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## Parties far apart on crucial issues

Major political parties have taken firm and opposing stances after the National Consensus Commission submitted its recommendations on implementing the July National Charter 2025 yesterday. The parties remain deeply divided over when the referendum should be held, whether a constitutional order is required, and how the upper house of parliament should be formed. BNP wants the referendum to be held on the day of the national election while Jamaat-e-Islami and the National Citizen Party (NCP) insist it should take place before the polls. The divide widens further over the constitutional order: BNP has outright rejected the proposal, whereas Jamaat and NCP support it as essential legal backing for the charter. On the formation of the upper house, BNP proposes it be based on the number of seats a party wins in the lower house while Jamaat and NCP want it on the basis of percentage of votes cast for each party in the lower house.

Commission creating further disunity among parties

Says BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed has alleged that instead of forging unity, the National Consensus Commission is creating further division.

He made the remark while speaking to reporters after meeting the law adviser at the Secretariat yesterday afternoon, just after the Consensus Commission submitted recommendations for the charter's implementation to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

Criticising the commission for inserting new proposals beyond what was in the July charter, he said, "I think everything that has been proposed...



Referendum on election day a plot to please one party

Says Jamaat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami has reiterated the demand for a referendum before the national election and a presidential order to implement the July charter.

"Those who want to hold the referendum on the same day [as the election] actually intend to render the July charter ineffective," said Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar at a rally held at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in Dhaka yesterday.

Jamaat's Dhaka South unit organised the rally and procession demanding justice and punishment for those involved in the "logi-boitha (poles and sticks) violence of October 28, 2006".



Will sign charter if implementation order issued at Shaheed Minar

Says NCP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Citizen Party will sign the July charter if Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus issues the implementation order at the Central Shaheed Minar, the party's Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary said yesterday.

"If Chief Adviser Yunus and other advisers come to Shaheed Minar, and if everything goes according to our consent, then we'll also go to Shaheed Minar and sign it," Patwary said at a roundtable titled "Implementation Roadmap of the July charter" at the Jatiya Press Club.

He said the chief adviser should not



which the party said resulted in killings.

"We are hearing that some individuals within the government are plotting to stage a farce by holding the national election and the referendum on the same day just to please a particular party," Parwar said.

The July Charter, achieved through a sea of blood and a historic transformation of the state structure, is being "targeted".

Calling on the government to "abandon this short-sighted plan", Parwar demanded that the referendum be held in November in line with the

list of proposals do not include the notes of dissent provided by political parties."

Salahuddin also alleged that a new proposal -- the formation of a

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Mohebullah's abduction allegation false

Say police

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Gazipur

Mufti Mohammad Mohebullah Miyaji, who claimed to have been abducted, had actually travelled to Panchagarh on his own and was not kidnapped, said Gazipur Metropolitan Police yesterday.

At a press briefing, Taherul Huq Chauhan, additional police commissioner of GMP, shared details of the probe into the reported abduction of the khatib of the T&T Bazar Mosque in Tongi.

According to the case filed on October 24, Mohebullah claimed that around 7:00am on October 22, four to five unidentified individuals stopped an ambulance in front of a filling station and forced him inside. He said they blindfolded him, tortured him inside the vehicle, cut his beard, and later left him stripped by the roadside.

Two mobile phone SIM cards and a smartphone

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JOURNO PROTECTION ORDINANCE  
Independent media commission dropped from ministry draft

ZYMA ISLAM

A draft ordinance prepared by the information ministry has omitted any reference to an independent media commission as proposed by the body tasked with media reforms.

The Media Reform Commission had drafted two laws -- the Bangladesh Media Commission Ordinance, 2025 and the Journalism Rights Protection Ordinance, 2025 -- outlining the creation, roles, and responsibilities of the independent media commission.

In its final report submitted to the chief adviser, the reform commission said, "All forms of media should be brought under a unified, independent supervisory body. The existing Press Council for print and news agencies and the proposed Broadcast Commission for electronic and online media can be merged into a new Bangladesh Media Commission."

"This institution should be free from government control and ensure accountability in line with global best practices through self-regulation. It should be financially autonomous, funded by a small portion of media revenues, similar to the model used in India."

It added that only unconditional government grants may be accepted.

According to the proposal, the independent media commission will be tasked with barring convicted criminals and loan defaulters from owning or managing media outlets. It will also oversee the formulation and enforcement of ethical guidelines for journalists, determine minimum educational criteria for entry into the profession, maintain a national database of active

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A freight train derailed at the Sagarika level crossing in Chattogram city after a truck crashed into it around 4:00am yesterday, causing the locomotive and two wagons to veer off the tracks. The collision claimed the life of a night guard and disrupted freight train operations at least until 10:00pm.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



In Sylhet city's Masuk Bazar, the silt-choked Bashia river lies dry, halting irrigation and devastating thousands of farmers. Crop delays and rising costs are hitting both markets and livelihoods. Farmers urge urgent dredging or irrigation support, warning that if the river dies, so does the farming in the area. This photo of the mouth of the river was taken on Monday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## Govt has to decide on referendum time

FROM PAGE 1  
a public mandate solely through the lens of its own partisan position."

He hoped that political parties would see the matter positively.

Prof Riaz said their recommendations suggest that the government immediately implement all issues that are not related to constitutional matters through ordinances, executive, and office orders.

### TWO ALTERNATIVES

About the two alternatives for implementing the reforms requiring constitutional changes, Prof Riaz said both share a common thread -- the government will issue an implementation order; a new parliament will be formed through the general election; and the Constitution Reform Council will be simultaneously established with the authority to exercise "constituent power" on constitutional matters.

The first alternative suggests that the referendum question will ask voters, "Do you approve the July National Charter (Constitutional Reform) Implementation Order, 2025, and the proposals for constitutional reforms included in Schedule 1 of this order?"

The second would see the government prepare a Constitutional Reform Draft Bill based on the charter's proposals.

In that case, the referendum question would be, "Do you approve the July National Charter (Constitutional Reform) Implementation Order, 2025, and the draft bill on Constitutional Reform included in Schedule 1 of this order?"

If the Constitution Reform Council/JS fails to complete its work within 270 days of its first sitting, the bill will automatically take effect and be incorporated into the constitution, as its contents would have been endorsed by the referendum.

### UPPER HOUSE

Both proposals call for establishing a 100-member upper house within 45 days of the council's 270-day term ending. Members would be elected

under a proportional representation (PR) system based on total votes obtained by each party in the lower house election.

The lower house would continue under the first past the post system.

The term of the upper house would coincide with that of the national parliament.

### REFORM COUNCIL

The Constitution Reform Council would determine its own procedures for convening, proposing, and adopting reforms.

A minimum of 60 members would be required for a quorum, and all decisions would be taken by majority vote. In case of a tie, the Speaker, who will chair the council, will cast the deciding vote.

Asked if the Constitution Reform Council will have the authority to discard any proposal of the July charter after discussion, Prof Riaz said the council's duty will be to carry out all necessary amendments and additions to translate the July charter's commitments into the constitution.

"If matters are approved through referendum, the council must uphold both the spirit and the letter of those commitments.

"Therefore, if certain matters are debated and decided upon, and receive public approval through a referendum, it becomes the duty of the council to remain steadfast in upholding both the spirit and the letter of those commitments. That is our expectation," he said.

**TOO COMPLEX?** Asked whether the referendum question might be too complex, Riaz responded that globally, referendums often address broad issues through a single question.

"In Turkey's 2016 referendum, one question covered 21 constitutional amendments," he noted. "So, if you're concerned that people won't grasp the details, I will ask you to have trust in the people of Bangladesh. They fought for liberation, led uprisings, and resisted fascism."

He added that it was the

government's responsibility to explain the issues clearly, and that all sides must accept the public's verdict, even if the reforms are rejected.

Asked if the implementation order itself would be a constitutional order, Riaz avoided a direct answer and said the current situation is a "state of exception" requiring flexibility beyond traditional frameworks.

"The order will be issued by the government... This cannot be viewed as overreaching, nor can it be seen in a narrow way

"But we must also recognise the uniqueness of each political context. The situation we are in now is a kind of state of exception. With that in mind, our approach must be thoughtful. Everything cannot be forced in old frameworks. Some elements may need to be considered outside the box," he said.

After the fall of the Hasina-led regime in the July 2024 uprising, the Yunus-led interim government formed several commissions to propose reforms. Among them, six commissions were on the constitution, judiciary, electoral system, Anti-Corruption Commission, public administration, and police reforms.

The National Consensus Commission, formed in mid-February 2025, was tasked with building political consensus around the proposals of these commissions. The consensus commission compiled 166 recommendations from five commissions, excluding the one on police.

After two rounds of talks, the consensus commission drafted the July charter with 84 proposals, including 48 constitutional reforms.

The BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami are among the parties that have signed the charter, while the National Citizen Party, formed by student leaders of the uprising, and four leftist parties have yet to do so.

Prof Riaz said he hoped that the NCP would sign before the commission's tenure ends on Friday.

He added that it was the

## Mohebullah's abduction allegation false

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were reportedly taken from him. Later, after locals dialed 999, the police rescued him and admitted him to the hospital.

However, investigators collected CCTV footage along the reported route and analysed bus travel records. The footage shows Mohebullah leaving his home alone, travelling to Bhogra Bypass by CNG-run auto-rickshaw, and later boarding a Panchagarh-bound bus at 2:00pm.

Quoting Mohebullah, police said after arriving in Panchagarh between 12:00am and 1:30am, he walked past the district administration office and police lines. He got his clothes wet when he sat by the roadside to urinate, removed his clothes and fell asleep by the road.

Although the case statement claimed that four to five people abducted him in an ambulance, there was no CCTV evidence supporting that claim. Around 11:36am on

October 22, he was seen near Plaza Air in Sobhanbagh, Dhaka.

When questioned, Mohebullah said he left home around 7:00am, took a CNG-run auto-rickshaw to Mirer Bazar, followed by another to Bhogra Bypass. From there, he went to Gabtoli's Shyamoli bus counter, bought a ticket, and boarded a Panchagarh-bound bus at 2:00pm.

Police added that his statements are still being verified. The investigation is ongoing to determine the full circumstances of the incident and whether any other individuals were involved.

Md Wahiduzzaman, officer-in-charge of Tongi East Police Station, told The Daily Star that he had no information regarding the viral Facebook video in which Mohebullah allegedly admitted to staging his own abduction.

According to the report, journalists prevented from working independently or facing obstruction from their employers could seek redress through the proposed independent media commission, which would investigate complaints, arbitrate disputes, and, in cases involving criminal offences, seek legal action on behalf of journalists.

However, the draft ordinance prepared by the information ministry, a copy of which The Daily Star has seen, removed all these proposals.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Additional Secretary Dr Mohammad Altaf-Ul-Alam said, "Nothing is final yet." He refused to make further comments.

"High level exchanges are of great significance to the development of Sino-Japan relations," Wang said according to a ministry statement.

The phone call between the two foreign ministers comes as Donald Trump is visiting Japan.

Takaichi yesterday lavished the US president with praise and vows of a "golden age" of ties, and signed a deal aimed at securing critical minerals.

Contacted, a top official of the

AFP, Beijing

Beijing's top diplomat yesterday told his Japanese counterpart he sees "positive signals" from Tokyo's new leadership, after the country swore in a prime minister long viewed as a China hawk.

Japan last week named conservative Sanae Takaichi, who has previously said that Tokyo must

## Referendum on election day a plot

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people's aspirations.

"Before that, the president should issue an order to implement the July Charter, followed by the national election. Only then will a new humane Bangladesh be established through people's representatives elected by their votes," he added.

Meanwhile, after a meeting with the Election Commission yesterday, Parwar said if both the national election and referendum are held on the same day, violence may erupt at polling centres.

Technical issues like the suspension of polling at a few centres could also undermine the referendum, he said.

"The national charter that is being prepared -- the reforms we have

agreed upon in the July National Charter, which aim to change the existing state structure... the nation must be informed about those first. Only then can they vote 'yes' or 'no'.

If the referendum and the election are held on the same day, how will the voters even know what they are voting for?"

Over at the rally, Parwar recalled the events of October 28, 2006.

"That day witnessed brutal, barbaric and unprecedented cruelty that shook the entire nation and the world. People couldn't even watch the horrific killing footage for a minute."

Everyone condemned it and demanded justice, he said.

"If people can be given death sentences in false cases after 30 or 40

years, why can't the real perpetrators of the killings 20 years ago -- Hasina, Menon, Inu, and other fascists of the 14-party alliance -- be brought to justice?"

Either the law ministry should revive the case, or the existing tribunal should be tasked with investigating the incident and trying Hasina at the international tribunal, he said.

Jamaat Assists General Maulana Abdul Halim and Maulana Rafiqul Islam Khan attended the event as special guests.

The rally was presided over by Dhaka South Amee and central executive committee member Md Nurul Islam Bulbul and conducted by Dhaka South Secretary Shafiqul Islam Masud.

## Will sign charter if

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the coming election," Patwary added.

He said the reform documents from the Consensus Commission have already been handed over to the law ministry. "If the reform process and justice cannot be fulfilled, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul will not be able to escape accountability."

Patwary rejected allegations that the NCP had "sold out" the July uprising, saying the party was striving to preserve the movement's spirit.

On the upcoming polls, he said, "BNP is 'lau' and Jamaat is 'kodu'."

They have long been allies but are now pretending to be divided for the sake of election drama."

Lau and kodu are Bangla words for two types of gourds.

In another programme at Rajshahi Tourism Motel, NCP Convenor Nahid Islam told reporters that the party would sign the July charter on the condition that the "notes of dissent" are removed and the consensus commission's recommendations on constitutional reforms are incorporated.

"The July charter cannot contain any note of dissent during

implementation," he said, adding that the consensus commission's proposals for constitutional reform would be put to a public referendum, and the constitution would be amended based on the people's verdict.

"The approved measures would then be implemented under the leadership of Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, based on the legitimacy of the July uprising."

Nahid added that if the government ensures these conditions, the NCP would sign the implementation order of the July charter.

## Commission creating further disunity

FROM PAGE 1

Constitution Reform Council -- was formed without prior discussion. "This concept was never on the commission's table before. There was no consensus on this matter."

"We know that members of the parliament will be elected in the upcoming parliamentary election. Now, if those MPs have to carry out the activities of the Constitution Reform Council, that decision must be made in the parliament."

"Even though there was no discussion on this matter, suddenly they cannot impose the decision that the next parliament will also work as the Constitution Reform Council."

About the proposal that states

that the Upper House would be formed through a proportional representation system, the BNP leader said this decision was not made in the commission meetings.

"It was decided that the Upper House would be formed with 100 members. But there was no consensus on how those seats would be filled. Some wanted it proportional to the votes gotten in the Lower House elections, and we wanted it proportional to the seats in the Lower House."

Criticising the decision to present all bills, except finance and confidence motions, in the Upper House, Salauddin said since the Upper House members aren't elected by

direct voting, they cannot deliberate on constitutional amendments and other critical matters.

Citing a proposal that states the July Charter reforms would be automatically incorporated into the constitution if the reform council fails to adopt them within 270 days, Salauddin said, "This is ridiculous. I don't know how these were included."

Salauddin urged the authorities to review the matter carefully.

"I believe the National Consensus Commission has made some suggestions just to complete its work. I hope the advisory council and the government will examine and consider the proposals thoroughly."

## Independent media commission

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journalists, and, most importantly, regulate licences for broadcast and online media platforms.

Currently, media licences are issued and regulated solely by the information ministry, which holds full authority over media ownership.

The media reform body, in its final report, noted that the Press Council in its existing form needs to be abolished and replaced with an independent commission to tackle the multifold crises plaguing the media industry and prevent journalists from being involved as political tools.

According to the report, journalists prevented from working independently or facing obstruction from their employers could seek redress through the proposed independent media commission, which would investigate complaints, arbitrate disputes, and, in cases involving criminal offences, seek legal action on behalf of journalists.

However, the draft ordinance prepared by the information ministry, a copy of which The Daily Star has seen, removed all these proposals.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Additional Secretary Dr Mohammad Altaf-Ul-Alam said, "Nothing is final yet."

information ministry said that the creation of this independent commission is still being discussed with stakeholders and the draft ordinance is still at a nascent stage.

The ministry's draft further omitted key provisions from the reform commission's proposal that were aimed at safeguarding journalists' rights.

One of those provisions ensured a journalist's right to privacy and prevented illegal entry into their residences and illegal seizure of their property.

The draft also dropped a provision that proposed a Tk 1 lakh fine and a five-year jail term for assaulting or harassing journalists. It was replaced with "relevant" sections of the Penal Code".

Another provision that was omitted in the draft stated that the government must ensure journalists are protected from violence, coercion, or intimidation by individuals, institutions, or state actors.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Additional Secretary Dr Mohammad Altaf-Ul-Alam said, "Nothing is final yet."

## Iran demands \$170m from owner of seized Israel-linked ship

AFP, Tehran

Iran has demanded a \$170 million fine from the owner of a cargo ship that it seized in Gulf waters last year and accused of having ties to Israel, a judicial official said yesterday.

The Revolutionary Guards, the ideological arm of Iran's military, intercepted the MSC Aries in April of 2024 and detained its 25 international crew members.

At the time, the official IRNA news agency said the Portuguese-flagged vessel was "managed by Zodiac, which belongs to the Zionist capitalist Eyal Ofek".

Yesterday, Iranian judiciary spokesperson Asghar Jahangir said charges had been filed and the case was before the courts, though no date had been set for a trial.

"A fine of \$170 million has been demanded against its owner, of Israeli origin, accused of financing terrorism," Jahangir said.

## July charter implementation recommendations have ambiguities: IAB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islami Andolan Bangladesh has said the recommendations for implementing the July National Charter still contain ambiguities that could complicate future politics.





Farmers steer a boat through flooded fields to harvest a local variety of Aman paddy that grows in water. After filling their boats with the crop, they head home to dry and sell it in local markets. The photo was taken at Chalan Beel in Singra, Natore recently.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

## COX'S BAZAR AIRPORT

## A vision too big for ground reality?

Experts slam govt decision to upgrade airport to int'l status then retract after 11 days

RASHIDUL HASAN

The decision to backtrack just 11 days after declaring Cox's Bazar airport as the country's fourth international airport shows a lack of planning and preparation from the civil aviation ministry and other authorities, said aviation experts.

They alleged the ministry and the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) made the decision without any feasibility study or assessment of its viability.

On October 12, the civil aviation ministry issued a notification declaring that Cox's Bazar domestic airport would be upgraded to an international airport. However, on October 23, Civil



Aviation Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin instructed CAAB to suspend activities in this regard. The ministry officially announced yesterday the suspension of scheduled international flights at the airport.

Meanwhile, nearly Tk 6,000 crore has been spent to transform the coastal airport into an international one, according to a CAAB source. The previous Awami League government had initially decided to upgrade the airport.

Questions have been raised about why the interim government made such a declaration without proper verification and preparation, only to retract it later. Such actions tarnish the

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No cause for concern over ties with China Says foreign adviser

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain yesterday assured that Bangladesh's engagement with China is no cause for concern, emphasising that the country maintains a balanced foreign policy in its relations with all nations.

"I don't think there is any reason for concern,"

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**Lead level high in some local paints**  
ESDO survey finds over 40% of paint samples exceed legal lead limit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite compliance by major multinational and national paint brands with legal lead limits, many local and unregistered manufacturers produce paints containing dangerously high levels of the toxic metal, posing a serious public health risk.

A recent survey by the Environmental and Social Development Organisation (ESDO) found that 42.2 percent of 161 decorative paint samples tested exceeded the permissible lead limit of 90 parts per million (ppm).

**ESDO made six recommendations, including strengthening monitoring and enforcement, bringing industrial and spray paints under standards, enhancing import controls, and promoting consumer awareness.**

Alarmingly, 26.2 percent of the samples contained more than 1,000 ppm of lead, which can severely affect the human body, ESDO said while unveiling the findings at its Lalmatia office yesterday.

The high-lead samples mostly came from small, unregistered manufacturers operating without proper testing facilities or regulatory oversight. In contrast, 57.8 percent of samples -- mostly from established multinational and national brands -- were within the safe range.

According to the Bangladesh Paints and Coatings Market-2024 report, multinational companies make up 86 percent of the paint market, while small local producers account for 10-15 percent.

Lead, often used in paints for its durability and colour vibrancy, is a toxic metal linked to serious health issues. Such paints release toxic lead dust after a period when used on walls, toys, furniture, or public structures.

Continuous exposure can damage the brain and nervous system of children,

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A man jumps over a makeshift road divider while others jaywalk in the background. Amid such risky behaviour, buses continue to pass by, putting pedestrians in danger of accidents. The photo was taken at the Noor Hossain Square in Gulistan, Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Govt launches national family planning strategy

It aims to ensure universal access to rights-based family planning

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday launched the National Family Planning Strategy 2025-2030, aiming to ensure universal access to rights-based family planning in Bangladesh.

The strategy was unveiled at an event at the CIRDAP International Conference Centre in Dhaka, jointly organised by the Directorate General of Family Planning and the Medical Education and Family Welfare Division of the health ministry.

Presenting the strategy, Dr Abu Sayed Md Hasan, sexual and reproductive health and rights specialist at the United Nations Population Fund, highlighted Bangladesh's progress in family planning and maternal health over the years.

He said the total fertility rate has declined and the maternal mortality ratio has dropped

from 574 deaths per 1,00,000 live births to 236 in 2023.

Despite this progress, he said preventable maternal deaths still occur.

The new strategy aims to address existing gaps, shift from a population control mindset to population management, and align family planning efforts with human rights and the SDGs, he said.

He also pointed out challenges such as a high unmet need for contraception, especially among adolescents.

Around half of Bangladeshi girls marry before 18, and contraceptive use among adolescents remains low. The contraceptive prevalence rate has stagnated at around 64 percent for nearly a decade, with modern methods used by about 55 percent of couples, said Dr Hasan.

High discontinuation rates, reliance on

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Caretaker system basic structure of constitution  
BNP lawyer tells SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP counsel Md Bodruddoza Badal yesterday prayed to the Supreme Court to restore the nonparty caretaker government system with necessary guidelines by cancelling its 2011 verdict that scrapped the 13th Amendment of the Constitution, which had introduced the system in 1996.

All political parties had adopted the caretaker government system for holding free and fair elections and establishing democracy in the country.

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**JCD man shot dead in Jubo Dal factional clash in Ctg**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activist was shot dead, and at least 15 others were injured in a clash between two factions of Jubo Dal in Chattogram city early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Md Sajjad, 22, confirmed Bakalia Police Station Inspector (Investigation) Mozammel Haque to The Daily Star.

Sajjad was known to be a follower of Emdadul Haque Badsha, the expelled organising secretary of the now-defunct city unit of Jubo Dal, party insiders said.

The "gunfight" erupted between Emdadul and former city unit JCD president Gazi Siraj Ullah at 1:30 am in the Bagar Bilmukh area on Bakalia Access Road following a dispute over tearing down banners, police and party sources said.

Inspector Mozammel Haque said, "During the clash, Sajjad was shot and later pronounced dead at Chattogram Medical College Hospital."

According to party sources, tension escalated after local Jubo Dal activist Md Jasim, a follower of Emdadul, was allegedly abducted and beaten up by Borhan Uddin and Nazrul Islam Sohel -- both followers of Siraj -- on Monday night.

Borhan had previously been active in Awami League politics but recently hung banners featuring Chattogram City Corporation Mayor and former city BNP president Shahadat Hossain in the area, which triggered mixed reactions, the party sources said.

Jasim told reporters that Mayor Shahadat Hossain had instructed them to remove banners hung across different parts of the city featuring photos of "self-proclaimed leaders".

Following the directive, Jasim and others took down several banners in Bakalia and other areas, including one displaying photos of Shahadat, Siraj, and Borhan.

Over the incident, Borhan and his men allegedly abducted and assaulted him, Jasim claimed.

Party insiders said after news of Jasim's abduction spread, supporters of Emdadul went to rescue him. As they reached Bakalia Access Road, they came under attack, during which Sajjad suffered bullet wounds.

Emdadul told reporters, "Borhan had hung banners featuring Siraj and others. When Mayor Shahadat ordered those to be removed, Borhan's



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## Rezaur Rahman's namaz-e-janaza today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The funeral of renowned scientist and Bangla Academy Award-winning writer Rezaur Rahman will be held today.

Family sources said his first namaz-e-janaza will be held after the Zohr prayers at Taqwa Mosque on Dhanmondi 12/A and the second one after the Asr prayers at Jame Mosque on Salimullah Road in Mohammadpur. Later, he will be laid to rest in the grave of his father Fazlur Rahman at the Mosque Complex Graveyard.

Rezaur Rahman passed away on October 26 at LabAid Hospital in Dhaka at the age of 81 following a cardiac arrest.

His body was kept at the hospital mortuary.

## Woman, son burnt by her husband die

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

A woman and her son died at a Dhaka hospital yesterday, a week after her "drug addict" husband allegedly set his family members on fire in Narsingdi.

Additional Superintendent of Police (Crime) Sujan Chandra Sarker of Narsingdi said Rina Begum, 38, and her son Farhad, 15, died at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery.

Rina's younger son Tawhid, 7, is still undergoing treatment, while three others - Rina's elder son Jihad, 24; her sister Salma Begum, 34; and Salma's son Arafat, 15 - were discharged after primary care.

The suspect, Farid Mia, 44, a pickup driver from Ghoradia in Chinispur union, was arrested on Saturday.

On the night of October 22, Farid allegedly poured petrol on the victims and set them ablaze in their sleep in his in-laws' house.

## No cause for concern

FROM PAGE 3  
since we have maintained a balance. There is nothing for anyone to worry about," he told reporters when asked about concerns voiced by a third country regarding Bangladesh's relationship with China.

Talking to reporters at the foreign ministry, Touhid said Bangladesh maintains a balanced policy in its relationships with other countries and that there is no question of avoiding relations with any particular nation.

"We have deep relations with the United States and extensive economic relations with China," said the adviser, expressing confidence that Bangladesh will continue to uphold this balanced approach.

Touhid also said he believes that future governments will continue to follow this policy. Brent Christensen, nominee for US ambassador to Bangladesh, last week said if confirmed, he would engage with the Bangladesh government and military to "clearly articulate the risks from Chinese activity and involvement with their military activities in the maritime domain and in their critical infrastructure, as well as highlight the opportunities and benefits that come with a closer partnership with the United States, especially military-to-military".

"The United States supports Bangladesh in its journey toward a bright and democratic future," he



**Farmer Subinoy Mollik shakes dew from the leaves of his jute spinach plants onto the soil to keep it moist amid a water crisis. He follows this method as a natural alternative to irrigation. The photo was taken in the Masuk Bazar area of Sylhet Sadar upazila yesterday.**

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## Siltation choking Manu River

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

The Manu River in Moulvibazar, once a lifeline for local agriculture, fisheries, and navigation, is losing its natural water flow and navigability due to siltation.

Originating from India, the 74-kilometre-long river enters Bangladesh through Sharifpur in Kulaura upazila and merges with the Kushiyara River at Manumukh in Moulvibazar.

Locals said the river's navigability and water flow have drastically deteriorated due to the heavy deposit of silt during two consecutive floods in 2022 and 2024. This has severely reduced the river's depth, causing adjoining haors, canals, and waterbodies to gradually dry up.

At the Shikaria area, around 300 feet of the river protection embankment was eroded last monsoon. The floods in 2022 and 2024 also caused severe damage in Miyarpur, Sondra, and Shalon areas of Kulaura upazila due to riverbank erosion.

"Silt has filled up the river, and since it hasn't been dredged for years, water inundates our farmlands and destroys our crops whenever it rains heavily," said Taju Mia, a local.



"The river is no longer deep enough for boats to navigate, especially during the dry season, when people resort to crossing the river on foot or using bamboo bridges," said Rubel Ali, a boatman at Rajapur Kheyga ghat. "The water-holding capacity of Manu, Fanai, and Hakaluki rivers has decreased due to siltation," said Abu Masud, senior fisheries officer of Kulaura upazila. "We've submitted a proposal to the Fisheries Department to dredge the Kangli Beel

section and adjoining parts of the rivers."

Khaled Bin Walid, executive engineer of the Water Development Board in Moulvibazar, said some parts of the river were dredged previously, but more work is urgently needed. "We'll send a proposal to the higher authorities for the removal of new sandbars and dredging of the riverbed."

Kulaura UNO Md Mohiuddin said they will discuss the issue with the relevant authorities to restore the river's navigability.

## 4 more die of dengue



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least four dengue patients died, while 1,041 others were hospitalised, in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), of the deaths, three were recorded in Dhaka South City Corporation and one in Mymensingh division.

"We will certainly encourage those who wish to come as observers. However, we do not want anyone to come under the guise of an observer to pursue ulterior motives or tarnish the country's image," he said. He also said Bangladesh sought the extradition of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina based on legal aspects and a subsequent court order but had not received any response from the Indian side.

"We have followed the legal process and requested her return as per the court's order. Let them look into it. They have yet to reply. Let them examine it from their side," he said in response to a question. Bangladesh sent a diplomatic note (note verbale) to India in December 2018.

Considering these risks, the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (Bsti) set a legal lead limit of 90 ppm in decorative paints in 2018.

ESDO conducted the research with support from the Lead Exposure Elimination Project in London and Instiglio in Nairobi.

Presenting the findings, Sadmeen Sadaf Jahan, senior research and campaign associate at ESDO, said 161 samples from 73 brands were

## Caretaker system

FROM PAGE 3

The provision of the caretaker government cannot be removed, as it is a basic structure of the Constitution. There is no dispute about this system. All the elections held under this government were free and fair," he said.

The lawyer made the remarks while presenting arguments before a seven-member bench of the SC, headed by Chief Justice Syed Reza Ahmed, during the fourth day of hearings for the appeals and review petitions against the 2011 verdict that scrapped the non-party caretaker government system.

The apex court fixed today to resume the hearing.

Badal told the Appellate Division that the 2011 verdict, which had scrapped the caretaker government system, became invalid following last year's High Court judgment on December

17, which scrapped part of the 15th Amendment that abolished the non-partisan caretaker government system.

Earlier in the day, Jamaat-e-Islami lawyer Mohammad Shishir Manir told the SC that the non-party caretaker government system is the most acceptable formula for democracy, as it is possible to hold free, fair, impartial, and credible elections under such a government.

Arguing for the restoration of the caretaker government system, Shishir Manir told the court that it is not possible to hold the upcoming national election under the caretaker government, as the parliament is not functional at present.

The caretaker government must be formed within 15 days of the dissolution of parliament under the 13th Amendment of the Constitution, he added.

Sayem Sattar, office secretary of the Bangladesh Paint Manufacturers Association, said 33 major brands are members of the association and none of them were found to exceed the permissible limit.

In adults, lead can cause high blood pressure, cardiovascular issues, and kidney damage.

He urged authorities to act against non-compliant producers.

ESDO Chairman Syed Marghub Mursheed, Executive Director Siddika Sultana, Technical Advisers Shahriar Hossain and Prof

Abul Hashem, and former Additional Secretary Mahbub Kabir Milan also spoke at the event.

## Govt launches

FROM PAGE 3

short-acting methods, rising fertility in urban slums, and regional disparities – particularly in Chattogram and Sylhet divisions – also remain major concerns, he added.

Speaking as a special guest, Prof Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser for the health ministry, called for data-driven systems, national research ownership, and comprehensive primary healthcare that combines prevention, treatment, and education to ensure people-centred progress.

Catherine Breen Kamkong, UNFPA Bangladesh representative, urged greater focus on adolescents, regional disparities, and human resource development.

"Every pregnancy should be by choice, not by chance," she said.

Dr Md Abu Jafar, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services, said the health ministry aims to achieve universal health coverage by 2030 by strengthening healthcare management, particularly at the primary level.

"This strategy will serve as a unified guide for future initiatives," he said.

Md Saidur Rahman, secretary of Health Services and Medical Education & Family Welfare Divisions, stressed the importance of accurate birth registration, better data systems, and motivating field workers to promote safe deliveries and healthy babies so that policies reflect real needs.

Dr Nazmul Hossain, director of the Directorate General of Medical Education, also spoke.

He urged authorities to act against non-compliant producers.

ESDO Chairman Syed Marghub Mursheed, Executive Director Siddika Sultana, Technical Advisers Shahriar Hossain and Prof

Abul Hashem, and former Additional Secretary Mahbub Kabir Milan also spoke at the event.

## Woman files rape case against neighbour

OUR CORRESPONDENT, M'singh

Monsur Ahmed said the incident took place around 5:00am on October 18 when the woman went out of her house to fetch water from a tube-well in her yard. Akmol forcibly took her to a nearby field and raped her.

Hearing her screams, the victim's husband, a day labourer, and neighbours rushed to the spot, but the accused managed to flee, the OC said.

"The accused is on the run, and police are trying to arrest him," he added.

## NOTICE OF INVITING QUOTATION FOR THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENT

Sealed quotations in separate envelopes (Technical & Financial) are hereby invited by Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC. from reputed suppliers and service providers for the following requirement.

**Item Description:** Request for Quotation (RFQ)/Schedule for Access Control System for employee attendance.

**Specification & Other information:** Detail mentioned in RFQ document/Schedule

### Terms and Conditions:

- The RFQ/Schedule will be available from GSD of the Bank, Head Office, 63 Purana Paltan (Level-7), Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh, from 10:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. on all working days between 29/10/2025 to 17/11/2025.
- The quotations will be received up to 3:00 P.M. on 18/11/2025 and the tender box will be opened at 3:15 P.M. on the same day.
- Sealed quotation must be submitted on or before the deadline mentioned in the RFQ document/Schedule.
- Any manipulation, unusual approaches or failure to submit offer within the stipulated time frame will result in disqualification from the bidding process.
- Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC. reserves the right to accept, cancel or reject any or all offer without providing any reason.
- The cost of RFQ/Schedule is Tk. 3,000/- (three thousand) in cash which will be non-refundable.
- All other terms and conditions will be in accordance with the Bank's procurement policy.

**SEVP & Head of GSD**

General Services Division, Head Office  
Al-Arafah Tower (Level-07)  
63 Purana Paltan, Dhaka-1000.

**alb** Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC. আরাফাহ ইসলামি ব্যাংক

**PRAYER TIMING**

OCTOBER 29

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-5 12-45 4-00 5-32 7-15

JAMAAT 5-25 1-15 4-15 5-35 7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

**Invitation for Tender**

1. Institution : ASC Centre and School, Jahanabad Cantonment, Khulna.

2. Invitation For : Vehicles Purchase for Driving School of ASC Centre and School.

3. Tender selling commence date : 29 October 2025 (1000 hours).

4. Tender last selling date : 19 November 2025 (1000 hours).

5. Tender opening date and time : 20 November 2025 (1200 hours).

6. Tender selling place : ASC Centre and School, Jahanabad Cantonment, Khulna.

7. Tender opening place : ASC Centre and School, Jahanabad Cantonment, Khulna.

8. Tender closing place : ASC Centre and School, Jahanabad Cantonment, Khulna.

9. Tender opening date and time : 20 November 2025 (1200 hours).

10. Tender closing date and time : 20 November 2025 (1200 hours).

11. Tender closing place : ASC Centre and School, Jahanabad Cantonment, Khulna.

12. Tender closing date and time : 20 November 2025 (1200 hours).

13. Tender closing place : ASC Centre and School, Jahanabad Cantonment, Khulna.

14. Tender closing date and time : 20 November 2025 (1200 hours).

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19. Tender closing place : ASC Centre and School, Jahanabad Cantonment, Khulna.

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21. Tender closing place : ASC Centre and School, Jahanabad Cantonment, Khulna.

22. Tender closing date and time : 20 November 2025 (1200 hours).

23. Tender closing place : ASC Centre and School, Jahanabad Cantonment, Khulna.

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25. Tender closing place : ASC Centre and School, Jahanabad Cantonment, Khulna.

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51. Tender closing place : ASC Centre and School, Jahanabad Cantonment, Khulna.

52. Tender closing date and time : 20 November 2025 (1200 hours).

53. Tender closing place : ASC Centre and School, Jahanabad Cantonment, Khulna.

54. Tender closing date and time : 20 November 2025 (1200 hours).

55. Tender



## ACC ordinance needs full reform

Approved version falls short of real transparency

The recent approval in principle of the draft Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Ordinance, 2025 is a welcome and necessary step towards the long-overdue reform of the institution, which is essential for combating the pervasive menace of corruption in the country. The decision to abolish the existing discriminatory provision that long granted special privileges to government officials—contrary to the constitutional guarantee of equality among citizens—is a much-needed corrective measure.

In 2013, this extraordinary exemption for civil servants was inserted into the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004 by the then Hasina government, overruling parliamentary standing committee's objection. Although the High Court declared the provision unconstitutional and ordered its repeal in 2014, the government ignored the ruling for the next decade. It has been alleged that such undue privileges were used by the Hasina government to secure the political loyalty of civil servants, enabling the manipulation of elections and the suppression of opposition under an increasingly authoritarian rule.

Among the recommendations of the ACC Reform Commission—established by the interim government led by Professor Muhammad Yunus following the 2024 mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's autocratic regime—was the abolition of Section 32A of the ACC Act. This section requires the ACC to obtain prior government approval before initiating cases against judges, magistrates, or government employees, mirroring Section 197 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. However, as ACC Reform Commission chief Dr Iftekharuzzaman has noted, the draft ordinance falls short of fully implementing the widely supported reform proposals. A key omission is the failure to ensure transparency in the appointment process of ACC commissioners.

Experience has shown that the politicisation of such institutions often begins at their formation stage, as secrecy and lobbying influence such key appointments. The draft ordinance drops the crucial provision mandating public disclosure of shortlisted candidates for the commission. The interim government, therefore, should reconsider these strategically significant reform issues. It should also adopt the proposed provision for half-yearly performance reviews of the ACC, as recommended by the reform commission, to strengthen accountability.

While the ordinance in its current form is expected to enhance the ACC's operational capacity and effectiveness, the absence of sufficient safeguards against politicisation—stemming from a lack of transparency in appointments—risks undermining the broader reform objectives. Half-hearted or flawed reforms rarely yield lasting benefits. The government must, therefore, heed the concerns raised by the reform commission and ensure the full implementation of its recommendations to truly empower the ACC and restore public confidence in the fight against corruption.

## Preserve Goidartek retention area

BADC must stop construction in this crucial zone

It is unacceptable that the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC), a government agency tasked with advancing the country's agricultural interests, is itself violating key environmental and urban planning laws to build a tissue culture laboratory. Reportedly, it began constructing a four-storey structure in 2023 on 11 acres of the 117-acre Goidartek pond, which plays a vital role in preventing flooding in large parts of Dhaka and is clearly marked as a retention zone in Rajuk's Detailed Area Plan (DAP) 2010. Shockingly, BADC went ahead with the project despite objections from environmentalists and without obtaining clearances from Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakka (Rajuk) or the Department of Environment (DoE). Building any structure on this land constitutes a violation of the Environment Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2010 and the Building Construction Act, 1952. Yet the building's main structure is nearly complete, with several additional structures and boundary walls under construction. Such disregard for the law by a state institution sets a dangerous precedent.

According to reports, the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) has repeatedly urged BADC to stop the construction, even offering alternative land for the laboratory at a different location. Despite this, the construction continued. Moreover, after the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) filed a petition to halt the project, the High Court declared the construction illegal in January last year and ordered BADC to restore the pond within three months. But instead of complying, the BADC secured a stay order from the Supreme Court and carried on with its activities.

Reportedly, Goidartek was first marked as a retention pond in the Structure Plan 1997 of the Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP), which was later included in DAP 2010. It is also listed as a water-regulating pond in DNCC's zoning plan. However, the BADC chairman has claimed that the land in question, covering 68 acres, was acquired for the Department of Agriculture in 1958 and is classified as cultivable land. This conflicting claim must be resolved urgently.

Experts warn that filling or obstructing the pond will disrupt Dhaka's drainage system, as the Kallyanpur canal and its branches channel stormwater to it before the water flows into the Buriganga River. Any encroachment here will disrupt Dhaka's drainage, worsening waterlogging in Mirpur, Kallyanpur, Agargaon, Mohammadpur, and surrounding areas. We, therefore, urge the government to immediately stop BADC's construction, restore the water retention area to its previous state, and hold to account those responsible for its degradation. Dhaka has already lost most of its natural waterbodies, ponds, and canals due to unplanned urbanisation and encroachment. Those that remain must be protected at all costs if the city is to survive.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### US stock market collapse

On this day in 1929, five days after nearly 13 million shares of US stock were sold in one day in 1929, an additional 16 million shares were sold this day, called "Black Tuesday."

# BNP's notes of dissent show that old habits die hard



WINKERS AWEIGH!

Tanim Ahmed  
is digital editor at The Daily Star.

TANIM AHMED

A cursory examination of the July National Charter reveals that BNP's notes of dissent—and those of its axis of like-minded parties—follow a certain pattern. Many of the 84 proposals in the charter can be carried out with simple executive orders. However, there are some that require constitutional amendments, while others demand new laws. Taken together, BNP's position throughout the discussions at the National Consensus Commission shows a consistent opposition to proposals that would significantly weaken the authority of the prime minister or the ruling party in running the government.

It is important to point out that almost 30 proposals have accompanying notes of dissent. Of them, BNP filed over a dozen notes, while Jamaat-e-Islami had only one and the NCP had none. The charter records several instances of both BNP and Jamaat disagreeing with certain proposals but not strongly enough to formalise them as notes of dissent. It should also be noted that both Jamaat and NCP approached the discussions on reforms as potential opposition parties in a future parliament, and hence their interest in strengthening accountability mechanisms of the government, which coincided with the public interest as well.

Let us begin with the proposal for a 10-year term limit for a prime minister and the bar on individuals simultaneously serving as party leader and PM.

Initially, the proposal was to bar individuals from serving as prime minister for more than two terms. BNP opposed this and finally agreed to a 10-year limit—on the condition that another key proposal, the National Constitutional Council (NCC), be dropped entirely. The initial draft also proposed that MPs would be allowed to hold only one of three positions—prime minister, party chief, or leader of the parliamentary party. The final draft dropped the third role, simply mentioning that MPs would be barred from serving as both PM and party chief at the same time. BNP dissented to that proposal as well.

Let us take a moment to analyse what this really means. First, the National Constitutional Council. It was proposed as an independent body—comprising representatives from the ruling party, the opposition, other political parties, the president, and the chief justice—for making appointments to key constitutional

and regulatory bodies such as the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), Election Commission, Bangladesh Bank, Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), the chiefs of the armed forces, and most importantly, the head of the caretaker government.

The provision was designed so that successful appointments would require bipartisan support, making candidates more broadly acceptable. But BNP opposed this and successfully bargained to have it removed, trading it off against the 10-year PM term limit.

Notably, the term limit is 10 years,

Commission, the CAG, or the ACC. If these institutions were made truly independent and free from political influence, they would strengthen transparency and accountability. The charter proposed an independent body for these appointments, but BNP and its allies submitted notes of dissent against it.

Another widely supported proposal was the introduction of an upper house of parliament based on proportional representation of votes acquired in the general election. Read that in connection with the proposal that constitutional amendments would require a two-thirds majority in both houses of parliament. This would mean that even if a party secured two-thirds of seats in the lower house (meaning 200 out of 300 seats, or 67 percent) and wanted to amend the constitution, it would require opposition support in the upper house whose composition could be different because of the proportional representation of votes. In other words,

This stance has to be considered alongside BNP's proposal for exceptions of Article 70 of the constitution, which barred MPs from voting against their party line. There was general agreement that it should be done away with, except in finance bills and votes of no confidence. BNP's note of dissent, however, proposed that the exception should not apply to constitutional amendments, meaning that MPs would still be barred from voting independently on constitutional amendments.

The pattern that emerges from these positions is clear: BNP has dissented to proposals that strengthen government accountability, ensure the independence of constitutional bodies, and prevent excessive concentration of power in the hands of the prime minister. Further, it has opposed provisions aimed at making constitutional amendments bipartisan. Its stance on Article 70 also indicates a desire to retain tight party control over



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

not two terms—a distinction that warrants some scrutiny. While the difference here may seem minor, one could argue that a future ruling party might delay constitutionalising the provision until late in its tenure, thus allowing a sitting PM to serve nearly a full term before the clock starts ticking. Technically, then, the PM would clock a few months, maybe a year, at the helm, thus affording them a clear run for, say, nine more years (or almost two further terms). That is presumably the advantage of a 10-year limit over a two-term one.

Then there are the appointments to constitutional bodies—the ombudsman, the Public Service

any amendments pushed by the ruling party would have to be so necessary and justified that even the opposition, or at least some of its members, would find merit in them.

But BNP has done its best to dilute this proposition, beginning with its suggestion that the upper house be constituted according to the proportion of seats won by parties in the lower house, and not by their share of votes—making it a mirror image of the lower house where the ruling party would again dominate. BNP has also added a proviso, through another note of dissent, that the upper house should have no say in constitutional amendments.

parliamentary votes, paving the way for the kind of majoritarian governance that has repeatedly undermined democratic practice in Bangladesh.

BNP's approach at the consensus commission discussions seems to have been guided by the assumption that it will win the next election and form government with a considerable majority. What was meant to be a collective effort to build a stronger, more accountable system of governance for citizens has thus turned into an exercise in expedience. BNP, from these developments, seems intent less on ensuring checks and balances than on preserving the latitude to govern without them.

## Why we need a new climate finance approach



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

HASEEB MD. IRFANULLAH

Most of the recent discussions on climate change in Bangladesh have been focused solely on funding. The world annually requires \$4.6 trillion to reach net zero in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, yet only 43.5 percent of this was spent in 2024. For adaptation, developing countries need \$387 billion per year, but only 7.2 percent of that was made available in 2022. Therefore, climate funding is, indeed, crucial. My concerns, however, lie elsewhere.

Let's look at a few examples of why Bangladesh's motivation and interest behind all its funding dialogues do not make much sense. Over the last five years or so, the government, civil society organisations, and development partners have shown outstanding enthusiasm in promoting and mainstreaming youth involvement in climate action. The July uprising was supposed to prioritise young people's capabilities at the core of our development agenda. Despite these efforts, our latest climate budget for

FY2025-2026 once again failed to allocate funds to the youth ministry. How much energy have our youth climate activists spent ensuring that Bangladesh moves away from its obsolete, decade-old climate budgeting style compared to the efforts they have invested in attending the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) across the world over the years? Do our youth genuinely believe they can influence global climate finance when they cannot move the needle in their own country?

Although we do not yet have a national policy on climate change, we have several recent action plans directly dedicated to climate action. Each of these time-bound documents has also estimated the budget required for full implementation: the Delta Plan 2100 (\$37 billion during 2018-2030); the Climate Prosperity Plan (\$89.72 billion, 2022-2030); the National Adaptation Plan (\$230 billion, 2023-2050); and the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0) (\$116.18 billion, 2026-2035).

Avoiding double-counting of activities in these plans, it is often declared in public forums that Bangladesh annually needs around \$26 billion for climate action, with an 89.2 percent funding gap. Yet, we do not see any desperate or drastic measures from the government to reduce this enormous gap by improving transparency and accountability in public sector fundraising and project management to build funders' confidence, or by effectively tracking and reporting fund flows and expenditure.

In response to the newly established Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD), currently managed by the World Bank, Bangladesh may soon begin estimating how much money it will need by 2050—further widening the overall climate funding gap. It seems that we are moving rapidly away from our proud notion of being a resilient and prosperous nation under climate change, instead seeking compensation as a climate victim.

Furthermore, all our recent conversations have focused on how to tap into the FRLD. Between December 1, 2025, and May 31, 2026, the FRLD will seek its first round of proposals to disburse an initial \$250 million pot for loss and damage actions, and Bangladesh may not be prepared for this.

On October 29, 2016, ICCCAD, ActionAid, NACOM, and CARE provided a clear outline, titled National

Mechanism on Loss and Damage in Bangladesh, to initiate actions through appropriate institutions and governance. Nine years on, it has not been materialised despite several attempts. The establishment of the FRLD now appears to have sparked some motivation, as the government is planning to prepare a national framework on loss and damage, while several civil society organisations have revived discussions on the national mechanism. However, how the national mechanism will be linked to the national framework, and vice versa, remains unclear. Nevertheless, for loss and damage, Bangladesh's action has been to engage mostly in talks. Apart from that, a list of 43 loss and damage actions were included in the NDC 3.0.

Bangladesh must rethink its approach to seeking funds from UN-facilitated sources. It should also stop working solely around the COPs—climate change is a year-round reality for Bangladesh, not just an 11-day event in November. We must also ask ourselves: despite an annual climate funding gap of \$23.2 billion and losing 1-2 percent of GDP to climate change impacts every year, how are climate-vulnerable Bangladeshis adapting to and tackling losses and damages by investing their own resources? The answer to that question could help us recalculate our climate finance needs and motivate us to expand our funding options more seriously.

# The injustice of our inflation is tilted against the poor



Saba El Kabir  
is a development practitioner and founder of Cultivera Limited. He can be reached at [saba@cultivera.net](mailto:saba@cultivera.net).

SABA EL KABIR

The way inflation works in our economy is profoundly unjust. Prices are rising in ways that mirror a deeper imbalance in our social and moral order—a widening gulf between capital and labour, between those who set prices and those who must bear them. It reflects how our institutions, intended to protect fairness, bow under the weight of capture and complacency. It reflects an economy whose intent and design have grown inequitable.

The injustice of our inflation lies in its asymmetry. As in most capitalist societies, those who control capital or trade in scarcity are shielded, even rewarded, while those who work with their hands and hearts are quietly impoverished.

In towns and cities alike, this story plays out in an unending loop. Most vegetables in the market would eat away half of a day labourer's daily income. Meanwhile, sources of protein such as fish have become a luxury for many families, and meat—a distant memory. Most treat lentils as a substitute for meat.

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) confirms that prices have risen faster than wages for more than three consecutive years. September marked the 44th consecutive month in which wage growth failed to keep

pace with inflation. Nominal incomes rose by about eight percent between August and September, but prices rose by more—progress has become loss disguised as gain. Although inflation has somewhat eased since last year, the gap between inflation and wage growth remains tenacious. At first glance, the gap may seem minor; in reality, it is the difference between treading water and drowning, between a family eating twice a day or only once.

This imbalance is most visible not in data but in the stories of those who produce our food. The prices of rice, potatoes, and onions have surged, yet farmers often sell these crops at a loss. In Gabbandha, we met farmers who spoke of potatoes and betel leaf left to rot even as consumer prices climbed. A Bangladesh Bank study found that even when harvests are strong, supply-chain bottlenecks and intermediary mark-ups drive up retail prices in the markets, where farmers sell below production cost, which results in the final consumers paying many times more by the next day. The rewards of rising prices flow upwards; the risks stay below. Farmers take the losses, consumers pay the costs, and those who control storage, transport, and trade capture the rent in between. Inflation here is not demand-pull or cost-push; it is



Each queue at an OMS truck, each unpaid overtime shift, each farmer's unsold harvest is another reminder of the injustice of our inflation.

FILE PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

rent-pull, born of power asymmetry rather than productivity.

Our repeated money-whitening schemes stand as unabashed monuments to this injustice—government amnesties that in the past have allowed untaxed wealth to be legalised through real estate or stock investment. These pragmatic tools “bring hidden money into the economy” at the cost of widening the gap between the privileged and the rule-abiding. When a garment worker's real wages fall by two percent and their meagre savings are eroded by inflation, while a wealthy investor can whiten crores of

now feed each other—the weakening taka gives cartels cover to keep prices inflated, and those inflated prices, in turn, deepen fiscal pressure and erode confidence in the currency. It is a toxic coupling, one that thrives because governance fails to separate real cost-push from opportunistic greed.

For too long, perhaps forever, we have treated inflation as a technical matter to be managed rather than a moral question to be answered. Inflation reveals who a nation protects when scarcity arrives; and for 44 months and counting, Bangladesh has been failing that test. The poor are paying for inflation twice: once at the market, again in lost trust that the system was ever meant for them.

Restoring balance will take more than technocratic fixes. The syndicates are not abstract market failures; they are extensions of power itself. To challenge them demands not only courage but independence: regulators insulated from politics, and a free media that insists on accountability. Without that separation, every promise of reform collapses under its own conflict of interest.

Inflation is not just a measure of prices; it is a measure of priorities. It tells us whose pain we deem tolerable, and whose creature comforts we protect. Each queue at an OMS truck, each unpaid overtime shift, each farmer's unsold harvest is another reminder of how ordinary struggle has become our national condition. With political courage, institutional integrity, and moral clarity, we can build an economy where prices rise for reasons of growth, dictated by the market, not by greed.

The injustice of our inflation is not inevitable. We are the root cause and therefore, it can be undone.

## Palestine's past is our present: Why its story matters to us all



Dr M Reza Behnam  
is a political scientist who specialises in comparative politics with a focus on West Asia.

M REZA BEHNAM

A new story has emerged out of the ashes of Gaza. It is the narrative of a people who have fought bravely and who have stood firm against the overwhelming military power and genocidal violence of the Israeli and US regimes.

years in Gaza and currently in the occupied West Bank, it has been mutilating the land to eliminate all that sustains life. Nearly 92 percent of Gaza has been turned into 60 million tons of debris, containing the remains of countless innocents.

How can people who claim they have a historic and biblical bond to the ancient land of Palestine, as Israelis have, completely destroy the “Holy Land” of the West Bank and Gaza, one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world?

The answer is rooted in their perception of and relationship to the land. For Israelis, it is an exploitable resource, a source of potential wealth accumulation. For Palestinians, it is home.

The zeal and ferocity of its destruction can also be explained by the fact that modern Israel is an imperial-inspired foreign infliction transplanted into the heart of the Arab world.

To establish legitimacy for their political project in Palestine, Israel's European secular founders provided dubious links between past and present. They strategically and selectively used religious narratives and historical connections as tools in building an Israeli national identity and to legitimise the establishment of a Jewish state on alien land, strategies that continue to this day.

Hence, Israel and its American enablers are unable to appreciate that Palestine is the locus of Palestinian nationhood. They will never comprehend that the land has been a living archive of Palestinian history, language, and culture for 5,000 years. As an agrarian society, land has provided a shared sense of belonging and foundation for collective consciousness and national identity. Palestine has been a unifying force, especially since their homeland was recast as Israel in 1948.

Olive cultivation, engaged in for thousands of years, has been a vital part of the Palestinian economy, culture, and heritage. The ancient, deeply rooted olive trees, able to survive harsh conditions, are the perfect symbol of the Palestinian refusal to be displaced.

Since 1967, to further humiliate and break the back of Palestinian

resistance, the Israeli army has illegally uprooted an estimated 800,000 to over one million Palestinian olive trees. In addition to land appropriation for the expansion of illegal colonies, economic control and intimidation, the destruction of orchards is the regime's attempt to undermine their connection to the land and to break Palestinian sumud.

Palestine is unique in the Arab world. When history began to be recorded in what is often referred to as the Middle East or West Asia, there was no Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, or any of today's Persian Gulf Arab states. But there was Gaza; there was Palestine.

The recorded history of Gaza spans 4,000 years. Under the administration of various empires, including the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Achaemenid, Persian, and Roman, Gaza prospered. During the third century, it became part of the province of Palaestina Prima.

After it seized and occupied Gaza in 1967, Israel reduced the Strip to a concentration camp. Palestinians have, since then, been serving life sentences behind the sophisticated surveillance-equipped “iron wall” that surrounds Gaza. For them, the wall is a daily reminder of occupation and that their hopes and dreams for a future are out of reach.

Palestinian journalist Anas al-Sharif captured the essence of Palestine in his message to the world written prior to his assassination by Israeli forces: “I entrust you with Palestine—the jewel in the crown of the Muslim world, the heartbeat of every free person.” According to the United Nations, as of August 11, 2025, Israel, determined to suppress the truth, had killed 242 journalists.

From the Balfour Declaration (1917) to Trump's 20-point Gaza “peace” plan (2025), imperial powers have, for 108 years, manipulated and deceived to control Palestine. They have failed.

The future is uncertain unless the wrong committed a century ago, when an imperious British government technocrat gave away a land he did not own to European Zionists, is made right.

There are no ambiguities. Not only has Gaza revealed Israel's cruelty and lawlessness, it has also exposed the hypocrisy and ruthlessness of the American and British empires as well as the political, economic, and military systems that have supported it.

Unless those who have made Israel's modern-day genocide possible are held accountable, the global community may find itself living in what the 17th-century English philosopher,

Thomas Hobbes, described as “war of all against all,” a state of continuous wars, violence, and insecurity. Failing accountability and consequences for the perpetrators, inhumanity and lawlessness will become the standard.

Additionally, the international community can no longer accept Israel as it currently is—a violent apartheid settler-colonial entity. It is bound by international law to implement the mandate of the International Court of Justice to decolonise the Occupied Palestinian Territory (Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem).

Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, in 1968, prophetically spoke to where we are today.

In his final speech the night before his assassination, he said that there is “no longer a choice between violence and nonviolence in this world; it's nonviolence or nonexistence.”

Palestine is more than a geographical place. It is a compelling idea. It cannot be erased, just as Palestinians' rightful demand to return home cannot be erased.

*The unabridged version of the article was first published on CounterPunch on October 24, 2025.*

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BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



Assistant Director Office  
Fire Service and Civil Defence  
Agrabad, Chittagong

## e-Tender Notice (OTM)

Memo No. 58.03.2015.010.009.23-3400

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following goods under revenue budget. Details are given below:

Sl. No.	Description of the goods & package	Tender Id No.	Tender closing date & time	Tender security submission date & time
1	58.03.0000.014.36.001.23.1021(30), dated 14/09/25 Procurement of Lentil/Masur Dal (High Quality Dashi Small grain) for the months of July/25 to September/25 for Chittagong Fire Service and Civil Defence, Agrabad, Chittagong. Divisional Ration in Financial Year 2025-2026	1160768	12-Nov-2025 12.00.00	12-Nov-2025 11.00.00
2	58.03.0000.014.36.001.23.1021(30), dated 14/09/25 Procurement of edible Soyabean Oil (enriched in Vitamin-A) for the months of July/25 to September/25 for Chittagong Fire Service and Civil Defence, Agrabad, Chittagong. Divisional Ration in Financial Year 2025-2026	1160918	12-Nov-2025 12.00.00	12-Nov-2025 11.00.00

- This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
- To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>)
- The fees for the downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to selling 11-Nov-2025.
- Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).



Md. Anwar Hossain (BFM)  
Assistant Director  
Fire Service & Civil Defence  
Agrabad, Chittagong

GD-2266

WHAT'S  
THE  
HAPS?**'Khona'**

Renowned theatre troupe BotTala brings back its acclaimed production *Khona*, a powerful retelling of the legendary astrologer Lilabati's life. Written by Samina Luthfa Nitra and directed by Mohammad Ali Haider, the play examines gender, class, and power through a timeless story that continues to challenge and inspire audiences today.

**DATE:**  
WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY OCT 29-31, 2025  
**TIME:** 7PM-9PM  
**VENUE:** STUDIO THEATRE HALL, BSA



## The goal is to push Asian cinema forward: MANOJ PRAMANIK

SHARMIN JOYA

"Being a student after a long time was quite interesting — that too when I am a teacher myself," shared actor Manoj Pramanik, who recently returned from Busan, South Korea, after seven months. The actor-turned-producer came back with a renewed and deeper understanding of the world of cinema. During his time there, he attended a film production course at the Busan Asian Film School (AFiS). Manoj has been teaching at the Department of Film and Media Studies at Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University since 2016.

"What was the course all about?" — "The course offered a thorough understanding of film production, co-productions between Asian countries, and ways to create an avenue to expand the overall Asian film market," shared the actor. Everything about the programme left an impression on him — the teaching style,



PHOTOS: STAR AND COURTESY

the mentors, and the content. "There were 20 students from 15 Asian countries, and I was the only participant from Bangladesh. We lived in the same building, cooked different cuisines in a shared kitchen, exchanged cultures, and attended classes together. Most importantly, I made some wonderful friends."

He mentioned that producers from Bangladesh, such as Tanvir Hossain, Fazle Hasan Shishir, and Arifur Rahman, among others, previously took this training, and their productions are shining across the international film festivals. Manoj recently ventured into production, producing several short films, including *A Snail without Shell*, directed by emerging filmmaker Mohin Rakhaire, which earned accolades from international film festivals as well.

When asked about when he plans to put this experience into practice, Manoj smiled, "I already have. As part of the course, I had to submit a project, and I'm continuing to work on it now.

I'm looking at ways to further develop it and will soon apply for international funding. The goal of this course was to push Asian cinema forward in the global market. We discussed why we still can't compete with Hollywood — and how we can overcome those weaknesses to build one of the biggest film markets in the world."

But did he miss acting during his time away? "Very much," he admitted. "I was eagerly waiting to face the camera again. I returned home on October 22, and two days later, I shot a commercial. That should tell you how eager I was — I didn't want to waste a single moment."

Manoj has also worn the director's hat. "That was just for learning," he said humbly about his short film *Hoite Surma*, which has already travelled to film festivals.

His next big project is *Sheyana*, a government-funded feature film. "If all goes well, we'll start shooting early next year," he revealed. "Right now, we're making a few script corrections. Once that's done, we'll finalise the casting," he said, adding that he won't be acting in this project.

For now, Manoj has just wrapped up a new commercial and is planning to shoot a short film soon. He also feels that the industry has slowed down a bit, though he hopes it will recover soon. "Due to a lack of audience attention or sponsors, the number of projects being made has decreased. But I want to believe that the situation will bounce back, as our audience has always shown eagerness for projects that are mindful and have merit," he concludes.



## Shironamhin set to release 'Ei Obelay 2' this December

Popular band Shironamhin will release *Ei Obelay 2*, a sequel to their 2019 hit *Ei Obelay*, in the first week of December.

The song marks the final track of their *Batighar* album and will be released in both Bengali and English.

Written by bandleader Ziaur Rahman and composed by drummer Kazi Ahmad Shafin, who also directed the video, the song's visuals were filmed across scenic locations in Thailand.

Actress Neel Hurerzhan stars in the video, while actor Tawsif Mahbub appears in stills. Meanwhile, the band — comprising Ziaur Rahman, Kazi Ahmad Shafin, Sheikh Ishtiaque, Symon Chowdhury, and Sudipto Sinha Dipu — will perform in Toronto on November 1, their first ever show in Canada.

## Thom Yorke strongly opposes performing in Israel again

Radiohead frontman Thom Yorke has declared he will not perform in Israel again, distancing himself from the Netanyahu-led government amid the ongoing conflict.

Speaking before the recent Israel-Hamas ceasefire, Yorke said he would "absolutely not" return, adding, "I wouldn't want to be 5,000 miles anywhere near the Netanyahu regime."

Lead guitarist Jonny Greenwood, whose wife Sharon Katan is Israeli, disagreed, arguing that boycotts can worsen divisions. "I can't apologise for collaborating with Arab and Jewish musicians," he said. Radiohead previously faced backlash for performing in Tel Aviv in 2017 despite BDS pressure to cancel.



# NEWS

## Seized vehicles rotting under police watch

FROM PAGE 12

Meanwhile, some vehicles parked on the roads have become public nuisances and breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

At Banani Police Station, around 38 cars, several motorbikes, and a pickup occupy five roads around the premises. The 20-foot-wide road in front of the station is lined with two rows of abandoned cars, causing daily traffic jams.

When The Daily Star visited on October 10, pedestrians and drivers complained. "Why don't the police remove them? They block half the road," said a passerby.

Resident Abdur Rahim said the problem worsens in the evening when traffic increases.

Officer-in-Charge of Banani Police Russell Sarwar said, "These cars are court evidence and cannot be removed without a court order. It has become a burden for us. Traffic authorities also ask us to move them, but we can't."

He added that in his 14 months at the station, no owner had returned with valid court papers to reclaim their vehicle.

"We often receive calls through the 999 hotline asking us to remove the cars. Residents living on the streets where these vehicles are stored complain and pressure us to clear them, but we can't do anything without court orders," the OC said.

Anisur Rahman, joint commissioner (traffic admin and planning) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said they have no designated impound lots or dumping stations, so

vehicles are kept at police compounds or nearby roads.

"We use four temporary grounds — Shahbagh, Bosila, Postgola, and Uttara police line. We've applied for at least four permanent dumping stations. The situation will improve when we get them," he said.

The Shahbagh dumping ground, where seized vehicles from different divisions are kept, presents a grim picture. The open field has no boundary wall, and pools of water and mud make it nearly inaccessible.

People can walk in freely; some are seen removing car batteries, tyres, or other parts. Only one police constable stands at the gate, often occupied with other work.

Constable Mohammad Rakib said that approximately 150 autorickshaws, a few buses, and several motorcycles are stored there. "We work in three shifts, but only one constable is present per shift. There is no security inside. People come in, claim a car as theirs, and take parts away. We cannot stop them as we lack manpower."

During a visit on October 8, a 30-year-old man was seen removing tyres from an autorickshaw. When approached, he identified himself as Nur Mohammad. He said it was his vehicle, seized by traffic police. When he came to pay the fine, he found the tyres missing, so he was taking what was left.

Another man, Al Amin, was also seen removing his car battery and seats to save them from theft. "If we do not take the parts, they will be stolen."

Asked about these incidents,

Constable Rakib said, "Our superiors told us to check papers when someone comes to reclaim a vehicle. Beyond that, we cannot do anything."

On reports of theft from the dumping ground, DMP Joint Commissioner Anisur said, "We'll try to install boundaries and lighting to prevent such incidents."

The problem is structural — lack of space, limited manpower, and bureaucratic delays.

Senior officers concede the system is broken. "Due to a shortage of designated dumping grounds, seized vehicles remain as evidence until trials end. We can't release or auction them without court orders," said one official.

"There is a provision for auctioning, but delays make it nearly impossible. Meanwhile, cars rot, parts are stolen, and the value is lost."

Asked about stolen parts and damaged vehicles in police custody, Hasan Md Shawkat Ali, additional commissioner (logistics, finance, and procurement) of DMP, said they had limited resources and refused to elaborate.

Additional Public Prosecutor Md Samsuddoha Sumon said the courts have no impound lots for seized cars. "After trial completion, police can remove those with court orders."

However, he added that police could act proactively by submitting reports to courts in time to release vehicles from custody.

Meanwhile, Morium Akter's ordeal sums up the human cost. "My Tk 7.5 lakh car is gone. Nobody is taking responsibility. There's no compensation nor accountability."

But DMTCL has yet to implement any such insurance coverage, leaving victims unable to benefit from these legal provisions.

## Deploy law enforcers

FROM PAGE 12

ensuring a free and fair 13th national election.

All field-level administrative officials — deputy commissioners (DCs), superintendents of police (SPs), upazila mirbahi officers (UNOs) and officers-in-charge (OCs) — must be appointed through a full lottery-based system to ensure neutrality.

Jamaat also demanded to hold a national referendum in November following the gazette notification on the implementation of the July Charter.

"The EC must make the 'July Charter' and its reform agenda public so voters can make informed choices," Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar told reporters after the meeting at the EC headquarters.

At the meeting, the EC did not mention any challenge or incapacity

in organizing the referendum, he said.

Jamaat demanded installation of CCTV cameras in all polling centres (subject to technical and financial feasibility), ensuring equal rights and privileges for all political parties, maintaining law and order, recovering illegal arms and arresting identified criminals, allowing election officials (presiding, polling, Ansar) and expatriates to vote through postal ballots or other easy mechanisms, appointing election observer organisations only after verifying that they have no political affiliation, and ensuring the neutrality of the administration during the polls.

The party also proposed that in the case of alliance-based voting, each party should contest using its own electoral symbol, as per the latest amendment to the Representation of the People Order (RPO).

The party also proposed that in the case of alliance-based voting, each party should contest using its own electoral symbol, as per the latest amendment to the Representation of the People Order (RPO).

Jamaat termed it "very unfortunate" that a political party had recently objected to the amendment and demanded its reversal.

The party described this move as a "naked violation of the level playing field" under a so-called "gentlemen's agreement", calling the objection "alarming" and a "bad omen" for a fair election.

In response to a question, Parwar termed BNP's objection regarding the appointment of officials from Islami Bank and other financial institutions as "regrettable" and "unpolitical".

Jamaat has no ownership links with any of the institutions mentioned by the BNP, describing such claims as part of a "bad political tradition", he said.

Issuing counter-statements or lists "is not a political courtesy", he said.

## Metro mishap exposes legal void

FROM PAGE 12

Section 28 mandates that DMTCL

insure the metro rail, all passengers, and third parties — a category that includes pedestrians affected by metro rail incidents. The licensee is also required to collect compensation from the insurance company within three months and provide it to the injured person or their family.

But DMTCL has yet to implement any such insurance coverage, leaving victims unable to benefit from these legal provisions.

Contacted by The Daily Star yesterday, Khondaker Ehteshamul Kabir, company secretary of DMTCL, admitted that neither the metro rail structure, its passengers, nor third parties are currently covered under any insurance policy, citing the enormous financial cost involved.

In this situation, the authorities have proposed an amendment to the Metro Rail Act to address compensation issues on a case-by-case basis.

When this correspondent pointed out that the existing law stipulates compensation, Kabir responded

that the current rules under the act contain no such provision. "That's why we proposed an amendment to the act, and the proposal remains pending with the ministry."

Contacted, Adviser Fouzul Kabir Khan said he announced Tk 5 lakh in compensation for the victim in accordance with the Road Transport Act, due to the absence of relevant provisions in the metro rail regulations.

He added that the government will work on a process to ensure compensation for the victim.

## EU to deploy full team

FROM PAGE 12

Miller praised the July National Charter, describing it as a "very important" document aimed at ensuring a smooth democratic transition.

He also commended the recently approved labour law reforms and initiatives to strengthen the independence of the judiciary, calling them "notable successes".

"These are all important steps," he said, stressing the EU's continued support for the Election Commission's efforts to ensure free, fair, and credible elections in February.

Miller described the upcoming polls as "an opportunity to reset the reputation of the country".

The envoy also reaffirmed the EU's commitment to supporting Bangladesh's smooth graduation from a least developed country to a middle-income nation.

Discussions also focused on strengthening trade and investment ties, with both sides exploring the possibility of an economic partnership agreement and cooperation in aviation and shipping.

They also agreed to work closely on tackling human trafficking and

illegal migration.

Yunus said Bangladesh is expected to sign an agreement with global shipping giant AP Moller-Maersk for the development and management of the Laldia Terminal at Chattogram Port.

Miller noted that the Danish company plans to invest around \$800 million to develop Laldia into one of the top terminals in the region.

The two sides also discussed the election environment, candidate eligibility, and ensuring due process to uphold human rights ahead of the national vote.

## Ceasefire in tatters as Israel strikes Gaza

FROM PAGE 12

were Israel's violations of the ceasefire.

Israeli media earlier reported an exchange of fire between Israeli forces and Hamas fighters in the southern Gaza city of Rafah. The Israeli military did not respond to a request for comment on the reports.

Hamas said it was complying with the ceasefire terms and Netanyahu was looking for excuses to back away from Israel's obligations.

Under the ceasefire terms, Hamas released all living hostages in return

for nearly 2,000 Palestinian convicts and wartime detainees, while Israel pulled back its troops and halted its offensive.

Hamas has also agreed to hand over the remains of all dead hostages yet to be recovered, but has said that it will take time to locate and retrieve the bodies amid Gaza's ruins. Israel says the militant group can access the remains of most of the hostages.

The issue has become one of the main sticking points in the ceasefire, which US President Donald Trump





# REPUBLIC DAY of TURKIYE 2025

DHAKA WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 29, 2025 KARTIK 13, 1432 BS ■ 10



## ISTANBUL UNFOLDED

### Tales of Streets, Seas, and Centuries

TANJIM FERDOUS

#### A JOURNEY BEGINS: AN UNEXPECTED ADVENTURE IN ISTANBUL

Istanbul greeted me in April 2017 with a curious mix of familiarity and wonder. I had just completed a 25-day backpacking journey across Europe, departing from Paris for the final leg of my adventure. Flying with Turkish Airlines, which always connects Europe to Dhaka via Istanbul, I decided to turn this stopover into a five-night stay — the perfect finale to a journey that had already reshaped my worldview.

I didn't have a Turkish visa, but with valid Schengen and US visas in my passport, I was eligible for an e-visa on arrival. At the airport, the sleek, human-less digital kiosks seemed straightforward — until I realised they didn't accept euros, only US dollars or credit cards. Exhausted and clutching my carry-on backpack, I wondered if bureaucracy would derail my plan.

As if travel itself had a sense of timing, help appeared: a friendly Australian traveller offered to pay the visa fee with his card in exchange for euros. A small act of kindness, yet monumental in that moment. Finally, the process was complete, and the immigration officer stamped my passport, officially welcoming me to Türkiye.

At baggage claim, my 70 litre backpack was missing. After a tense hour, I discovered it patiently waiting in the "Oversized Baggage" section — a modest 13 kilograms, yet a small

Tower, a 14th-century medieval structure offering sweeping views of the Golden Horn. Narrow streets lined with cafés and boutiques buzzed with life, balancing old-world charm with modern energy.

Taksim Square, Istanbul's vibrant heart, offered a contrasting pulse. Street performers, neon lights, and the aroma of döner kebabs and baklava filled the air. A friendly street cat weaving between my feet reminded me of Istanbul's thousands of strays, cared for by locals, embodying a unique harmony between humans and animals.

#### A DAY IN SULTANAHMET: WONDERS OF FAITH AND HISTORY

The next morning, I explored Sultanahmet early, before the crowds. The Blue Mosque, with its six towering minarets and thousands of hand-painted tiles,

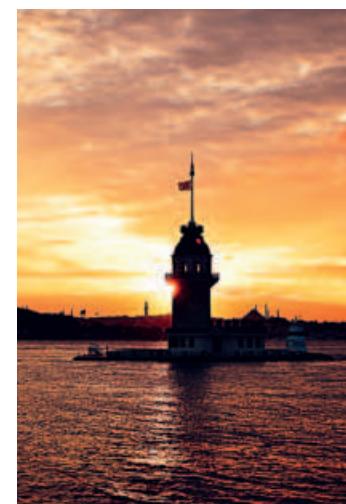


PHOTO CREDIT: BAYRAM YALÇIN

to prayer — history alive in motion.

#### TOPKAPI PALACE, THE GRAND BAZAAR, AND SULTAN SULEIMAN'S MOSQUE

The following day, I revisited Topkapi Palace in detail, indulging in its architecture, gardens, and carefully curated courtyards. Wandering the Grand Bazaar afterwards, I was immersed in over 4,000 shops: vibrant spices, Turkish delight, handwoven carpets, and the playful banter of vendors. At a juice stall, freshly crushed pomegranate juice offered a tart, refreshing interlude amid the labyrinthine alleys.

By evening, I visited Süleymaniye Mosque, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent's legacy. Perched on Istanbul's Third Hill, its domes and minarets provided a spiritual counterpoint to the city's imperial and commercial grandeur. Attending the Esha prayer there, I felt enveloped in quiet devotion and timeless architecture.

**BOSPHORUS CRUISE: CONTINENTS, HISTORY, AND SEA**  
The next morning, I boarded a motorboat for the Bosphorus. The wind carried the scents of salt, seaweed, and simit, while dolphins leapt alongside, celebrating the journey. The floating lighthouse, marking the meeting point of the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara, reminded me of Istanbul's centuries-long maritime significance.

Passing the Florya Atatürk Marine Mansion and Mehmed II's fortress, I imagined Ottoman cannons blocking European ships during the conquest of Constantinople — history palpable along the strait. The Bosphorus Bridge came into view, a striking juxtaposition of modern life and historic continuity, with waterfront mansions, hidden gardens, and palaces lining the shores.

Returning along the waterfront, the golden light of sunset softened the city's contours. Fishermen prepared for the night, seagulls wheeled overhead, and the lighthouse stood as a silent witness. Disembarking, I paused to watch a man casting nets, a quiet testament to Istanbul's enduring rhythm of life, where history, culture, and daily routines flow together seamlessly.

#### STREETS, STORIES, AND SERENDIPITY

The following day, I explored Istanbul on foot, slower, noticing details missed earlier. Locals greeted me warmly, a distinct hospitality compared to Europe. A memorable encounter involved a young cobbler dropping his brush near me. I returned it, resisted his offer to polish my shoes, and later realised it was a common tourist scam. Small moments like these underscored the value of vigilance.

By the waterfront, fishermen lined the bridges. One old man, white-haired and puffing a cigar, moved methodically among rods, a living emblem of patience and dedication. Evening brought golden light on the cobblestones, street aromas, and a delicious dinner of freshly grilled fish, crusty bread, tangy salad, and ayran — the perfect close to a day of walking and discovery.

#### Golden Horn of the Bosphorus, Istanbul

adventure in itself. With my bag in hand, a few euros exchanged for lira, and a metro card secured, I stepped onto the tram toward Sultanahmet, anticipation building for the city's streets, history, and flavours.

#### EXPLORING THE HEART OF ISTANBUL: STREETS, FLAVOURS, AND STORIES

By the time I reached the city centre near the Grand Bazaar, the sun cast a golden glow over bustling streets. I found a tucked-away hostel, welcomed by a warm Syrian manager who shared his story of displacement and resilience with quiet optimism. He offered detailed directions to food spots in Eminönü and tips for reaching Taksim Square, turning a brief interaction into a memorable connection.

At Eminönü, I savoured freshly grilled fish tucked into crusty bread, accompanied by the crisp Bosphorus breeze — simple yet unforgettable. From there, I wandered toward Galata

created a serene, almost meditative atmosphere. Nearby, Hagia Sophia carried centuries of layered history: Byzantine mosaics coexisting with Islamic calligraphy, echoing stories of faith, conquest, and coexistence.

Topkapi Palace, the opulent seat of Ottoman sultans, revealed imperial life through serene courtyards, the Divan Hall, the Harem, and grand kitchens capable of feeding thousands. A small museum displaying relics associated with Prophet Muhammad (swt) added a profound spiritual layer to the experience. From the palace balcony, I gazed at Europe and Asia across the Bosphorus, a reminder of Istanbul's role as a bridge between continents.

The Archaeology Museum and the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts further deepened my appreciation of Istanbul's rich cultural heritage. Pausing at a small café for çay, I watched the city's rhythm unfold: trams threading narrow streets, locals chatting, and the distant call

#### FAREWELL, ISTANBUL: FROM AIRPORT TO SKIES

On the final day, I took a shared shuttle to the airport. Despite a long immigration queue, the sprawling terminal and vibrant airport life kept my mind occupied. The shuttle to the aircraft was crowded and longer than any other international ride I had taken, leaving me restless as my sugar dipped.

Boarding Turkish Airlines, I requested a chilled drink, expecting

delay or refusal. To my quiet surprise, the crew served it promptly and checked in later, attentive yet unobtrusive — a subtle reminder of thoughtful service.

As Istanbul receded beneath the clouds, I reflected on five nights where history, culture, and human warmth intertwined. From bustling streets to quiet alleys, imperial palaces to vibrant bazaars, and Bosphorus cruises to heartfelt encounters, Istanbul had

revealed itself as a living, breathing story. The journey back to Dhaka felt reflective, carrying memories that would linger long after landing — a city that exists simultaneously in history, present, and imagination. Tanjim Ferdous is a development activist who works with The Daily Star and can be reached at tanjim.tds@outlook.com



PHOTO CREDIT: MERUYERT GONULLU

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

# WE'RE ALL CONNECTED: ISTANBUL

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## Metro mishap exposes legal void in victim compensation

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The death of a pedestrian and injuries to two others -- caused by a bearing pad that fell from a metro rail pillar on Sunday -- have exposed a critical gap in the legal framework regarding compensation for victims of metro rail-related accidents.

The existing Metro Rail Act stipulates that if any person is injured or killed during metro rail operations, their family is entitled to compensation in an amount and manner determined by rules.

However, the rules formulated under the act do not specify how such compensation should be determined or who is responsible for paying it, leaving victims' families in legal uncertainty.

Under the act, the Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL) is required to insure all passengers and third parties, with compensation to be provided through those insurance policies. However, no steps have been taken to implement such coverage, leaving victims with no avenue for redress.

At present, compensation can only be granted if the government decides to do so or if ordered by a court.

Following Sunday's incident in the capital's Farmgate area, Road Transport and Bridges Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan announced that the family of the deceased will receive Tk 5 lakh, and an eligible family

- » Metro rail rules lack compensation clause
- » Victims have no guaranteed legal recourse
- » DMTCL has not insured rail, passengers as required

member will be offered a job at DMTCL. The government will also bear the treatment costs of the injured.

The victims of road, railway, or waterway accidents can get compensation under relevant acts.

For example, under the Road Transport Act-2018, which entitles a trustee board to deal with the compensation issue, the family of a person killed in a road crash is entitled to Tk 5 lakh in compensation. Those who lose a limb or suffer life-altering injuries receive Tk 3 lakh each, while victims expected to recover fully are entitled to Tk 1 lakh.

However, most victims remain excluded from the scheme due to a lengthy and complex process, as well as a lack of awareness.

Metro rail, the country's newest mode of transport, was launched in December 2022 and operates under the Metro Rail Act 2015 and Metro Rail Rules-2016. It is operated by the state-run DMTCL.

### LITTLE SCOPE TO GET COMPENSATION

Section 25 of the Metro Rail Act states, "If any person is injured, harmed, or dies as a result of an accident during metro rail operations, the licensee [DMTCL] shall be obligated to provide compensation to that person or the victim's family, as applicable, in the manner and amount determined by the rules."

However, the corresponding rules, which have 31 sections, make no mention of compensation.

Section 26 requires the metro rail authority to send any injured person to the nearest hospital for primary treatment and to reimburse medical expenses if the person seeks treatment independently, again "in the manner and amount determined by the rules". Yet, the rules are silent on this matter as well.

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Iron rods, meant for constructing a building, are left in front of a gate near the entrance to Farmgate Metro Rail Station, forcing people to use the street and put themselves in harm's way. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Deploy law enforcers a week ahead of election

Jamaat tells EC, places 18-point recommendations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday placed an 18-point set of recommendations before the Election Commission.

The party called for the deployment of the armed forces, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police at least a week before the 13th national election scheduled for next February.

In its letter to the EC, Jamaat also called on the EC to bar officials and employees who were involved in previous elections and have been deemed controversial or questionable from being assigned any poll duties.

The letter was handed over by a seven-member Jamaat delegation to Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin as part of discussions on

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## EU to deploy full team to observe national polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The European Union plans to send a large team of election observers to Bangladesh for the upcoming general election, scheduled for the first half of February, marking the bloc's first full-fledged mission since 2008.

EU Ambassador to Bangladesh Michael Miller made the announcement during a meeting with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka yesterday.

He said the EU observer mission was yet to be formally confirmed but could include between 150 and 200 members. Some are expected to arrive about six weeks before the election, while others will join a week prior to polling day.

"This would be the first time since 2008 that the EU is sending such a full-fledged election observer team to Bangladesh," Ambassador Miller told the chief adviser, adding that the EU would also assist in deploying local election observers during the vote.

During the hour-long meeting, both sides discussed a wide range of issues, including governance and constitutional reforms, election preparations, judicial and labour reforms, trade and investment relations between Bangladesh and the EU, and the broader political process.

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## CHALLENGES IN POLICING 3

### Seized vehicles rotting under police watch

They blame lack of impound lots, manpower, and delay in court orders

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

After six years of legal procedures and waiting, Oman expatriate Morium Akter returned home in early August to reclaim her private car from Kafrul Police Station.

On August 23, she went to the station with a court order permitting the car's release. But when officers showed her the vehicle, she was stunned -- it was completely damaged, flattened, stripped of its parts, with three other cars stacked over it.

"It was unrecognisable. If I had known its condition, I wouldn't have gone through so much trouble to reclaim it," she said.

Morium spent about a month visiting the court, BRTA, and lawyers' offices, spending around Tk 10,000-12,000 to complete the paperwork. "But when mechanics examined the car, they said it could not be repaired."

She added, "The entire interior was gone. Mechanics at Dholakhal said the parts had been stolen long ago and advised me to sell it for scrap, worth only Tk 6,000-8,000."

She had bought the second-hand Toyota Corolla nine years ago for Tk 7.5 lakh.

In 2019, while she was abroad, the car was seized after being used in an attempted abduction by a renter and stored at the

police station as evidence. Her husband, Mohammad Hanif, repeatedly contacted the police and court but was told only the owner could reclaim it -- prompting Morium's return.

around them, but we have nowhere else to store them."

Visiting the police station on October 7, this newspaper found vehicles stacked one over another due to a lack of space. Most were crushed under the weight of others, and many had no tyres, windows, or intact body structures.

The situation is similar in almost 50 police stations in the capital -- where seized vehicles kept as evidence in criminal or traffic cases have been left to rot for years.

Sub-Inspector Ariful Islam of Shah Ali Police Station said they have seven such vehicles, four of which are completely broken. "The owners of three cars visit sometimes, but they can't take them back without full documentation."

Due to space shortages, station officials have kept the seized vehicles on the footpath. Motorbikes and other vehicles were also found on the road during a visit by The Daily Star on October 8.

Golam Azam, officer-in-charge of the station, said, "The station is small, so they kept some vehicles on the street. We also don't have enough manpower to guard the damaged vehicles."

According to locals, thieves and homeless children are often seen around the abandoned cars. "At night, some people come and remove parts. Some sleep inside them," said a resident.

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Impounded vehicles are heaped inside the Kafrul Police Station compound. Due to a lack of space, the vehicles are left like this, sometimes for years. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHAHEEN MOLLAH

## Ceasefire in tatters as Israel strikes Gaza

At least 2 killed after Netanyahu orders 'powerful attacks'

REUTERS, Jerusalem/Cairo

- » Israel says Hamas violated truce with attacks on Israeli forces
- » Netanyahu accuses Hamas of handing over wrong hostage remains
- » Hamas says Israel seeking excuse to resume war

Still, an Israeli military official said Hamas had violated the ceasefire by carrying out an attack against Israeli forces in an area of the enclave that is under Israeli control.

"This is yet another blatant violation of the ceasefire," the official said.

The US-backed ceasefire agreement went into effect on October 10, halting two years of

Israeli aggression in Gaza. On Saturday, Israel said its forces carried out a "targeted strike" on a person in central Gaza who was planning to attack Israeli troops.

Earlier yesterday, Netanyahu accused Hamas of violating the ceasefire by turning over some wrong remains in a process of returning the bodies of those killed in the war.

Netanyahu said the remains handed over on Monday belonged to Ofir Tzafati, an Israeli killed during Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack. Tzafati's remains had already been partially retrieved by Israeli troops during the war.

Hamas initially said in response to this that it would hand over to Israel yesterday the body of a missing hostage found in a tunnel in Gaza. However, Hamas' armed wing, Al-Qassam Brigades, said later it would postpone the planned handover, citing what it said

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