum wage for journo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information Adviser Mahfuj Alam hinted yesterday that the advisory council meetings are unlikely to continue past November.

He said the ministry has taken initiative to implement around 13 recommendations out of a total of 23 "urgent and feasible" recommendations from the Media Reform Commission.

"These measures need to be approved by the cabinet or enacted through issuing ordinances or regulations. After November, we will no longer be able to do this, as the cabinet will close and no further cabinet meetings may take place," the adviser said while speaking at a Dhaka Reporters' Unity programme.

Mahfuj said the information ministry

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Hilsa trading resumes at the wholesale fish market in Barishal city's Port Road area as the 22-day ban on fishing ended yesterday. The ban was imposed to boost hilsa production.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

## BNP seeks symbol sharing within alliances Criticises RPO amendment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has opposed the recent amendment to the Representation of the People Order (RPO) that requires political alliances to contest the next national election using each party's own symbol, instead of a single alliance symbol.

Ismail Zabihullah, BNP chairperson's advisory council member, shared the party's stance with reporters yesterday following a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin and EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed at the EC headquarters in the capital.

Former acting EC secretary Mohammad Zakaria was with the two-member BNP delegation.

On October 24, the advisory council approved major changes to the RPO, 1972.

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

Zabihullah said that in previous polls, political alliances in Bangladesh have always been free to either use their own symbols or contest under the symbol of an alliance partner, a process that, he said, caused no complications and was both democratic and widely accepted.

"This has always been a political and democratic right. No problems ever arose under this system."

He noted that there had never been any demand to amend this provision, and that during discussions with the Election Reform Commission, the BNP clearly opposed any change to article 20 of the RPO, a position that was conveyed to both the commission and the government.

Zabihullah said the BNP had been assured during high-level talks with the government that no such amendment would be made.

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## GAZIPUR SAFARI PARK At least 37 animals dead or missing in five years Rights activists slam mismanagement

MONJURUL HAQUE and NAZIBA BASHER

The number of animals at Gazipur Safari Park has dropped sharply in recent years amid allegations of mismanagement, negligence, and theft.

Park officials say at least 37 animals have died or gone missing over the past five years. To prevent further losses, 32 CCTV cameras have been installed and staff strength raised from 69 to 93.

The issue drew attention after the park's last giraffe, an ageing female from Africa, died on October 23 while undergoing treatment.

An autopsy found tuberculosis as the cause of death, said Safari Park Wildlife Inspector Raju Ahmed.

Despite repeated attempts, the park's veterinary surgeon, Hatem Sajjad Mohammad Zulkarnain, could not be reached for comments.

Officer-in-Charge Tarique Rahman said several thefts and escapes have occurred in recent years. Two green-winged macaws were stolen in November 2024, three lemurs in March this year, and a nilgai escaped in January. Another of the same species fled in 2021.

Environment ministry sources, however, said the macaws and one lemur were later recovered and returned.

Tarique said work on strengthening the boundary wall has yet to begin but will be carried out gradually across

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

## CHALLENGES IN POLICING 2 Living conditions appalling at some police barracks

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

In one of Dhaka city's most affluent neighbourhoods, the barrack of Banani Police Station stands in stark contrast to its surroundings.

Amid high-rises and luxury apartments, the police personnel tasked with guarding the posh area live in conditions barely fit for habitation.

The ground floor of the three-storey structure on Banani Road-7 houses the offices of the officer-in-charge, duty officer, two inspectors, the armoury, and the custody cell. There is no separate space for female detainees.

Trunks and bags are piled up on the staircase landings. On the first floor, a hand-written sign reads "Offices of ASI and SI".

But inside, there are no desks or chairs -- only narrow camp beds with thinbare mosquito nets overhead.

"This is our office. We prepare case reports and store evidence here. Unlike other stations, we have no desks. We do paperwork, sitting on beds," said a sub-inspector (SI) seeking anonymity.

"Mosquitoes are not the main problem here, bedbugs are," said a constable.

The second floor, with a tin roof just seven to eight feet high, is crammed with 42 beds.

They have just two toilets on this floor,



and a common bathroom.

In an around 600-square foot cramped space on this floor, about 20 constables sleep shoulder to shoulder on beds packed tightly together, leaving no space in between.

Suitcases, trunks and other belongings like towels and lungis are stacked in the corners.

It feels suffocating inside, as there are no overhead fans.

"Installation of overhead fans is not possible due to the low height of the ceiling. Several of us have to share

one stand fan," a constable told these correspondents during a visit to the station on October 5.

"There are no cleaners. We sweep and wash the floors and clean everything after duty hours. Only then we can rest," said another constable.

Constable Rashidul Haque said he, along with 10 other police members, had to sleep on the floor of the around 200 square foot prayer room on the second floor after he joined the station in October last year.

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 3 SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## Bias in police postings will be probed Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dismissing concerns over bias in police postings, Home Adviser Lt Gen (retired) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said the government is committed to ensuring a level playing field for the upcoming national election.

He made the comment while speaking to the media after the 15th meeting of the Law and Order Advisory Council at the Secretariat.



Sources said the issue of favouritism in police promotions and transfers was discussed at the meeting, where the adviser instructed the inspector general of police to take strict action against officers involved in such practices.

Jahangir told the media, "As for us, the level playing field has always been there and will remain in future. Many times, we receive requests, but we verify them before making decisions. If we don't act on a request, some may accuse us of favouritism or spread false news, but we must prevent these issues."

"Let me be clear: if there is any evidence of a recruitment or posting trade, we will investigate."

The adviser also talked about several key concerns discussed at the meeting. One of

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6



A Palestinian woman carries wood for a fire in Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip on Saturday. The devastating conflict between Israel and Hamas reduced swathes of Gaza to rubble, displaced the vast majority of its population and crippled public services.

PHOTO: AFP

## Army recovers firearms, explosives from train

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Army recovered a large cache of foreign firearms and explosives from the Banalata Express, a train that runs on the Dhaka-Rajshahi route, during a special operation at the Airport Railway Station in Dhaka yesterday.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), the seized items include eight foreign-made pistols, 14 magazines, 26 rounds of ammunition, 2.39kg of gunpowder, and 2.2kg of plastic explosives.

The operation was conducted by the 46th Independent Infantry Brigade between 11:15am and 12:00pm, based on intelligence reports suggesting that arms and explosives were being smuggled aboard the Rajshahi-bound intercity train, officials said.

Army officials, working in close coordination with the Dhaka Railway Police,

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