



Govt gears up for polls

Chief adviser asks officials to complete key tasks by Nov 15

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday directed authorities to complete key preparations for the national polls by November 15, as the Election Commission plans to announce the election schedule by the first week of December.

At a high-level meeting at the State Guesthouse Jamuna, Yunus also instructed everyone to remain vigilant against “any kind of sudden and powerful attack centring the polls”.

Chaired by Yunus, the meeting was attended by several advisers, top bureaucrats, EC officials, and representatives from law enforcement agencies.

Among those present were Home Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman, Cultural Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser on Defence and National Solidarity Lt Gen (ret'd) Abdul Hafiz, and Special Assistant on ICT Affairs Fayez Ahmed Taiyeb.

The discussions mainly focused on four issues: the posting of field-level administrative officials, the law and order situation, the training of election-related personnel, and strategies to counter false information on social media.

During a media briefing at the Foreign Service Academy afterwards, CA's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said the chief adviser cautioned that the upcoming election would face significant challenges.

“Hope for the best, prepare for the worst.... There will be forces, both internal and external, trying to disrupt the election – powerful ones, not minor actors. Sudden attacks may occur. No matter how strong the storm, we must overcome it,” the CA was quoted as saying.

Shafiqul clarified that the term “attack” does not only refer to physical assaults but also includes cyberattacks and the spread of disinformation online.

He said those who supported the fallen autocrat do not want a free and fair election. “Everyone has been urged to remain vigilant.”

Quoting Yunus, he added, “There will be disinformation on social media. Both from within and outside the country, there will be well-coordinated attempts to derail the election. AI-generated photos and videos will be released. We must deal with these swiftly. As soon as a false narrative starts, it must be stopped before it spreads.”

Although the date for the 13th national polls is yet to be fixed, the EC and the government are preparing to hold it in the first half of February.

In a televised address on August 5, Yunus said he would request the EC to hold the election before Ramadan in February. The following day, his office sent a formal directive to the commission to complete all necessary preparations by that time.

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“There will be forces, both internal and external, trying to disrupt the election – powerful ones, not minor actors. Sudden attacks may occur. No matter how strong the storm, we must overcome it.”

PROF MUHAMMAD YUNUS



Lighter vessels anchored near Chattogram port in the Bay of Bengal wait their turn to unload goods from mother vessels at the outer anchorage. Every day, around 400 lighter ships ferry cargo from mother vessels, feeding much-needed consumer goods and industrial raw materials into the economy, while another 400 wait in queue under a system managed by the Water Transport Cell, a platform of shipowners. The photo was taken near Akmal Ali Road recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Political rift over July charter widens

Parties diverge sharply over consensus commission's recommendations on implementation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP accused the National Consensus Commission of deception, while the Jamaat-e-Islami demanded that the referendum on constitutional reforms in the July charter be held before the national polls, even if that means a delay in the election.

The National Citizen Party, meanwhile, said there can be no election unless the charter is implemented, as it placed forward its own set of demands, including reconstitution of the Election Commission.

The reactions came yesterday after the commission submitted its recommendations on implementing the July National Charter 2025 to the government on Tuesday, laying bare the deepening divisions among political stakeholders over the reform process.

At a Standing Committee meeting last night, the BNP decided to send a delegation to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and express the party's concerns over the exclusion of its notes of dissent from the proposed implementation process, among other issues.

The party also decided to share its opinion on the recommendations

formally at a press conference at noon today.

At the two-hour meeting, BNP leaders alleged that the recommendations reflected the political demands and interests of the Jamaat and NCP.

“If this [omission of notes of dissent] was their plan all along, what was the point of 11 months of dialogue?”

Salahuddin Ahmed, BNP Standing Committee member

They also alleged that the recommendations were part of efforts to obstruct the next national election.

At another Standing Committee meeting on Tuesday night, the BNP accused Yunus of breaking his promise to remain neutral. Acting chairman Tarique Rahman chaired the meeting virtually from London.

Senior BNP leaders said the exclusion

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NEWS ANALYSIS

A binary vote for a complex charter

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Although the exact timing of the referendum is yet to be decided, it is almost certain that there will be one on the July National Charter in one form or the other.

In its outline submitted to the interim government, the National Consensus Commission has proposed two alternative formulations for the referendum question.

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 the first schedule of this order?”

The second alternative envisions the government preparing 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 the first schedule of this order?”

The difference between the two is that one mentions the set of proposals while the other mentions a bill. The one with the bill has further significance. If the Constitution Reform Council—the next parliament is set to be designated as such besides performing its regular function—fails to complete its work within 270 days of its first sitting, the bill will automatically take effect and be incorporated into the constitution.

Both proposed questions are complex especially when compared to the questions posed in the country's previous three referendums.

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Hasina refuses to apologise

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina has refused to apologise for the deaths of at least 1,400 people during the July Uprising in 2024, and said Bangladesh's interim government would be disenfranchising millions without an inclusive election.

In written responses to Reuters, AFP, and the UK-based Independent – all of them published yesterday – the 78-year-old former leader remained defiant in her exile in New Delhi, rejecting charges of crimes against humanity and describing her ongoing trial as “politically motivated”.

Prosecutors have sought the death penalty for Hasina, accusing her of ordering lethal force

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Israeli airstrikes kill 104 in Gaza

Trump, mediator Qatar confident that shaky truce will hold

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israel said it struck an arms stockpile in Gaza yesterday, hours after the deadliest night of bombing since the start of a US-brokered truce, which killed at least 104 people across the Palestinian territory, warning it would continue to operate to take out perceived threats.

The military announced it had carried out a precision strike on a site in the Beit Lahia area of northern Gaza where it said weapons were being stockpiled for “an imminent terror attack”.

Israeli troops, it said, would remain deployed in “accordance with the ceasefire agreement and will continue to operate to remove any immediate threat”.

Hamas-run Gaza's civil defence agency told AFP that one Palestinian was killed in the latest strike – and that 104 – including 46 children and 24 women – had died in the previous night's bombardment.

The Israeli military launched a wave of bombing after one of



Mourners gather around the bodies of members of the Abu Dalal family, killed in an overnight Israeli strike on their home in Nuseirat, central Gaza Strip, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

its soldiers was killed in Gaza on Tuesday. By mid-morning yesterday it said it had begun “renewed enforcement of the ceasefire”.

Both US President Donald Trump and regional mediator Qatar said they expected the ceasefire to hold, but inside Gaza displaced families were losing

hope.

“We had just started to breathe again, trying to rebuild our lives, when the bombardment came back,” said 31-year-old Khadija al-Husni, a displaced mother living with her children under canvas at a school in Al-Shati refugee camp. United Nations rights chief

Volker Turk said the report of so many dead was appalling and urged all sides not to let peace “slip from our grasp”, echoing calls from Britain, Germany and the European Union for the parties to recommit to the ceasefire.

The Israeli military said that its strikes had targeted 30 senior militants, with Defence Minister Israel Katz maintaining “dozens of Hamas commanders were neutralised”.

Israel said it launched the wave of strikes after reservist Master Sergeant Yona Efraim Feldbaum, 37, was killed in Rafah when his engineering vehicle was hit by enemy fire.

Hamas said its fighters had “no connection to the shooting incident in Rafah” and reaffirmed its commitment to the US-backed ceasefire.

Before the truce, Israel's two-year-long assault on Gaza killed at least 68,643 people, according to figures from the Hamas-run territory's health ministry, which the UN considers reliable.

Bangladesh makes strides in beating food insecurity

A lot more is to be done, says major study

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Despite improvement, at least 16 million people in Bangladesh are still facing severe levels of acute food insecurity, according to a new report prepared by the government and development partners.

The report, presented at a workshop convened by the Ministry of Food with FAO, UNICEF, World Food Programme, Action Against Hunger, and Save the Children, also found that 1.6 million children are acutely malnourished.

In 2024, the number of people facing high food insecurity was 23.5 million, highlighting progress from a coordinated effort by government ministries, humanitarian actors, and development partners.

However, these efforts must not only continue but also be strengthened to ensure lasting change, the report added.

The report was prepared based on a study conducted in April 2025, using the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), a globally recognised tool that helps governments and humanitarian actors understand the severity and geographic spread of food insecurity and malnutrition.

According to the report, between May and December 2025, an estimated 16 million people across 36 districts of Bangladesh and in the Rohingya camps

are facing the crisis.

“Among them, 361,000 people are expected to be in emergency conditions, requiring urgent humanitarian assistance to meet their basic food needs,” the WFP said in a statement.

16m still food insecure, down from 23.5m last year

Crisis most acute in Cox's Bazar, especially in Rohingya camps

1.6m children and 117,000 mothers malnourished

The highest incidence of acute food insecurity was observed in Cox's Bazar, where both Rohingya refugees and the surrounding local populations – particularly in Ukha and Teknaf – are facing severe food insecurity.

Several other districts across Bangladesh are also at high risk, including Sunamganj, Barguna, Bandarban, Noakhali, and Satkhira, where around 25 percent of people are experiencing a high

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Rohingya crisis sidelined at ASEAN Summit

PORIMOL PALMA

The Rohingya crisis was sidelined in the ASEAN Summit in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur on October 26-28, despite it being a regional humanitarian challenge affecting Bangladesh the most.

The event carried special significance due to the presence of major global powers, including the US, China, India, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Canada and South Africa as well as the heads of the World Bank, IMF, ILO and FIFA.

The timing of the event was also important given the global geopolitical shift, the tariff war and the presence of US President Donald Trump, who witnessed the signing of a peace deal between Thailand and Cambodia.

It acceded Timor-Leste and expanded ASEAN, while upgrading trade agreements, especially with China and across the region, to position ASEAN in key global value chains.

The summit addressed regional security issues, including maritime tensions, border disputes, and stability in neighboring countries, but not the Rohingya crisis.

“This is very frustrating,” said Nay San Lwin, co-chair of the Arakan Rohingya National Council (ARNC).

The summit was focused on trade and the economy.

“Everybody was busy with what Trump says – the US president too took credit for the Thailand Cambodia peace deal. But, what did he do for the Rohingya? Don’t they have right to live lives with dignity and

basic rights?”

The one positive aspect was that Myanmar’s Senior General Min Aung Hlaing was not invited to the event.

The Myanmar crisis and its fallouts including the Rohingya have been a much deeper and old regional problem, but global leaders have totally forgotten it, he told The Daily Star from Germany.

While about 750,000 Rohingya fled Myanmar’s Rakhine State and took shelter in Bangladesh in 2017, more than 150,000 of them again fled amid conflicts between the Myanmar junta and the rebel group Arakan Army since 2024.



FILE PHOTO

According to the UN, close to 3.6 million people are estimated to be internally displaced across Myanmar, as the ongoing conflict between the Myanmar junta, which took control of power in 2021, and various non-state armed groups continues to force civilians to flee their homes.

Aid agencies have repeatedly warned of starvation in war-torn Myanmar’s Rakhine State, as well as in the refugee camps in Bangladesh where some 1.2 million Rohingya live.

Of the total demand of \$934 million for the Rohingya humanitarian assistance in Bangladesh, only 38 percent was met this

year.

The summit adopted a four-page declaration, but there’s not a single word mentioning “Rohingya”, said Charles Santiago, co-chair of the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights.

“This means ASEAN does not think the Rohingya is a Myanmar problem. It is indeed a Myanmar problem creating a challenge for the whole region,” he told The Daily Star from Malaysia.

Though Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand have a sizeable number of Rohingya, Bangladesh is bearing the major brunt of the refugee crisis.

As a regional bloc, ASEAN has to take the responsibility to help address the crisis, he added.

“ASEAN cannot overlook a genocide that took place in its member country. Again, now the Myanmar military is preparing for the elections in December, but ASEAN does not appear to have any say on it,” Santiago said.

The UN, the EU and many other rights bodies are saying that the Myanmar elections will be a sham in a civil war and will not send election observers.

But ASEAN is likely to eventually endorse the Myanmar junta election.

“Thus, ASEAN is failing the Rohingya and the civilians of Myanmar seeking democratic rights. I would urge ASEAN to come out of rhetoric and act to protect the Rohingya and other refugees emanating out of Myanmar and oppose the genocidal events,” said Santiago, also a former member of the Malaysian parliament.

Metro rail hits another bump

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Metro rail operations were suspended on the Agargaon to Shahbagh section last night after a technical issue was reported around 9:10pm.

“Metro rail operations remained suspended following a jerk on the Bijoy Sarani-Farmgate part,” Ahsan Ullah Sharifi, deputy director (public relations) of Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit Line-6, told The Daily Star at 9:45pm without providing further details.

According to a metro rail official involved in the operation, the incident prompted the authorities to halt services between Agargaon and Shahbagh.

However, metro services on the Uttara-Agargaon portion continued uninterrupted, said the official, wishing anonymity.

Hours before yesterday’s incident, the metro rail authorities issued a notice reassuring passengers about the safety of its operations. In a statement, Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), the implementing and operating agency of the metro rail project, confirmed that the service was operating in full compliance with all safety regulations.

“Therefore, passengers are kindly requested not to be concerned about safety,” reads the statement signed by AKM Khairul Alam, director (administration) of DMTCL.

This disruption follows a tragic incident on Sunday, when a bearing pad fell from a metro rail pillar in the Farmgate area, killing a pedestrian and injuring two others.



Political rift over July charter widens

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of the views of the “biggest stakeholder” showed that both the commission and the government had favoured a few selected political groups. Some of these groups, they claimed, were now trying to exploit the situation for their own interests.

By moving ahead without political consensus, the government was putting the entire political environment at risk, they warned. Some even questioned the chief adviser’s intention to hold the election in February.

POLIS FIRST: BNP

Speaking at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said the commission had “deceived the people and political parties” through its final recommendations.

“We were surprised to see that the issues on which we disagreed, and for which we gave notes of dissent, were completely ignored,” he said.

Urging Yunus to correct the record by including the BNP’s dissenting notes, he said the chief adviser made a commitment to hold an acceptable election and carry out the necessary reforms.

“The parliament to be formed through that election will be the place to resolve all these crises.... If there is any deviation from this, or if you [Yunus] go beyond it, you will have to take full responsibility,” he warned.

BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed echoed similar frustrations, saying the commission’s proposals did not reflect the

discussions held with political parties nor align with the July charter signed on October 17.

“The report only contains the commission’s proposals. It does not mention what the political parties recommended, where consensus was reached, or where notes of dissent were recorded,” he said while speaking at a seminar.

“If this [omission of notes of dissent] was their plan all along, what was the point of 11 months of dialogue?”

He alleged that several issues now proposed for referendum were never discussed by the commission.

REFERENDUM FIRST: JAMAAT

Jamaat Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher yesterday reiterated the party’s demand that the government hold the referendum before the national polls, warning that any delay could endanger the July charter’s implementation.

The referendum and the election are of different nature; one concerns reform, the other state power, he said at a briefing at Jamaat’s central office in Moghbazar.

“Even if, for any reason, the national election cannot be held on time, even though we believe it will, InshaAllah, the July charter must still be passed,” he said.

Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar also called for an immediate announcement of the referendum date.

“As the head of the government and the consensus commission, it is his [Yunus] duty to dispel the

uncertainty hovering over the nation,” Porwar said. “Only he can clear the clouds from the political sky and give the country hope.”

IMPLEMENTATION FIRST: NCP

NCP Convener Nahid Islam said there was “no scope” for holding the national election unless the July charter was implemented.

“We also want a quick election. An elected government is necessary for stability in the country. Trust is also necessary, and for this reason, the reform process needs to be completed quickly,” he said at an event in Rangpur yesterday.

Nahid reiterated the NCP’s demand for a clear roadmap for the trials of those responsible for killings during the July uprising, reconstitution of the Election Commission, and assurance of a level playing field.

“The EC is losing the confidence of the public and political parties. These issues must be resolved quickly if an election is to be held in February,” he said.

“If any obstruction or delay comes from the government’s side, it will have to face the people,” he warned.

Calling the current situation a “multidimensional crisis”, Nahid said corruption, extortion, land grabbing, and “social fascism” had re-emerged after August 5. “The only way forward is unity,” he said.

At a separate press conference, the party’s Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary alleged that the BNP was trying to “sabotage” the July charter and “bring back the Awami League”.

“For 15 years, they couldn’t shake Hasina’s chair....,” he said.

its exclusion from the political process. “Yunus must reinstate the Awami League to give Bangladeshis the choice they deserve,” she told AFP. **‘DON’T FORGET HER PAST’** Chief Adviser’s Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam has said that those interviewing Hasina should not forget her past actions.

Speaking at a press conference at the Foreign Service Academy in the capital yesterday, he cited UN reports highlighting human rights violations by Hasina. “Moreover, reports from two other international media outlets suggest she gave orders to commit killings,” he said.

“In the 21st century, no one has committed more murders or human rights violations than Sheikh Hasina,” he said.

Asked about the government’s stance on Hasina’s interviews in foreign media, Shafiqul said that the International Crimes Tribunal could comment on the matter.

“We have not yet read the interview. We will comment after reviewing it,” he said.

About Hasina’s call for boycotting elections if the Awami League is barred from contesting, Shafiqul also said he did not foresee any issues.

“The Awami League is not active anywhere. There may be a couple of brief flash processions...and accordingly, some people might get a dollar or two, that’s all.”

The press secretary also criticised the way claims made by Sheikh Hasina are being reported. He accused her of hiring the UK’s most expensive law firms using stolen national funds and said some in the country are promoting these actions. “Her claims should not appear uncontested. Local news media have reported that her party is making claims in the ICC, yet there is no mention of the severe human rights violations she committed. This is unfortunate. We have also seen the Awami League claim that 400 people died, presented as uncontested,” he said.

Govt gears up for polls

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COMPLETE KEY TASKS BY NOV 15

At the meeting, Yunus instructed officials to complete certain key tasks – training Ansar members, procuring body cameras, and establishing committees to counter social media misinformation – by November 15, said Shafiqul.

Another instruction was to make training-related videos and materials available on the EC’s website and television channels, including BTv.

He added that since the parliament is not in session and state-run Sangsad Television is currently unused, the EC can plan to use it for election-related publicity.

Yunus further said, “To make the election festive and participatory, we have to reach people with information about the election code of conduct, voting procedures, and what to do if any disorder occurs.”

Asked whether a specific date was discussed, the press secretary told reporters that the EC said it will announce it in the first week of December.

Regarding concerns about possible attempts to disrupt the polls, he said, “There’s no reason to panic. This will be one of the best elections in Bangladesh’s history.”

The chief adviser’s meeting also emphasised coordination among the government, the EC, and various security agencies.

Meanwhile, the ministries of home and public administration have already begun work on the transfer and posting of officials who will perform election duties, taking into account the importance of the area and the competence of the officers.

At the same time, the EC has started training officials who will be assigned election duties.

The officials who served in the last three national elections will not be assigned this time, Shafiqul said.

“Even those who played a minimal role in those elections will not be assigned duties.”

Headed that during transfers in the local administration, certain factors will be taken into consideration – an officer’s political affiliation, physical fitness, professional competence, and whether any reports of irregularities about them have appeared in the media.

🔗 Polls date to be announced in the first week of December

🔗 Election-related postings to begin from November 1

🔗 Around 92,500 members of the army and navy to be deployed

🔗 Officials involved in the last 3 national polls will not be assigned this time

“The most capable officers will be posted in the most sensitive areas. No one will be posted in their home district or that of their in-laws. It will also be ensured that no officer is assigned to an area where their relatives are contesting in the election.”

These postings will begin on November 1, he added.

Shafiqul further said the home adviser informed the meeting that similar measures are being taken regarding the appointment of law enforcers.

“Discussions were also held on completing postings as early as possible so that officials have enough time to prepare and undergo necessary training.”

DEPLOYMENT OF SECURITY FORCES

The press secretary said that during the discussions, officials informed the meeting that nearly 92,500 members of the army and navy will be deployed across Bangladesh during the polls to ensure security alongside other law enforcement agencies.

Of them, 90,000 will be from the Army, with at least one unit stationed in each upazila.

The meeting also discussed how to maintain law and order before and after the election, Shafiqul added.

COUNTERING DISINFORMATION

The press secretary said a major part of the meeting focused on AI, disinformation, and misinformation.

“One of the major concerns raised was how to quickly debunk false information spreading on social media. It was noted that identifying a piece of misinformation and publicly clarifying it often takes time, during which significant damage can occur.”

“To address this, the meeting discussed setting up a central disinformation monitoring cell and a central communication cell,” he said, adding that the chief adviser stressed the need for fact-checking at not only urban and district levels but also in rural areas.

“Both cells will operate down to the upazila level and will immediately fact-check any false or misleading information and publish the verified results.”

The ministries of ICT and cultural affairs have been instructed to provide technical support for this initiative. “Discussions will also be held with Facebook authorities on the matter,” Shafiqul added.

Hasina refuses to apologise

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against protesters in July and August 2024, when as many as 1,400 people were killed and thousands injured in what the United Nations described as Bangladesh’s worst violence since the 1971 Liberation War.

The Daily Star’s own investigations found that Hasina had personally authorised the use of lethal weapons. This newspaper had reported on a phone recording from July 18, 2024 where Hasina tells her nephew, former Dhaka South mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, “I have given instructions, now I have given direct instructions; now they will use lethal weapons. Wherever they find them [protesters], they will shoot directly.”

Hasina claimed to AFP that the audio had been “taken out of context”.

“The charge that I personally directed security forces to open fire on crowds is bogus,” Hasina told AFP, while conceding that “some mistakes were certainly made within the chain of command.”

The International Crimes Tribunal, Bangladesh’s war-crimes court, is expected to announce the date of verdict on November 13.

Hasina claimed that she was denied adequate time to prepare her defence.

However, she did not surrender before the court and has not engaged any legal defence.

“They’ve been brought by kangaroo courts, with guilty verdicts a foregone conclusion,” she told Reuters, adding that she would “neither be surprised nor intimidated” if she were sentenced to death.

She told the Independent that she “mourns each and every child, sibling, cousin and friend we lost as a nation,” but refused to issue a formal apology, arguing that the unrest was manipulated by her political rivals to topple her government. “I mourn the lives we lost, but I reject the false allegation that I ordered police to shoot demonstrators,” she said.

Hasina also said she had “no intention of seeking asylum beyond India”.

She said she continues to live “quietly

and freely” in Delhi, occasionally walking through the city’s Lodhi Gardens, though she remains cautious given her family’s violent history – her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and three brothers were assassinated in a 1975 military coup. “For Bangladesh to achieve the future we all want, there must be a return to constitutional rule and political stability. No single person or family defines our country’s future,” she said.

She accused the interim government, led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, of denying the Awami League the right to contest elections, calling the move “a dangerous precedent” that “robs the people of their voice”.

“The ban on the Awami League is not only unjust, it is self-defeating,” Hasina told Reuters. Her regime had summarily banned the Jamaat-e-Islami just days before her ouster in 2024.

“Elections without the direct participation of all major parties, including the Awami League, cannot be credible. You cannot disenfranchise millions of people if you want a political system that works,” she said.

Hasina has been accused of disenfranchising millions of voters through holding elections in 2014 and 2024 without the participation of opposition parties.

The Yunus-led interim government banned Awami League’s activities, citing security concerns and ongoing war-crimes investigations into senior party leaders. Any election held under these conditions would “sow the seeds of future division”, Hasina told AFP.

“The next government must have electoral legitimacy,” Hasina told Reuters. “Millions of people support the Awami League, so as things stand, they will not vote.”

She added that she was not asking her supporters to back other parties, but hoped “common sense will prevail” and her party would be reinstated before polling begins.

Sheikh Hasina also said her priority now was “the welfare and stability of Bangladesh”, while her party explores legal and diplomatic avenues to contest

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Pak general meets chiefs of 3 services

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Pakistani delegation led by General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, met Bangladesh's three service chiefs in Dhaka, focusing on enhancing bilateral defence and security cooperation.

Bangladesh Army, Navy, and Air Force, in their verified social media pages, confirmed the developments.

The Pakistani general met Bangladesh's Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman at the Army Headquarters on Tuesday.

Earlier on Sunday, General Mirza met Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Nazmul Hassan at the Naval Headquarters, and Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan at the Air Force Headquarters, according to the notifications.

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A woman struggles to climb onto the footpath as the road in front of Solaiman Tower in the capital's Chawk Bazar remains dug up for over 10 days. The Dhaka South City Corporation excavated the road to install electricity lines, causing suffering to residents and pedestrians. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Grassroots women leading fight for climate resilience

10 honoured as climate champions at MJF convention



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sustainable development is only possible when every vulnerable and marginalised person is protected from the impacts of climate change, said Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan at an event yesterday.

She called for greater investment in micro-level adaptation initiatives, particularly in disaster-affected and river-erosion-prone areas, and stressed

the importance of integrating innovative efforts by local women entrepreneurs into national development planning.

The adviser made these remarks at a day-long convention held at the Aloki Convention Centre in Dhaka. The programme was organised by the Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) under the EmPower: Women for Climate Resilient Societies (Phase II) project, supported by UN Women Bangladesh.

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A 'third force' taking shape?

SHAMIMA RITA and KEERO ADHNAN AHMED

Discussions are underway to form a new nine-party alliance as a potential "third force" ahead of the upcoming national election, with talks reportedly involving the National Citizen Party (NCP), Gono Odhikar Parishad, Amar Bangladesh Party (AB Party), and the Gonotontro Moncho.

Multiple sources within the NCP confirmed the initiative to The Daily Star. They said the initiative aims to build a coalition outside the spheres of the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami.

"The discussion of the nine-party alliance is still at the preliminary stage," an NCP senior leader said, wishing anonymity.

"It's true, the NCP is indeed considering forming an alternative alliance. However, the situation could change before the election," said the NCP leader.

However, other NCP leaders said the party is divided on this issue, with some factions holding talks with parties like BNP and Jamaat about forming alliances or sharing election seats.

Gono Odhikar Parishad, formed by leaders of the 2018 quota reform movement, is open to an alliance with the NCP but has expressed strong reservations about its conduct.

"NCP doesn't have the maturity to lead an alliance. They are a small party with leaders who don't know how to conduct themselves," party General Secretary Rashed Khan told The Daily Star.

He said the NCP had previously proposed integrating the two parties, but the talks soured after NCP leaders made "offensive remarks," something his party "hasn't taken lightly."

Despite this, Rashed said his party is still discussing the NCP's proposed alliance, which was offered "with joint leadership."

He believes the integration of the two parties is also a possibility.

"We have a good understanding with the BNP, too. They are a big party, big enough to lead any alliance. Gono Odhikar Parishad joining an alliance under BNP's leadership is also a strong possibility," he added.

Meanwhile, the AB Party, formed by a reformist faction of Jamaat, said the proposed nine-party alliance has received "positive responses" among its members.

The party's Joint General Secretary, Nasrin Sultana Mily, said, "We, these nine parties, found ourselves to be like-minded political forces in the meetings of the consensus commission."

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Talks are underway to form an alliance among nine parties, including NCP, Gono Odhikar Parishad, AB Party, and Gonotontro Moncho (a coalition of six parties), ahead of the national election in February.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE Govt launches SOP, app to strengthen care for survivors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday launched a standard operating procedure (SOP) to guide healthcare providers in delivering medical, medico-legal, and psychological care to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

Developed with support from UNFPA Bangladesh, the SOP aims to raise awareness among healthcare personnel about SGBV and its consequences, while recognising such violence as a serious public health concern, said officials.

They also said the guidelines would help doctors, nurses, midwives, and sub-assistant community medical officers understand government priorities and compliance requirements in responding to SGBV cases.

As part of the initiative, the government also introduced a mobile application titled "Clinical Management of Rape".

The app aims to improve coordination among healthcare providers, forensic experts, law enforcement, legal professionals, journalists, and social service organisations.

The digital platform is expected to address existing gaps and clarify roles and responsibilities, ensuring more cohesive and survivor-centred services.

- ➔ SOP includes protocols for hospitals, health complexes, welfare centres
- ➔ App to improve coordination among service providers, ensure survivor-centred care
- ➔ Nine ministries collaborate to streamline SGBV response roles

The launch event was organised by the Gender, NGO and Stakeholder Participation Unit (GNSPU) of the Health Economics Unit under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare at the CIRDAP auditorium in Dhaka.

Presenting the SOP, Mohammad Shawkat Hossain Khan, director of the Health Economics Unit, said it includes separate protocols for medical college hospitals, district hospitals, upazila health complexes, maternal and child health training institutes, mother and child welfare centres, and the Mohammadpur Fertility Services and Training Centre.


Prof Md Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser for health ministry, described the SOP as a "bridging" document.

"At least nine ministries are involved, with overlapping responsibilities. Through this SOP, the roles of all relevant agencies – including doctors, police, lawyers, and the social welfare and women and children affairs departments – will become clearer," he said.

UNFPA Bangladesh Representative Catherine Breen Kamkong said, "Through the new SOP and referral protocols, we can ensure timely, compassionate, and survivor-centred care free from stigma or discrimination."

Md Saidur Rahman, secretary of the Health Services Division, stressed the need to make the SOP available in Bangla and ensure it is simple, smart, and user-friendly.

Dr Md Enamul Haque, director general of the Health Economics Unit, and Prof Dr Md Abu Jafor, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services, also spoke at the event.



Students should focus on their studies first and engage in other activities as co-curricular. Not all of you need to get involved in politics. We need to build a society where everyone focuses on their designated duties.

WAHIDUDDIN MAHMUD
Planning Adviser at PPRC discussion

China for smooth polls, deeper ties with Bangladesh

BSS, Dhaka

Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen yesterday expressed China's sincere wish for a smooth general election and continued stability in Bangladesh, reaffirming Beijing's commitment to deepening cooperation on development and modernisation.

He said China stands ready to work with Bangladesh to uphold a people-centred development philosophy and jointly explore a path to modernisation suited to each country's national realities.

Yao made the remarks while speaking at a seminar hosted by the Association of Former Ambassadors at the Foreign Service Academy in Dhaka.

The ambassador highlighted the enduring friendship between the two nations over the past five decades, rooted in mutual respect and win-win cooperation. "Despite changes in the international and regional landscape, our two countries have always developed friendly relations based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence," he said.

He noted that Bangladesh firmly upholds the one-China principle and supports China on matters concerning its core interests, while China respects Bangladesh's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

On economic ties, Yao said Bangladesh was the first South Asian country to join the Belt and Road Initiative, which has created nearly 600,000 jobs in the country.



With an aim to recognise and support promising agricultural students across Bangladesh, Syngenta Bangladesh Limited and The Daily Star have signed a memorandum of understanding to launch the "Proyash Agriculture Scholarship". The signing event was held at the Syngenta Bangladesh office on Sunday.

PHOTO: STAR

Syngenta, Star launch agriculture scholarship

150 students to be awarded in nationwide initiative

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Syngenta Bangladesh Limited and The Daily Star have signed a memorandum of understanding to launch the "Proyash Agriculture Scholarship", a nationwide initiative aimed at recognising and supporting promising agricultural students across Bangladesh.

The MoU was signed at the Syngenta Bangladesh office by Hedayet Ullah, managing director of Syngenta Bangladesh Limited, and Md Tajdin Hassan, chief business officer of The Daily Star, on Sunday.

Representatives from both organisations were present during the signing ceremony.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

SAVAR CLASH

DIU, City University
file counter-cases

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Savar*

The authorities of City University and Daffodil International University (DIU) have filed counter-cases over the violent clash between their students in Savar.

The cases were filed on Tuesday night with Savar Model Police Station, said OC Md Jewel Mia.

City University Registrar Prof Mir Akhter Hossain filed a case, naming one individual, Fahad, and approximately 1,000 unidentified students from DIU, while also implicating certain DIU officials of aiding and abetting the students. The accused face charges of unlawfully assembling while armed, entering the City University campus, vandalising and setting fire to vehicles, using petrol bombs and

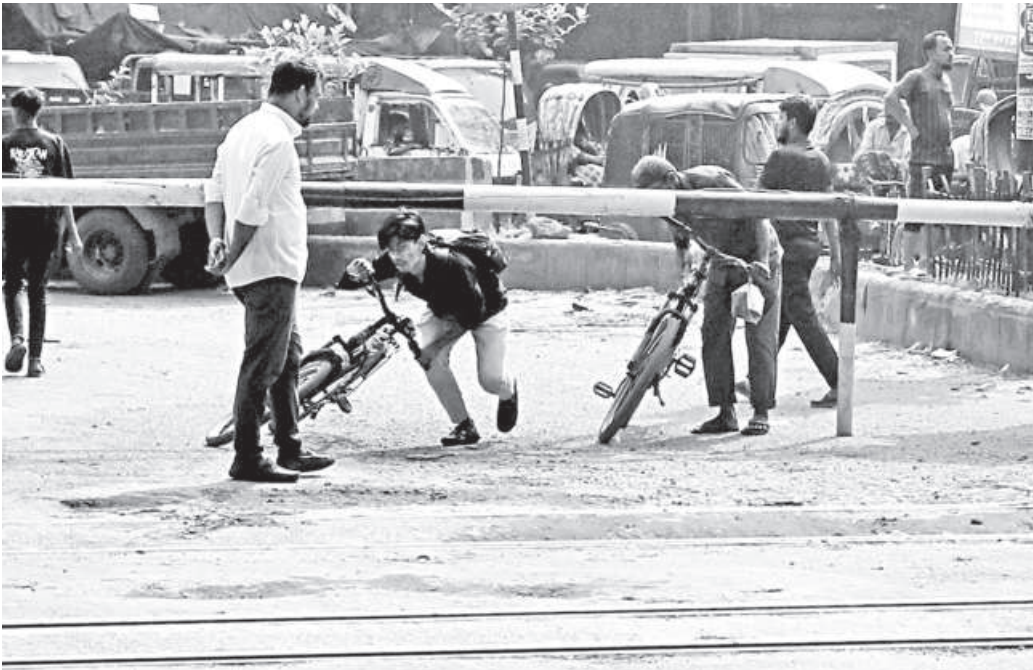
hand grenades, damaging various university offices, looting valuables, and stealing Tk 1.5 million.

On the other hand, DIU assistant administrative officer filed another case against 250 unidentified City University students.

The accused are alleged to have vandalised Bachelor Paradise, a rented dormitory for DIU students, injured over 150 students, taken 11 of them hostage, demanded ransom, detained them overnight, and forcibly extracted statements at gunpoint.

No arrests have been made so far in connection with either case, the OC added.

The clashes erupted on Sunday night following a dispute reportedly triggered by an incident involving spitting.



Despite the rail gate being lowered, cyclists duck underneath to cross the tracks at Tejgaon level crossing in Dhaka, moments before a train passed. In their rush to save a few minutes, they put their lives at serious risk. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

EXTRA-JUDICIAL KILLINGS

ICT sends two
cops to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday ordered to send two police sub-inspectors, accused of killing a Chhatra Dal and Jubo Dal leader in a crossfire a decade ago, to jail.

The tribunal issued the order after the two were produced before it for their alleged involvement in a crimes against humanity case concerning extrajudicial killings.

The two SIs, Md Mahabul Islam and Md Jashim Uddin, were serving as assistant sub-inspectors at Barishal's Wazirpur Police Station at the time of the incident.

According to the prosecution, the officers, on the orders of local police higher-ups, went to Agailjhara upazila and allegedly killed pro-BNP activists Tipu Hawlader and Kabir Mollah on February 21, 2015.

Police then claimed that Tipu and Kabir were accused in two cases filed over petrol bomb attacks that resulted in four deaths.

After the political changeover on August 5 last year, Kabir's son filed a case with a Barishal court and lodged a complaint with the office of the ICT chief prosecutor.

Eight held in
murder case
filed over Ctg
Jubo Dal clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A murder case was filed on Tuesday night over a clash between two rival Jubo Dal factions in Chattogram's Bakalia area that left a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activist dead.

The victim, Md Sajjad, 22, was shot dead during an armed confrontation between supporters of Emdadul Haque Badsha and former city unit JCD president Gazi Siraj Ullah in the Bagar Bilmukh area on Bakalia Access Road early Tuesday. The violence reportedly erupted over the tearing of political banners.

Sajjad's father, Md Alam, filed the murder case with Bakalia Police Station, accusing 17 named individuals and around 40 unnamed others.

Confirming the development, Bakalia Police Station Inspector (Investigation) Mozammel Haque said police arrested eight people, including six named in the case.

"They were picked up from different parts of Bakalia. The arrestees were produced before the court yesterday," the police official said.

Community clinic in
middle of a paddy field

No access road even after 12 years; patients
forced to walk through croplands



OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jamalpur*

In Kamrabad union of Jamalpur's Sarishabari upazila, visitors are met with an unusual sight -- a small community clinic standing alone amid a vast paddy field.

The Char Dharaborsha Community Clinic, built on eight decimals of land, donated by a local, was constructed in 2013 at a cost of Tk 20 lakh under the Directorate General of Health Services.

Although it has been operational since June 2015, even after 12 years no access road has been built leading to the clinic. Patients face severe inconvenience as they must walk about 300 metres along narrow ridges through cropland to reach it.

Nearly 10,000 people from nearby villages depend on the clinic for healthcare services.

Patients and health workers said landowners often verbally abuse them

for crossing their paddy fields.

While movement is somewhat possible during the dry season, during monsoon and floods people have to rely on banana rafts or small boats, or trudge through mud and water to reach the clinic, said Alauddin Sheikh, an elderly resident.

Anguri Begum, another local, said, "No one wants to give up their land for a road. So the access road could not be constructed even in 12 years."

Asmaul Husna, a healthcare provider at the clinic, said, "It's a struggle to come to work here daily. Patients have to walk along field ridges and then climb stairs to reach the clinic. Many don't return after visiting once."

Contacted, Dr Debashish Rajbangshi, upazila health and family planning officer in Sarishabari, said, "We've already informed the higher authorities in this regard. Steps will be taken to construct an access road to the clinic soon."

European Bakery Ingredients Company Seeks
Strategic Partner for Bangladesh Market Entry

Join a Multinational Network offering proven bakery solutions
tailored for Bangladesh's consumer and industrial needs

A leading European bakery company is expanding into Bangladesh and is seeking a business partner or distributor. MTI Consulting - an international strategy consultancy with experience in over 680 projects across 51 countries (www.mtiworldwide.com) - is managing the selection process.

Why Bangladesh?

- Bangladesh's bread and bakery market recorded growth in sales value of 9.8%, reaching \$17.7 billion in 2024
- Annual growth rate: 8.08% (CAGR 2025–2030).
- Third highest per capita bakery consumption in South Asia.
- This is a prime opportunity for growth and partnership.

Partner Requirements

1. Strong Financial Strength
2. Proven track record working with global food brands
3. Ability to serve Industrial and Craft Bakeries, Retail and HoReCa Channels
4. Nationwide Distribution Network and coverage
5. Food-safe logistics and warehousing infrastructure
6. Sales Team: Decentralized, experienced, and nationwide

Benefits

- Represent Leading International Brands in the food and bakery sector.
- Leverage Marketing and Product Placement Expertise to strengthen brand presence and reach.
- Capture significant growth opportunities in Bangladesh's expanding food industry with premium high quality bakery ingredients.

How to Apply

If your organization meets these criteria and is ready to introduce high-quality European bakery products to Bangladesh, please submit a company profile highlighting your strengths in the relevant areas mentioned above.

Email Submission: saima@mtiworldwide.com

Application Deadline: Wednesday, 12th November 2025

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director
Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project
Directorate of Technical Education
Plot -F-4/B, Agargaon, Sher-E-Banglanagar, Dhaka-1207
www.asset-dte.gov.bd

Memo no.: 57.03.0000.051.07.933.25-3780

Date: October 29, 2025

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST - National
(CONSULTING SERVICES – FIRMS SELECTION)

Country: Bangladesh
Project Name: Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project
Credit No.: 6874-BD
Assignment Title: Selection of consulting firm for independent verification of Enterprise Based Training (EBT)
Reference No.: S90

The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The consulting services ("the Services") include conducting Independent Verification of Enterprise Based Training (EBT).

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment *can be found at the following website: www.asset-dte.gov.bd or can be obtained at the address given below.*

The Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project now invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The shortlisting criteria are:

- General Experience of the Firm (core business and years in business, details of business registration certificates, corporate documents).
- Experience in similar assignments of compatible size, complexity and technical specialty in the required area.
- Working experience in the development partner-funded projects will be an added advantage
- Corporate Capacity of the Consultant's organization (manpower resources, financial strength, logistics).

Key Experts will not be evaluated at the shortlisting stage.

Consultants are requested to submit, but not limited to, the following supporting documents in support of the above-mentioned criteria:

(i) Registration paper of the firm(s); (ii) Firm's brochures; and (iii) description of relevant assignments including nature, total cost, total input in terms of man month, employer, location of service etc.);

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to *Section III, paragraphs, 3.15, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" July 2016 [Revised February 2025] ("Procurement Regulations")*, setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

Consultants may associate with other firms to enhance their qualifications but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a joint venture and/or a sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract, if selected.

The experience of sub-consultants will not be taken into consideration in the EOI stage. Please don't consider any sub-consultant at this stage. Each short-listed firm have to show the rationale of association with the sub-consultant at the time of proposal submission and have to be fully justified for due-diligence purpose.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the **Consultants Quality and Cost-based Selection (QCBS)** method set out in the Procurement Regulations.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours. 09:00 to 17:00 hours (GMT+06:00).

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by fax, or by e-mail) by November 17, 2025: 14:00 hours (GMT+ 06:00).


(Mir Zahid Hasan)
Project Director (Additional Secretary)
Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project
04th Floor, Directorate of Technical Education, Agargaon, Dhaka.
Phone: +880-2-410 24953
E-mail: pd@asstet-dte.gov.bd

Moscow tests
nuke-capable
super torpedo
Says Putin; 9 hurt
in Russian strike
on Ukraine hospital

AGENCIES

Russian President Vladimir Putin said yesterday that Russia had tested a Poseidon nuclear-capable super torpedo and that it had been a great success.

US and Russian officials have both described Poseidon as a new category of retaliatory weapon, capable of triggering radioactive ocean swells to render coastal cities uninhabitable, reports Reuters.

Meanwhile, a Russian strike on a children's hospital in southern Ukraine wounded at least nine people, including four children, Ukrainian officials said yesterday, accusing Moscow of a "war crime".

The attack was in Kherson. It still faces regular shelling and drone strikes from Moscow's troops on the opposite side of the Dnipro river.



A resident slides over part of the roof of his house, damaged by Hurricane Melissa, in Santiago de Cuba, Cuba, yesterday. President Miguel Diaz-Canel said Melissa had caused "extensive damage" after making landfall overnight on the southern coast.

PHOTO: AFP

BORDER CONTROL
China, India
to use existing
mechanisms
for ground
issues

REUTERS, Beijing

The Chinese and Indian militaries have had talks on the management of the border the countries share, and both agreed to use existing mechanisms to resolve any "ground issues", the neighbours said yesterday.

New Delhi and Beijing had reached a pact last year on lowering tensions on their Himalayan border, which escalated after a military clash in 2020 in which 20 soldiers from India were killed.

Since the pact in 2024, the countries have taken steps to improve ties, including a resumption of direct flights and enhanced trade flows.

China's defence ministry said in the latest round of talks held on the Indian side of a meeting point on Saturday, the neighbours agreed to continue their dialogue through military and diplomatic channels.

FAILED PEACE TALKS IN ISTANBUL
Pakistan threatens
to 'obliterate' Taliban

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan's defence minister yesterday threatened to "obliterate" the ruling Taliban in neighbouring Afghanistan, a dramatic escalation of rhetoric after the collapse of talks towards a lasting peace between the South Asian nations.

Truce negotiations conducted in Istanbul without a "workable solution", Pakistan's information minister said early yesterday, in a blow for peace in the region after this month's deadly clashes.

Pakistan reacted with fury to the failure of the talks, which sources said ended with a disagreement over militant groups allegedly using Afghanistan as a base to attack its security forces along their border.

"Pakistan does not require to employ even a fraction of its full arsenal to completely obliterate the Taliban regime and push them back to the caves for hiding," Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said in a post on X.

The Taliban and Afghanistan's defence ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on



the remarks.

Dozens were killed this month along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan in the worst such violence since the Taliban took power in Kabul in 2021.

Both nations agreed to a ceasefire brokered in Doha on October 19, but could not find common ground in a second round of talks mediated by Turkey and Qatar in Istanbul, Afghan and Pakistani sources briefed on the issue told Reuters on Tuesday.

Each blamed the other for the failure.

"The Afghan side kept deviating from the core issue ... on which the dialogue process was initiated," Pakistan Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said yesterday, accusing it of engaging in deflection, ruses and playing a "blame game".

"The dialogue thus failed to bring about any workable solution," he added in a statement.

Afghanistan's foreign and defence ministries did not immediately respond to requests from Reuters for comment on the statement.

64 killed in Rio
police raids ahead of
climate conferences

REUTERS, Rio De Janeiro

At least 64 people died on Tuesday in Rio de Janeiro's most deadly police operation ever, which targeted a major gang days before the city hosts global events related to the United Nations climate summit known as COP30.

Police have often conducted large-scale operations against criminal groups ahead of major events in Rio, which hosted the 2016 Olympics, the 2024 G20 summit and the BRICS summit in July.

Next week, Rio hosts the C40 global summit of mayors tackling climate change and Prince William's Earthshot Prize.

250pc tariff
threat averted
Indo-Pak clash
Trump claims at a summit
in S Korea, expects 'great
meeting' with Xi

REUTERS, New Delhi

US President Donald Trump said yesterday he prevented a war between India and Pakistan this year by threatening both nations with 250 percent tariffs, the highest he has mentioned on any country.

"If you look at India and Pakistan ... they were going at it," Trump said at the Asia-Pacific summit in South Korea. "Seven planes were shot down. They were really starting to go."

Trump said he called Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Pakistan's leaders to say that Washington would halt trade and impose the massive tariffs if the fighting that briefly flared up in May continued.

"I said I was going to put 250 percent on each country, which means you'll never do business ... That's a nice way of saying we don't want to do business with you," Trump said, to applause from the audience, as he referred to trade deals with several Asian countries in a speech.

Trump has previously made similar assertions about warning both countries of a halt in trade during the military strikes - assertions that India has dismissed. India and Pakistan's foreign ministries did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Trump's remarks.

Trump said both sides initially resisted his call for a ceasefire, but later backed down.

"They both said, 'No, no, no, you should let us fight.' After literally two days, they called up and said, 'We understand', and they stopped fighting," he said. The US president also voiced optimism for advancing toward major trade deals with Beijing and Seoul, on the eve of crucial talks in South Korea with Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

He told reporters that "a lot of problems are going to be solved" at the "great meeting" today.

"We are willing to work together with the US side to ensure that this meeting yields positive outcomes, provides new guidance, and injects new momentum into the stable development of China-US relations," China's foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said.



IBA

Institute of
Business
Administration

BBA ADMISSION TEST

34th Batch | Session: 2025-2026

BBA Admission Test (Session 2025-26) of the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka will be held on Friday, 28 November 2025 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. For Applicants Who Have Passed SSC and HSC or Equivalent Exams:
Candidates who have passed their HSC or equivalent exam held in 2025 are eligible to apply for the 2025-2026 academic session. They must have a minimum 8.0 as total of SSC & HSC GPA (including the 4th subject) and secure at least 3.5 GPA in both the exams.

2. For Applicants Who Have Passed IGCSE/O-Level and IAL/GCE A-Level or Equivalent Exams:
Candidates who have passed the IGCSE/O-level exam with at least 5 subjects (including Mathematics) and IAL/GCE A-Level exam in at least 2 subjects (final result of at least one subject of IAL/GCE A-Level must have been published in 2025) are eligible to apply. Out of the 7 subjects in IGCSE/O-Level and IAL/GCE A-Level, candidates should get minimum 2 A grades. Students must obtain minimum average grade point of 3.5 (out of 5.0) in both IGCSE/O-Level and IAL/GCE A-Level. The grade point equivalence is as follows: A=5.0, B=4.0, C=3.5, and D=0.0.

Candidates from O-level, A-level, or from any other board outside the country have to obtain "Equivalence Certificate from DU at the beginning of their application process. To get equivalence certificate, please visit the DU admission website (<https://admission.eis.du.ac.bd>). If an applicant faces any difficulty in obtaining "Equivalence Certificate" from DU, s/he is advised to contact "IBA Helpdesk" immediately.

3. No candidate is eligible to sit for this year's admission test if s/he previously appeared in any admission test of the University of Dhaka, including IBA, in 2025 or before.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

The test has two components: Written and Communication. The components of the Written Test evaluate applicant's aptitude in English Language, Mathematics, and Analytical Ability. In order to pass the Written Test, an applicant must obtain a minimum qualifying score in all sections. Applicants will be selected for the Communication Test on the basis of their performance in the Written Test.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The application must be submitted online (<https://admission.eis.du.ac.bd>) by Sunday, 16 November 2025 (till 11:59 PM). Application fee of Tk. 1500 is to be paid by Sunday, 16 November 2025 (till 11:59 PM). The admit card can be downloaded from Monday, 24 November 2025 to Friday, 28 November 2025 (till 9:00 AM).

For detailed application procedure, visit the IBA website (<https://www.iba-du.edu>) or the DU admission website (<https://admission.eis.du.ac.bd>).

For further information, contact the IBA Helpdesk at 01772563303 or 01871130956 between 9:00 AM-4:00 PM on any working day or email at bba-admission@iba-du.edu.

Director
Institute of Business Administration
University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000

ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED
395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka-1208

Local Press Tender Notice

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from Genuine Importers/ related Suppliers for Supply of following items for Male Latex Condom of Khulna Essential Latex Plant (KELP) on urgent basis:

S.L No.	Tender No. Date	Name of the Item	Cost of Tender Schedule	Last date of Closing & opening
01.	EDCL(KELP)/PUR/RM/LT/2025/397 Dt. 29/10/2025	Raw Materials & Compounding Chemicals for producing Male Latex Condom: 01.Trisodium Phosphate 2.Magnesium Carbonate 03.Magnesium Oxide 04.Silicone Emulsion 05.Sulphur Powder 06.Zinc Dibutyl Dithiocarbamate (ZDBC) 07. Zinc Diethyl Dithiocarbamate (ZDEC) 08. Zinc Oxide 09. Wingstay L (Kumanox) 10. Potassium Hydroxide (KOH) 11. Tamol NN 12. Bentonite Clay 13.Oleic Acid (Details as per Tender Schedule)	Tk. 1500.00/set Non-refundable	Closing : 16/11/2025 at 3.00 PM Opening :16/11/2025 at 3.15PM

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of Essential Drugs Company Limited, Dhaka on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

The Tender will be accompanied by a amount of Earnest Money mentioned above in the form of Bank Draft/Pay order from any schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favour of " Essential Drugs Company Ltd" without which the Tender will be considered as non-responsive.

EDCL authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever

Deputy Manager & Current Charge
Procurement Deptt.
For: Managing Director.

Size-(7inc x 4el)

‘One Battle After Another’ dominates Gotham Awards with record six nominations

Paul Thomas Anderson’s war epic *One Battle After Another* has made history at the 38th Gotham Awards, earning a record six nominations — the highest ever for a single film. The \$130 million action-drama leads in major categories, including Best Feature, Best Director (Paul



Thomas Anderson), Best Lead Performance (Benicio Del Toro, Teyana Taylor), Best Supporting Performance (Chase Infiniti), and Breakthrough Performer (Chase Infiniti). Its dominance signals a shift for the Gothams, which previously limited entries to low-budget productions. Joining Anderson’s film in the Best Feature race are *Bugonia*, *Hamnet*, and *The Testament of Ann Lee*, among others. Winners will be announced on December 1 in New York, marking the start of an intense awards season.



15 Stories by the Songwriters’ Collective: Where musicmen share their journey

Following the success of *First Draft*, The Songwriters’ Collective is back with another original music showcase, titled, *15 Stories*, presented by Yamaha Music Bangladesh. The event aims to celebrate the craft of songwriting by featuring 15 singer-songwriters who will share not only their songs but also the stories and creative processes behind them. The exciting lineup includes Joy Shahriar, Aseer Arman, Imtiaz Barshon, Rayhan Islam Shuvro, A K Rahul, Mumtahina Mehabin (Modernotaku), Ishmamul Farhad, Rodoshi, Samin Yasar, R Bashar Lisan, Pehnaz Upama, Aung, Tanzir Shuddho, Muhib Faysal Lincon, and Maruf Mia. True to the spirit of originality, the event proudly declares—No Covers Allowed! — ensuring every performance remains an authentic reflection of the artiste’s personal expression. The show will take place on Friday, November 7 at the Yamaha Flagship Center, Haque Center, Tejgaon. Gates open at 5pm, and tickets are priced at Tk 500. For music lovers who value creativity and community, *15 Stories* promises an intimate evening of stories, songs, and soulful ambience. Tickets are available online via ashor. live.

Palestinian women reclaim their voices through cinema at Gaza festival



The Gaza Strip recently hosted the first Gaza International Festival for Women’s Cinema, held in Deir al-Balah on October 27, highlighting Palestinian women’s resilience through film amid two years of Israeli bombardment. Organised with support from the Palestinian Ministry of Culture and global arts institutions, the festival opened with *The Voice of Hind Rajab*, winner of the Silver Lion Grand Jury Prize at the 82nd Venice International Film Festival. Festival founder Ezzaldeen Shalh said the event aimed to give women “a platform to reclaim their narratives” and inspire more to enter filmmaking. The festival marks women’s resilience amid Gaza’s crisis.

WHAT’S THE HAPS?

‘GAANWALADER GAAN 2’

Gaanwalader Gaan 2 brings together Bangladesh’s vibrant singer-songwriter scene, featuring performances by Autumnal Moon, Labik Kamal Gaurav, Khayam Sanu Sandhi, Angel Noor, Sohan Ali, Sahos Mostafiz, and Nahed Hasan. Organised by Aajob Karkhana with Aajob Records and the Bangladesh Singer-Songwriters Hub, the event promises a captivating musical experience. **Date:** Friday, Oct 31, 2025 **Time:** 5pm-9pm **Venue:** Jatra Birti





Sam Mendes’ four-part Beatles biopic confirms cast, release date

Oscar winning filmmaker Sam Mendes is set to direct *The Beatles – A Four-Film Cinematic Event*, an unprecedented biopic told through four separate films, each from the perspective of one band member. Paul Mescal will play Paul McCartney, Harris Dickinson takes on John Lennon, Joseph Quinn portrays George Harrison, and Barry Keoghan stars as Ringo Starr. The project, produced by Neal Street Productions, marks the first time Apple Corps Ltd, along with the Beatles and their families, have granted full rights for a scripted feature. All four films are slated for an April 2028 release, with Mendes aiming to create a “cinematic mosaic” celebrating the band’s legacy and individuality.

NEWS

Evictions, bar on outsiders spark debate

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of ordinary people. From that perspective, it cannot be separated from them.” She added that the emotions, political awareness, and culture of ordinary citizens are intertwined with DU. “If there were no space for common people here, it would neither be accepted by them nor look right.” On security concerns, she said the authorities must take proactive steps to ensure safety and curb drug abuse, but not through blanket restrictions. “You [the administration] cannot impose total bans, especially when the campus sits at the heart of the capital. Nor can you shift the responsibility elsewhere when you fail to provide safety to the students. Authorising others to evict hawkers by labelling them as security threats is not a solution.” Left-leaning student coalition Gonotantrik Chhatra Jote alleged that during a drive on Saturday, several hawkers and pedestrians were assaulted. At a press conference on Tuesday, it said Ducsu representatives vandalised vans, seized cash and goods, and harassed female hawkers, terming the drive “inhumane” and “excessive.” Muzammel Haque, president of DU Socialist Students’ Front, said, “We stand in moral solidarity with the evicted hawkers and refugees. We see their struggle as a state issue. This small business community remains powerless and exploited, forced into debt and daily hardship. “It was the state’s duty to ensure they could safely operate as small entrepreneurs and be allocated proper spaces. The government has failed in that duty. As university students, we have a responsibility to look for humane and practical solutions. But in reality, we saw members of the proctorial team and Ducsu leaders beginning evictions without discussion or policy.” He called on the government to rehabilitate the evicted hawkers and ensure alternative means of livelihood. Muzammel further claimed that during an operation, a rickshaw-puller was beaten near Shahbagh while a DU student was detained by the proctorial team, which also checked his phone. “The student later described the incident in a Facebook post.” Contacted by The Daily Star, Ducsu Welfare and Social Service Secretary AB Zubayer said the drives were conducted in coordination with the administration. “These aren’t new; they’re part of regular procedures. We’ve been assisting the administration

Air pollution killed

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was exposed to unsafe dust levels at least once. Between 2016 and 2022, Bangladesh’s CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels surged by 30 percent, reaching 103,891 kilotonnes. Coal’s share in total energy rose from 1.3 percent in 2016 to 5.4 percent in 2022. The rise in coal-based electricity mirrored this trend, increasing from 4.3 percent to 5.5 percent, while renewable energy accounted for just 0.1 percent of total energy and 0.85 percent of electricity in 2022. The report also said, in 2022, fossil fuels powered 98.5 percent of all road transport in Bangladesh. Climate change has also made conditions more favourable for disease vectors, with suitability for dengue transmission rising by 90 percent in 2015–2024, compared to 1951–1960. In 2024, nearly 14 million people in Bangladesh lived less than one metre above sea level, making them highly

Bangladesh makes strides

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level of food insecurity. Key drivers of food insecurity include climatic shocks such as the widespread flooding in 2024, which severely disrupted livelihoods and slowed recovery; economic shocks, including persistent inflation and market volatility that weakened purchasing power, especially for low-income groups; and humanitarian funding cuts combined with increased needs among the Rohingya population. The study also highlighted a worrying nutrition crisis. In 2025, 1.6 million children

since the new Ducsu was formed.” Denying the allegations of assault, he said hawkers were repeatedly warned to leave by the proctorial team before the eviction began. “It was the team’s decision to seize their belongings.” Samina Luthfa, professor of sociology, said restricting campus access is nothing new. “These restrictions began during the Awami League’s tenure, and since then we’ve witnessed the rise of fascism. Shrinking the public sphere is how influential political forces hold on to power — by silencing criticism and stifling debate. We’ve seen it for years.” Former Ducsu general secretary Mushtuq Husain called the eviction drive “one-sided and authoritarian”. “It’s an unprecedented and naive move by the current Ducsu leadership... So many stakeholders are involved. They should have discussed it with student groups, alumni, and representatives of the hawkers before acting.” Ania Fahmin, a student of social sciences, said branding hawkers as “drug dealers” is discriminatory. “There’s a common perception that low-income people or slum dwellers are involved in drug dealing or harassment. But it’s unexpected that DU students share such perceptions.”

50 hurt

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But around 2:00pm, the procession broke a police barricade on Link Road near the Secretariat, prompting police to use force, said Sardar Bulbul, inspector (patrol) of Shahbagh Police Station. Sound grenades and water cannons were used to disperse the demonstrators, he said. Following the clash, at least 50 injured individuals were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said Md Faruk, the in-charge of the DMCH police camp.

Call grows for free media commission

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reaffirmed his party’s pledge to establish an independent media commission — a key component of the BNP’s 31-point outline for state reforms. Rezvanul Haque Raja, president of the Broadcast Journalists Centre and news editor at Maasranga Television, said, “If the media is the fourth estate, why did the National Consensus Commission ignore its recommendations?” Dr SM Rezwan Ul Alam, associate professor of media, communication and journalism at North South University, said not just the state, but a very few organisations have seriously reviewed the Media Reform Commission’s findings. Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam said an independent media commission is the precondition to structural change in the media landscape. He expressed concerns about the government’s willingness to implement the proposals made by the media reform commission. “I’m not sure how far this government will go [on this issue]. There are many obstacles ahead. That’s why journalists, editors, and media owners themselves must become more aware of our collective interests and strengthen our own ethical foundations.” Speakers also highlighted the importance of protecting journalists

KL to open its labour market

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year, where the Malaysian delegation assured equal treatment for Bangladesh under uniform selection standards. Following this, Malaysia shared its updated ‘Recruiting Agent Selection Criteria’ on Tuesday, which will also apply to agencies from India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Myanmar, ministry officials said. The ministry circular outlined several key requirements for agencies wishing to take part in the labour recruitment process. These include agencies with a minimum of five years of operational experience, evidence of sending at least 3,000 workers abroad over the past five years, and experience of sending workers to at least three countries. Besides, the agencies must have permanent office spaces of no less than 10,000 square feet and be operational for at least three years. They are also required to maintain training and assessment centres with accommodation facilities, technical training and induction facilities, and must hold certificates of good conduct, free from any involvement in

from the influence of political parties and the corporate interests of media owners. Mahfuz said political affiliation of journalist unions remains one of the major obstacles to independent journalism in Bangladesh. “As long as our journalist unions remain divided along political lines, there will be no independent journalism.” Raja added to that by saying, “Until the BNP era, journalist unions were united. Then divisions began later — a BNP Jamaat leaning group, an Awami League leaning group, and a left-leaning group. That split has only deepened over time. Until recently, both unions maintained offices at the Press Club. But after August 5, one group was expelled and locked out, while another continues to operate freely. So, what exactly has changed since August 5?” On the relationship between owners and editors, Mahfuz highlighted the need for clarity on what rights owners should have and where those should end, adding that media owners must stay out of newsrooms. “A hospital is founded by a businessman, but it needs a doctor to operate it. Similarly, a media house should be run by journalists, not owners.” MRDI Executive Director Hasibur said, “Dishonesty begins at the contract level when owners claim journalists are

paid per the wage board, which they are not.” He called for transparency in media ownership and urged media houses to publicise their financial audit reports. “No government will give autonomy to BTV,” said Kamrunnesa Hasan, deputy director general of BTV and member of the media reform commission. “The state broadcaster has long been a political organisation and that has not changed.” National Consensus Commission’s Joint Member Secretary Mushfiq-us-Salehin said the country has witnessed “a capture of the media” following the July uprising and expressed concern over its possible misuse in the upcoming election. “There has been a kind of reverse partisan alignment.” Asked about the recent acquisition of two television licenses by two members of the National Citizen Party, he said, “Since we cannot change the rules of the game, we’re being forced to participate in this flawed system.” Devan Hanif Mahmud, general secretary of the Editors’ Council and editor of Bonik Barta, said journalists here face severe financial insecurity, forcing many to pursue additional work outside the profession. “Even editors often engage in things that don’t align with their professional role.”

be fully open to the eligible agencies starting January next year. Ali Haider Chowdhury, former secretary general of the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira), raised concerns about the feasibility of the new criteria. He pointed out that the criteria for agencies to have a permanent office of at least 10,000 square feet could pose a significant hurdle for most local agencies, out of 3,000, which typically operate from much smaller offices. “Many agencies only have around 800 to 1,000-square-foot office spaces, and the requirement for a 10,000-square-foot office is not realistic,” Haider said, adding that it will be almost impossible for agencies to comply with the requirements in nine days. He opined that only about 10 to 12 agencies would be able to meet the strict criteria, although he acknowledged the opening of the Malaysian labour market for Bangladeshi workers as a positive development. Still, he was cautious that shady dealings could continue even under the new system.

Wet Markets to Super Shops:

HOW BANGLADESH LEARNT TO SHOP SMART



PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

wet markets that once pulsed with life became sites of fear. Health-conscious consumers sought distance and reliability, and super shops stepped in. Online ordering, digital payments and doorstep delivery became lifelines. Once people learnt groceries could arrive with a few taps, the old model of navigating crowded lanes felt outdated. The pandemic did not just accelerate digital retail; it normalised it. For many, that was the moment grocery shopping permanently moved from a social ritual to a private, efficient routine.

THE ROAD AHEAD AND MEMORY
Today urban consumers are as likely to tap an app as to walk into a store. QR code payments, loyalty programmes and express deliveries are part of everyday life. Shopping is more about efficiency, a task to be managed, not an outing to be enjoyed. Behind the scenes retailers have built cold chain networks, warehouse automation and sourcing partnerships to keep up with demand. Organised retail, though still a fraction of total retail activity, has been growing faster than other segments, and it is expanding beyond megacities into secondary towns.

Still nostalgia refuses to fade. For many the smell of fresh coriander, the banter of vendors and the art of bargaining remain irreplaceable. The super shop may have redefined convenience, but it has also reshaped community. The wet market was a place where neighbours met and stories were exchanged; now shopping is often solitary or digital. In that exchange the country has gained cleaner food, consistent quality and more time for family, but it has also tidied away a part of its collective character.

From the clamour of open markets to the calm of climate-controlled aisles, Bangladesh's journey from wet markets to modern stores is a story of development and desire. A generation ago shopping meant trusting a person; today it often means trusting a system. That shift is one of the clearest symbols of how the country itself has modernised.

Bangladesh's retail and wholesale sector now contributes nearly 14% of GDP, with organised retail growing faster than any other segment. Super shops like Shwapno have expanded to over 750 outlets nationwide, redefining how the nation buys its daily essentials.

FARHAN MUSFIQUE

The smell hits first. In Dhaka's Karwan Bazar, the air is thick with the mingled scent of hilsa, coriander and sweat. Under tarpaulin roofs sellers shout prices over the hum of traffic, feet splash through puddles, and bargaining is both ritual and survival. For decades that was the unshakeable rhythm of Bangladeshi life. A world of trust built on faces, not price tags.

Now picture the contrast: the hum of an air conditioner, aisles lined with fluorescent lights, trolleys gliding over polished floors and the faint electronic beep of a barcode scanner. In less than two decades grocery shopping in Bangladesh has quietly changed, and everyday habits have slowly shifted. What was once a social act rooted in haggling and habit has become a streamlined experience defined by hygiene and efficiency. The question is not whether the shift happened but how an entire nation learnt to shop smart.

TIME CHANGED HOW WE SHOP
Until the early 2000s the typical Bangladeshi household revolved around a set routine. Each week family members visited the local mudir doka for basics and the nearest wet market for perishables. The neighbourhood grocer was more than a merchant; he was an informal banker and an extension of family life. Buying rice or

lentils came with gossip, community updates and the occasional loan noted in a worn notebook. The experience was deeply personal but far from perfect. Prices fluctuated daily, and hygiene could be inconsistent. For working mothers and domestic helps alike, grocery shopping was both a duty and a drain on time. In the absence of refrigeration and standardised packaging, trust rested entirely on human relationships. It was a system that worked until modern life made it hard to sustain.

TRUST BECOMES EVERYDAY CURRENCY
As Dhaka's skyline rose with apartment blocks and its streets filled with urban professionals, expectations shifted. With more women in the workforce and smaller family units, time became precious. Exposure to organised retail abroad sparked fresh demands for cleanliness and convenience. A growing middle class wanted fixed prices, neat aisles and clear separation between meat and vegetables. The first organised super

shops appeared, but adoption was slow. Many shoppers dismissed them as costly and distrusted packaged produce until quality controls and brands proved reliable. Chains like Shwapno and others helped by showing how branding accessibility and reliable sourcing could bridge tradition and modernity. Packaged goods with clear expiry dates and labelled origins reassured wary buyers. Investment in cold chain logistics meant fish, meat and dairy reached stores fresher and safer. Smaller vendors adapted too, some by improving hygiene or teaming with collection points and micro distribution. The change widened choice and convenience while keeping many neighbourhood sellers in the mix for fresh finds and daily chat and local traditions.

THE PANDEMIC PROPELLED DIGITAL HABITS
The real breakthrough came in 2020 when the pandemic turned shopping habits inside out. Overnight crowded

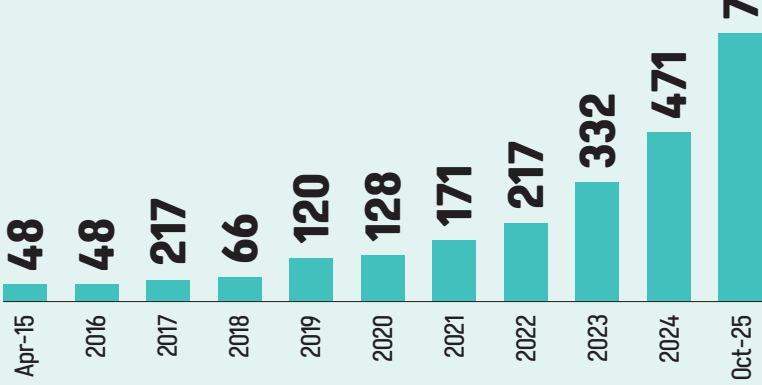


In February 2025, the interim government has removed extra 7.5% trade VAT at super shops; keeping prices at product MRPs.

Steps to strengthen retail shopping across Bangladesh

- Open compact outlets tailored for smaller towns with lower operating costs.
- Use flexible pricing models and micro promotions to match local purchasing power.
- Prioritise sourcing from local farmers and suppliers direct and fresh to boost sustainability and trust.

Shwapno's outlets over the years



2000

PQS debuts with first outlet in Uttara.

2001

Rahimafrooz launches Agora, quickly becoming the face of the "super shop" era.

2002

Gemcon Group introduces Meena Bazar with its first store in Dhanmondi.

2008

ACI Logistics enters the scene with Shwapno aiming for broader accessibility beyond premium areas.

2011

First Consolidation: Agora acquires PQS

2013

United Group launches Unimart, introducing large, high-end "one-stop" shopping.

2014

PRAN-RFL starts Daily Shopping, focusing on a citywide network.

FROM KIOSKS TO CLIMATE CONTROL – THE MILESTONES

2013-2017

E-Grocery takes off with Chaldal pioneering dark-store delivery, with online food retail gaining momentum, especially during the pandemic.

2022

Shwapno becomes the first GLOBALG.A.P. member among Southeast Asian retail chains.

2022

Cross-Border Acquisition: Softlogic (Sri Lanka) acquires Agora, a landmark international deal.

2023

Unimart opens a massive 60,000 sq ft flagship store in Gulshan-1.

2023-2025

Shwapno continues to grow rapidly with frequent new outlets.



PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

The ongoing interplay between wet markets and supermarkets underscores the dynamic nature of Dhaka's consumer landscape.

TAGABUN TAHARIM TITUN
The vibrant pulse of Dhaka city beats to many rhythms, and among them is the perpetual debate over where to buy the day's groceries. For millions, this isn't just a transactional decision; it's a reflection of lifestyle, values, and the ever-evolving urban experience. A traditional "kacha bazar" is loud and busy, while a modern supermarket has bright, clean aisles. Each one offers a

perfectly: "When I shop at the kacha bazar, I know the fish and meat are truly fresh, brought in the same day. There is a transparency you don't always find elsewhere; no worries about items being frozen and sold days later." This assurance of direct-from-source produce resonates deeply, particularly when it comes to highly perishable goods. Beyond freshness, the wet market offers a dynamic pricing experience. The opportunity to haggle



different experience for the shopper.
THE ALLURE OF AUTHENTICITY
For many seasoned shoppers, the traditional wet market remains unrivalled, primarily for its promise of unparalleled freshness. Habibul Alam, a father of two, deeply rooted in the city's ways, articulates this sentiment

and secure a better deal, particularly in the evening when vendors are keen to clear their stock, is a cherished aspect for many. One shopper observes, "Super shops have fixed prices." Here, there is a dance, a negotiation that can sometimes get you a much better price, especially for vegetables." This direct interaction with vendors also fosters a



sense of community and connection, which often goes missing in more formalised retail environments.
THE CALL OF CONVENIENCE
Conversely, the rapid pace of life in Dhaka has propelled many towards the undeniable convenience of supermarkets. For a young, working professional navigating a demanding

schedule, the appeal is clear. Mithila Rahman, a private banker, notes, "Supermarkets are simply more practical for my lifestyle. They are often closer to home, and I can quickly grab what I need without spending too much time. I can purchase in any quantity without having to have a lengthy conversation because everything is priced clearly." The often chaotic and sensory-rich environment of a wet market, with its distinct smells and crowded pathways, can be a deterrent for those seeking a more streamlined and comfortable shopping experience, especially during Dhaka's often challenging climate. The ease of navigating well organised aisles, often air-conditioned, provides a stark contrast to the bustling, open-air markets, offering a quick and efficient solution for daily necessities.

BLENDING BOTH WORLDS
A growing segment of Dhaka's population effortlessly navigates both shopping realms, leveraging the unique benefits of each. A university lecturer exemplifies this hybrid approach, explaining, "Sometimes, when I want a relaxed shopping trip, perhaps to pick up some imported items or specific gourmet ingredients for guests, I take my kids to a nearby super shop." It is

a pleasant outing." These trips are often about more than just groceries; they are leisure activities. However, for a truly authentic culinary experience, the wet market beckons. "But when I'm looking for a specific seasonal fish, or perhaps various local vegetables that are harder to find in supermarkets, the local wet market is my go-to," he adds. This selective approach highlights that for many, the choice is not mutually exclusive but rather complementary, dictated by specific needs, desired experiences, and the type of items being sought. As various Bangladeshi newspaper articles have pointed out, the rise of both formats indicates a diverse consumer base with evolving preferences, where traditional markets continue to thrive alongside modern retail chains.

THE EVOLVING LANDSCAPE
The ongoing interplay between wet markets and supermarkets underscores the dynamic nature of Dhaka's consumer landscape. While concerns about supply chains and freshness persist for some regarding supermarkets, their growth reflects a demand for convenience, hygiene, and a wider array of products, including imported goods. Conversely, wet markets, despite challenges like infrastructure and hygiene, continue to be central to daily life, offering not just fresh produce but also a cultural experience and a crucial livelihood for countless vendors. As the city grows and consumer habits shift, both retail models are constantly adapting, ensuring that Dhaka's residents have a plethora of choices in their daily quest for sustenance.

THE REINVENTION OF SHWAPNO

From Retail Underdog to Market Leader

“If it only serves the elite, it will never scale. We decided to build a brand that belongs to the middle-class family, to the teacher, the banker, the homemaker, and that shift in mindset changed everything.”
Sabbir Nasir
Managing Director, Shwapno

A decade ago, few would have bet on Shwapno's survival, let alone its dominance. Between 2010 and 2013, the Bangladeshi grocery chain operated only 37 to 38 outlets and struggled to stay afloat. Today, with more than 750 stores nationwide, Shwapno stands as the country's largest grocery retailer and one of its most remarkable turnaround stories. Once mired in heavy losses and internal doubts, the company has posted positive EBITDA for eight consecutive years.
The transformation is inseparable from Managing Director Sabbir Nasir, who took charge in 2012 amid widespread scepticism. "Vendors had lost trust, employees were demoralised, and even the parent company considered closing it," he recalls. "But I believed modern retail could serve everyday Bangladeshi households."
REIMAGINING MODERN RETAIL
At the time, supermarkets in Bangladesh were viewed as playgrounds for the affluent. Shwapno's stores, dimly lit and poorly stocked, did little to change that perception. Nasir's challenge was not just to fix operations but to reimagine the very idea of what a supermarket could be.
"We asked ourselves: who is modern retail for?" says Nasir. "If it only serves the elite, it will never scale. We decided to build a brand that belongs to the middle-class family, to the teacher, the banker, the homemaker, and that shift in mindset



changed everything."
From that decision came a transformation built on four pillars: value for money, convenience, trust, and bond. The goal was to make modern retail accessible, fair, and emotionally resonant.
THE LOOP OF CONFIDENCE
Shwapno's turnaround began with what Nasir calls the "loop of confidence," a virtuous cycle linking employees, customers, suppliers, and investors. "We realised that if we could win back the customer's confidence first, everything else would follow," he explains. "Satisfied customers bring more sales; that restores investor faith, re-engages suppliers, and reignites employee pride. It's a simple loop, but once it starts moving, it feeds itself."
The company began investing in retail training, from housekeeping to category planning, disciplines long neglected in Bangladesh's grocery sector. Headquarters adopted strategic merchandising frameworks, while field teams learned to connect daily execution with the brand's long-term purpose. Over time, these efforts evolved into what employees now call the "Value Tree," a symbolic guide to Shwapno's culture, rooted in consumer centricity and nourished by pragmatism.
THE SCIENCE OF EVERYDAY RELEVANCE
By 2012, Shwapno's leadership understood a crucial insight about the

Bangladeshi middle class: time and proximity mattered more than price alone. Shwapno leaned into this truth, pioneering hyper-local expansion strategies while building digital systems to support them.
Behind the scenes, its SAP backbone was reinforced by proprietary software linking SKU-level sales data with neighbourhood demographics. "We didn't want to rely on instinct anymore," says Nasir. "We wanted to make retail scientific to predict demand, not just react to it."
This combination of technology and touch, data-driven precision blended with personal service, became a hallmark of Shwapno's operating philosophy.
INNOVATION BEYOND THE AISLES
In its early years, Shwapno broke class barriers with bold, price-focused campaigns and live fish aquariums that blended wet-market familiarity with modern retail. As profits rose, it expanded into sustainability and inclusion, becoming South and Southeast Asia's first retailer to adopt GLOBAL.G.A.P. standards and earning HACCP certification for food safety. Shwapno also championed diversity by hiring people with disabilities, third-gender individuals, and rural entrepreneurs. "Profit alone doesn't define progress," says Nasir. "Real innovation creates fairness and inclusion."
FRANCHISE MODEL INNOVATION AND SHARED GROWTH
Perhaps the boldest step in Shwapno's

transformation was its franchise model innovation. Instead of pursuing a conventional franchise system, Shwapno introduced a pseudo-equity partnership model—a reimagined approach that invited small local investors to fund store spaces while the company handled operations, branding, and supply chain management. Profits were shared at the gross margin level, ensuring that incentives remained aligned and expansion could accelerate without relying heavily on debt.
"We wanted others to share in the growth," Nasir explains. "Not just as franchisees, but as genuine partners with real skin in the game."
CONFIDENCE AS CAPITAL
Shwapno's rise was not just about numbers but narrative, a belief that confidence, not capital, is the foundation of transformation. The company blended efficiency with empathy, technology with trust, and purpose with pragmatism.
"Bangladesh's retail revolution didn't start with technology or money," Nasir reflects. "It started with a belief that our people, our farmers, and our customers deserved better. Once that confidence took root, everything else followed."
From an underdog clinging to survival to a market leader redefining modern retail, Shwapno's journey offers a simple but profound lesson: in business, as in life, transformation begins not with perfection but with purpose.

LAW OPINION

Approaching the university ward quota debate: Rajshahi University in context

KMS TAREQ

Rajshahi University has been thrown into turmoil. Following the anti-discrimination movement in Bangladesh last year, Rajshahi University cancelled the ward quota, which paved the way for easy undergraduate admission for the children of academic and administrative staff. As the staff insisted on the restoration of the quota, on 18 September, the University restored the quota upon certain conditions. It led to the students protesting against the decision.

The claim has sparked heated debates concerning merit and quotas, as staff claim the quota as their institutional right, while students argue it is a discriminatory practice. The word 'right'

held. Without that correlative duty, there is no true right. By contrast, a privilege may mean I am free to do something, but no one else bears a duty to support or preserve it. If I have the privilege to walk on my own land, you have no right to stop me- but equally, you have no duty to ensure that I continue to own land to walk upon. Privilege is paired not with duty but with another's no-right. This distinction matters because it separates enforceable claims from negotiable benefits. Rights can be

category. They are not constitutionally recognised as a disadvantaged section of citizens. No duty, therefore, was imposed on Rajshahi University to sustain the quota. It was a policy choice, not a constitutional command.

On the above, from a Hohfeldian perspective, the staff quota was never a right backed by duty. It was a privilege: a discretionary benefit created by the university, paired with the no-right of outsiders to demand its continuation.

Yet Hohfeld does not end the story. Even where no legal right exists, the law sometimes recognises the unfairness of taking away a long-standing benefit without consultation. This is where Lord Denning enters the scene.

In Schmidt v Secretary of State for

without fairness or hearing, could be struck down as arbitrary.

Applied to Rajshahi, the staff quota may not have been a right in Hohfeld's sense, but its decades-long operation created reliance. Its abrupt abolition, without consultation or transitional measures, could be said to frustrate a legitimate expectation. That does not mean the quota must be restored, but it does mean the university owed its staff a fairer process in withdrawing it.

Now, the Rajshahi University dispute cannot be separated from the wider national context. On one hand, students argued that quotas not tied to present disadvantage were discriminatory, limiting opportunities for talented candidates. Their demand was for a level playing field where merit should prevail. Against that backdrop, the staff's call for a fresh quota appears rather tone-deaf. At a time when students across the country are challenging entrenched privileges, defending special preferences for relatively secure groups such as university academic and administrative staff risks fuelling resentment and undermining the legitimacy of the broader system of affirmative action.

Yet staff anger cannot be dismissed entirely. For many, the quota symbolised recognition of their contribution to the university. Its abrupt withdrawal, without dialogue or alternative benefits, was bound to create resentment. Institutions thrive on more than formal rules; they also depend on trust. When people feel their expectations are ignored, they often turn to protest and disruption- as the current boycott shows. The challenge for Rajshahi University is, therefore, twofold: to uphold fairness for the wider applicant pool while still acknowledging the loyalty and service of its staff.

The Rajshahi quota dispute is more than an internal quarrel. It is a test of how institutions in Bangladesh balance rights, privileges, and expectations. Hohfeld teaches us that without a corresponding duty, there is no right- only a privilege. Denning shows us that even privileges can ripen into legitimate expectations that require fairness in their withdrawal.

The lesson is simple but urgent: we must be precise about what counts as a right, cautious about defending privileges, and careful to respect legitimate expectations. Only then can our institutions remain both fair and trusted.

The writer is Associate Professor of Law, Rajshahi University, and a Doctoral Candidate, SOAS University of London, UK.

LAW AND CARE

Int'l Day of Care and Support

Care work consists of two overlapping activities: direct, personal and relational care activities, such as feeding a baby or nursing an ill partner; and indirect care activities, such as cooking and cleaning. Unpaid care work is care-work provided without a monetary reward by unpaid carers. Unpaid care is considered as work and is thus a crucial dimension of the world of work. Paid care work is performed for pay or profit by care workers. They comprise a wide range of personal service workers, such as nurses, teachers, doctors and personal care workers. Domestic workers who provide both direct and indirect care in households, are also part of the care workforce.

Growing populations, ageing societies, changing families, women's secondary status in labour markets and shortcomings in social policies demand urgent action on the organisation of care work from governments, employers, trade unions and individual citizens. If not adequately addressed, current deficits in care service provision and its quality will create a severe and unsustainable global care crisis and increase gender inequalities at work.

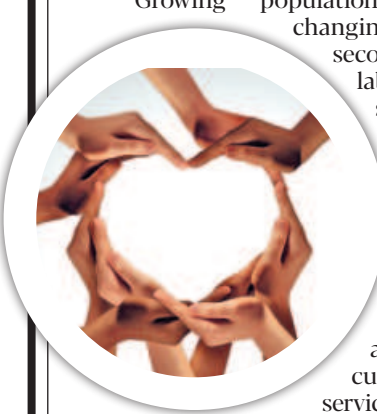
The care economy is growing as the demand for childcare and care for the elderly is increasing in all regions. It will thus create a great number of jobs in the coming years. However, care work across the world remains characterised by a void of benefits and protections, low wages or non-compensation, and exposure to physical, mental and, in some cases, sexual harm. It is clear that new solutions to care are needed on two fronts: in regard to the nature and provision of care policies and services, and the legal terms and conditions of care work.

Mindful of the need to invest in the care economy and to create robust, resilient and gender-responsive, disability-inclusive and age-sensitive care and support systems with full respect for human rights with a view to recognising, reducing, valuing and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work and support, the UN General Assembly decided to proclaim 29 October as International Day of Care and Support.

The Assembly invited stakeholders to observe the International Day of Care and Support on an annual basis in an appropriate manner in order to raise awareness of the importance of care and support and its key contribution to the achievement of gender equality and the sustainability of our societies and economies, as well as of the need to invest in a resilient and inclusive care economy, including the development of strong and resilient care and support systems.

This year's celebration aims to consolidate progress and momentum in global and regional discourses and action. The campaign will highlight: key global discussions on care and support held in 2025, in Geneva, New York, and around the world; perspective of diverse stakeholders, including diverse rights-holders, employers' and workers' organisations, both as those providing and requiring care and support, on progresses and gaps in 2025 to advance gender equality and ensuring leaving no one behind in sustainable development.

Compiled by Law Desk (Source: UN.ORG)



is the language of the Constitution, of courts, and of political struggle. In law, however, not everything we call a right is truly one. Sometimes what we call a right is merely a privilege, something enjoyed while it lasts but not guaranteed. At other times, even when no strict right exists, the law may still protect what courts call a legitimate expectation.

Two thinkers- Wesley Hohfeld, an American jurist writing a century ago, and Lord Denning, the great English judge of the mid-20th century- help us see this explicit distinction. The write-up will discuss the two schools of thoughts.

For Hohfeld, rights are not vague slogans but precise legal relationships. A right never floats in the air; it always has a partner. If one person has a right, another carries a corresponding duty. If a worker has a right to wages, the employer has a duty to pay. If a citizen has a right to vote, the state has a duty to ensure elections are

defended in all cases. Privileges can be altered or withdrawn by those who granted them.

If staff children truly had a right to reserved seats, then the university had a duty to continue providing them year after year. If, instead, the quota was a privilege, staff could enjoy it while it lasted, but the university bore no duty to maintain it once withdrawn. What does Bangladesh's Constitution say? Article 28(4) permits "special provision" for women, children, or for the advancement of backward sections of citizens. This is the legal foundation for affirmative actions. It allows the state to give disadvantaged groups a temporary headstart so that society as a whole becomes more equal. University employees' children do not fall into this

Home Affairs (1969), Denning planted the seed of the doctrine of legitimate expectation. This idea grew into a settled doctrine, later developed in landmark cases such as Council of Civil Service Unions v Minister for the Civil Service (1985) and R v North and East Devon Health Authority, ex parte Coughlan (2001), where courts recognised both procedural and, in limited circumstances, substantive protection of expectations.

Bangladeshi courts have embraced the doctrine, too. In Bangladesh v Idrisur Rahman (2009), for instance, the Appellate Division confirmed that clear practices and assurances from public authorities can generate legitimate expectations that deserve protection unless outweighed by compelling public interest. Similarly, in Rabia Bashri Irene v Bangladesh Biman (2000), the High Court Division ruled that an abrupt departure from established practice,

2. LAW VISION

Preventing land-related fraud through digitalisation

Protecting citizens against land fraud involves strong law enforcement and transparency. This protection depends on the maintenance of strict legal requirements, and the adoption of innovative technologies. In addition, public awareness and participatory citizenship are mandatory for property rights

M. AYSHA RAHMAN

In our country, land-related disputes and fraudulent practices have become very common. Such fraudulent practices not only deprive individuals of their legitimate ownership of property but also erode public confidence in the legal and administrative system. Safeguarding the people against such activities are therefore both a legal and ethical imperative.

False deeds refer to fake or forged legal documents that falsely assert land ownership. Scammers typically create fake deeds, forge signatures, or alter official records to sell or transfer the property unlawfully. In some cases, they sell the same property to multiple buyers by taking advantage of loopholes in record-keeping or the lack of electronic verification systems. Land fraud also includes cases of corruption by officials, changing land registry details, or issuing forged certificates of ownership.

The toll on the victims of such fraud is severe. Victims can lose their livelihood and even ancestral property because of these. Moreover, legal cases can take years to resolve in our already congested courts. But most importantly, such crimes undermine citizens' confidence in the State's effectiveness in protecting their rights relating to their properties.

The root cause of land fraud, in my view, is the outdated, paper-based registration system that can be easily exploited. Poor coordination between land, survey, and sub-registrar offices



leads to the creation of fake records. Corruption helps unscrupulous individuals to bypass the verification process. Furthermore, public ignorance and lack of legal literacy prevent citizens from properly checking records before purchasing land.

Government intervention is important to protect citizens from land-based crimes. Many countries have already taken steps to update their land administration system. Bangladesh too started several digital programs to create

transparency and accuracy in the land administration. The Digital Land Management System (DLMS) and e-Mutation are notable steps allowing citizens to check ownership information and even transfer land ownership online. The continuation of digitisation of the Land Record and Survey will ultimately eliminate discrepancies so that there is one true record of ownership.

Furthermore, the Registration Act, 1908 and the Penal Code, 1860 provide legal measures

to punish those who create or use fake deeds. Convicted offenders can face imprisonment, fines, and cancellation of fraudulent transactions. Under section 466, forging a document of a public registrar entails imprisonment for up to 7 years and fine. However, effective enforcement of these laws also requires technological efficiency, vigilance, and public cooperation.

Technology can protect citizens from land fraud through transparent 'digital land databases' that provide a tamper-proof chain of ownership. The use of blockchain, geo-tagging and satellite mapping can reduce risks associated with ownership disputes, data integrity and boundary verification. Biometric verification and digital signatures can further reduce land fraud.

Raising public awareness on fraud is important, especially to verify property information, to consult lawyers before signing the contract, and to report suspicious behavior. Government and civil society, especially in rural areas, can educate citizens on how to buy land and how they can verify land digitally.

Protecting citizens against land fraud involves strong law enforcement and transparency. This protection depends on the maintenance of strict legal requirements, and the adoption of innovative technologies. In addition, public awareness and participatory citizenship are mandatory for property rights.

The writer is student of law at the Bangladesh University of Professionals.



Apart from the AB Party, every other party in the proposed alliance is also reportedly in active discussions about forming an alliance with the BNP.

On October 25, General Mirza paid a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna.

FROM PAGE 3
Under this collaboration, the scholarship programme will award 150 final-year students from agricultural universities across the country. The initiative aims to recognise not only academic excellence but also the potential, vision, and commitment of students dedicated to advancing the future of Bangladesh's agriculture sector.

The application window will open in November 2025 through a dedicated scholarship portal hosted by The Daily Star. The programme will conclude with an award ceremony in December, where the selected students will be honoured for their outstanding results and achievements in agricultural education.

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-50	12-45	4-00	5-32	7-15
JAMAAT	5-25	1-15	4-15	5-35	7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Government of Bangladesh
Export Promotion Bureau, Dhaka
TCB Bhaban, 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215
www.epb.gov.bd /E-mail: dttf@epb.gov.bd /Facebook: www.facebook.com/epb.gov.bd



Date: 29/10/2025

File No. 26.02.0000.055.53.056.24.03

Inviting Applications for Allotment of Pavilions/Stalls/Restaurants' Spaces of 30th DITF 2026

The month long 30th Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) 2026 will be held at **Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Center (BCFEC)** at Purbachal from 01 January, 2026. Applications are invited from interested local and foreign companies/firms/entrepreneurs/businessmen/sole proprietors/organizations, government and non-government organizations for allotting/allocating spaces of following different categories of pavilions/restaurants/stalls/corner of DITF 2026:

Application Submission Procedure:

- Online Application:**
 - Application Submission Link: <http://services.mincom.gov.bd/portal/dttf>
 - Application Submission Start Date: 02.11.2025 & Closing Date & Time: 17.11.2025, 05:00pm (local time)

(A) Type/category, Size, Processing Fee, Floor Rate/Rent/Royalty of Pavilion/Restaurant/Stall (Local):

Sl. No	Type/category of Pavilion/Stall/Restaurants	Size	Application Processing Fee (Including VAT & Tax) Non Refundable	Floor Rate (Lowest Price of Rent/Royalty) (excluding VAT & Tax)
1	Premier Pavilion Platinum (PPP)	(50'x50')	Tk. 20,000/-	Tk. 22,00,000/-
2	Premier Pavilion Gold (PPG)	(65'x36')	Tk. 20,000/-	Tk. 21,00,000/-
3	Premier Pavilion Silver (PPS)	(56'x36')	Tk. 20,000/-	Tk. 21,00,000/-
4	General Pavilion (GP)	(36'x36')	Tk. 20,000/-	Tk. 15,00,000/-
5	Mini Pavilion (MP)	(36'x17')	Tk. 14,000/-	Tk. 11,00,000/-
6	Restaurant (R)	(50'x50')	Tk. 16,000/-	Tk. 17,00,000/-
7	Mini Restaurant (MR)	(20'x20')	Tk. 12,000/-	Tk. 6,50,000/-
8	Premier Stall (PS)	(20'x20')	Tk. 7,000/-	Tk. 4,50,000/-
9	Premier Mini Stall (PMS)	(20'x10')	Tk. 7,000/-	Tk. 3,30,000/-
10	General Stall (GS)	(20'x20')	Tk. 7,000/-	Tk. 4,00,000/- (Fixed)
11	Coffee Shop (CS)	(20'x20')	Tk. 7,000/-	Tk. 4,00,000/-

1.3. Security Deposit (Pavilions/Restaurants/Stalls/Coffee Shops as in Table-"A"):
Applicants shall deposit an amount equal to 25% (twenty-five percent) of the quoted price/rent (highest quoted price/rent in case of multiple choices) in advance as Security Deposit (refundable) along with the applications through "Sonali Payment Gateway" of Sonali Bank PLC (Counter Payment/Account Payment/Mobile Financial Service (MFS) & Card).

1.4. Instructions regarding online payment:

- Online applicants can complete payment process through "Sonali Payment Gateway" of Sonali Bank PLC;
- The applicant can complete the payment process through his/her own Card, Account, Internet banking, Mobile banking and Counter Payment. But, Bank limit is a must for Card, Account and Counter Payment. Payment process can be completed through Counter Payment if there is an available limit for Counter, Card and Account Payment;
- In case of online payment, limit for the amount equal to the quoted rate/rent needs to be approved by the concerned bank before the payment is made;
- In case of Counter Payment, applicant is to select the Counter option, download/collect the Counter voucher and can complete the payment process within 03 (three) working days at any branch of Sonali Bank PLC. Otherwise, payment will be considered as canceled. Application will be automatically submitted and confirmed through the mobile message as soon as the payment is made;
- In case of mobile banking, transaction above Tk.03 (three lakh), as fixed by the government, cannot be made.

2. Manual/E-mail Application

- Application Submission Start Date:** 02.11.2025
- Application Submission Closing Date & Time:** 17.11.2025, 05:00pm (local time)
- Place/means of receiving Application form:** Application form can be collected directly from EPB Admin. Section and DITF Secretariat (from 03.11.2025) or from Website: www.epb.gov.bd and Facebook: www.facebook.com/epb.gov.bd
- Place of submission of Application:** (a) Office of the Secretary (Deputy Secretary), EPB, Dhaka (b) Ministry of Commerce (Building # 03, Room # 127), Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka (c) Office of the Additional Divisional Commissioner (General) (1st 12-storied Govt. Building, Room # 303, Segunbagicha, Dhaka). Filled in Application can be submitted directly via e-mail: dttf@epb.gov.bd or by post/courier service. However, applications submitted/received after stipulated date and time shall be treated void/unacceptable.

(B) Type/category, Size, Processing Fee, Floor Rate/Rent/Royalty of Pavilion/Stall (Foreign) :

Sl. No	Type/category of Pavilion/Stall/Restaurants	Size	Application Processing Fee (Including VAT & Tax) Non Refundable	Floor Rate (Lowest Price of Rent/ Royalty) (excluding VAT & Tax)
1	Foreign Pavilion (FP)	(36'x36')	US \$ 400.00	US \$ 19,000.00
2	Foreign Mini Pavilion (FMP)	(36'x17')	US \$ 270.00	US \$ 10,000.00
3	Foreign Premier Stall (FPS)	(20'x20')	US \$ 135.00	US \$ 7,000.00

2.5. Security Deposit (Pavilions/Stalls as in Table-"B"):
Applicants interested in obtaining allotment of spaces of FP, FMP and FPS shall deposit foreign currency amounting to 25% (twenty-five percent) of the quoted price/rent/floor rent in advance as Security Deposit along with the Applications in favor of "DHAKA INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR FUND" in the following Foreign Currency (FC) Account (in US\$):

- Name of the Bank: PRIME BANK LTD.
- 54, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh
- A/C No: 11351130020437
- SWIFT Code No: PRLBDH010

(C) Type/category, Size, Processing Fee, Floor Rate/Rent/Royalty of Reserved Mini Pavilion/Stall (Local):

Sl. No	Type/category of Pavilion/Stall/Restaurants	Size	Application Processing Fee (Including VAT & Tax) Non Refundable	Floor Rate (Fixed) (Lowest Price of Rent/ Royalty) (excluding VAT & Tax)
1	Reserved Mini Pavilion (RMP)	(36'x17')	Tk. 14,000/-	Tk. 11,00,000/-
2	Reserved Stall (RS)	(20'x20')	Tk. 7,000/-	Tk. 4,50,000/-

2.6. Security Deposit (Local Applicants for RMP/RS/RMS/SC as in Table-"C"):
Applicants shall deposit money amounting to 25% (twenty-five percent) of the quoted price/rent/floor rate (as applicable) in advance as Security Deposit along with the Applications in favor of "DHAKA INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR FUND" in any branch of BRAC BANK Ltd. in the following Bank Account:

- Name of the Bank: BRAC BANK LTD. (any branch),
- SND A/C No: 1501102485103001

3. Papers/documents to be submitted by Local Applicants (Online/manual/E-mail applications):
Applications shall be submitted along with scanned copies of deposit slip of processing fee and security money, valid and up-to-date trade license, NID, VAT registration certificate, up-to-date Income Tax clearance certificate for the tax assessment year 2024-2025, up-to-date bank solvency certificate and membership certificate of Chamber/Trade Association (if applicable). In case of downloaded Application form, necessary documents as stated above shall also be submitted along with the Application. Original documents shall have to be submitted during scrutinizing the submitted Application documents.

4. Papers/documents to be submitted by Foreign Applicants:

- Duly filled in Application forms downloaded from Dhaka International Trade Fair service box of EPB's website: www.epb.gov.bd along with required documents can be sent through e-mail (dttf@epb.gov.bd). In case of any difficulty due to unavoidable circumstances, duly filled-in Application forms can also be submitted along with required documents by Fax/Courier service/Postal services.
- All online (e-mail: dttf@epb.gov.bd) applications shall be submitted through concerned **Bangladesh Missions** abroad or through **Missions of their own countries in Dhaka** along with scanned copies of deposit slip of Application processing fee and security money.
- Import of exhibits will be allowed on payment of customs duties and taxes at the Customs points of entry or as per provisions made by the Customs authority.
- Applicants of those countries where **Bangladesh Missions** are not available or who don't have their own Missions in Dhaka will have to apply through Government/Chamber/Trade Bodies of their own countries.

5. Reserved Pavilion/Stall Allotment Process:
A few numbers of Mini-Pavilions/Stalls/Sourcing Corners shall be kept reserved for allotting among the government/semi-government/autonomous bodies/organizations/scheduled banks, recognized trade associations/bodies, women entrepreneurs etc. Applications for these reserved pavilions/stalls/sourcing corners will be scrutinized and successful/valid applicants will be allotted these pavilions/stalls/sourcing corners at the floor rate/price. In this regard, decision to be made by the Fair Authority will be considered final.

6. Place, date & time for opening Applications:
All applications shall be opened on 18.11.2025 at 11:00am at the Conference Room of EPB (TCB Bhaban, 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215) in the presence of applicants (if any).

7. General Terms & Conditions:

- Premier Pavilion, General Pavilion, Mini-Pavilion, Restaurant, Mini Restaurant, Premier Stall, Premier Mini-Stall, Coffee Shop, Foreign Pavilion, Foreign Mini Pavilion, Foreign Premier Stall will be available for auction for allotting them in favor of the highest bidders subject to fulfilling all terms & conditions;
- General Stalls will be allotted among the eligible applicants by lottery. However, in case of allotment of General Stall, Women Entrepreneurs, Small & Cottage industries, Exporters, Manufacturers, Manufacturing Associations, Government/Autonomous Bodies, Chambers/Trade Associations, Banks & Assemblers will be given priority;
- Location map, number and quantity of Pavilion, Mini-Pavilion, Stall, Restaurant etc. will be available in **DITF 2026 Master Lay-Out Plan** kept at DITF

New family planning strategy a right move

Political will is a must to implement the plan’s rights-based approach

The launch of a national family planning strategy is a welcome pivot. With this, the government is signalling a move away from the blunt instrument of population control to population management, a more nuanced, rights-based approach. This shift is a strategic necessity for a nation poised to graduate from its Least Developed Country status in 2026.

Bangladesh’s achievements in family planning and maternal health are undeniable, with maternal mortality dropping from 574 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 236 in 2023. However, past success seems to have bred complacency, and the stagnation of the contraceptive prevalence rate at 64 percent for nearly a decade is a stark warning. The new strategy correctly identifies the challenges: a persistently high unmet need for contraception, alarming rates of adolescent marriage, and worrying regional disparities, particularly in Chattogram and Sylhet.

This new framework aims to align family planning with human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals, moving beyond simply hitting numerical targets for contraceptive use. It requires a fundamental reorientation of the healthcare system to ensure that “every pregnancy is by choice, not by chance,” as the UNFPA representative, Catherine Breen Kamkong, aptly put it. Under this approach, individuals—especially women and adolescents—must be empowered with information and investment in youth is crucial. However, the fact that half of all girls marry before 18 cannot be ignored. This is a drain on the nation’s human capital, not just a social malaise. An educated, healthy, and economically active female population is a proven catalyst for growth. Therefore, the strategy’s focus on adolescents should be its main agenda.

The government’s emphasis on data-driven systems and comprehensive primary healthcare, as highlighted by its senior officials, is the correct path. Strengthening healthcare management at the primary level is the bedrock upon which universal health coverage is built. Furthermore, motivating and equipping field workers, improving birth registration, and fostering national research ownership are essential pillars that will determine whether this strategy succeeds. At the same time, relevant authorities must act quickly to resolve the contraceptive shortage that health centres have been facing for several months. Govt must increase access to free and affordable contraceptives for poor and remote communities, and address the high discontinuation rates of contraceptives and the reliance on short-acting methods through a more sophisticated, client-centred approach. Reaching marginalised communities in urban slums and lagging regions demands targeted interventions.

The National Family Planning Strategy 2025-2030 provides a coherent and thoughtful blueprint. Its success, however, will be measured not by its launch but by its implementation. It will require sustained political will, adequate funding, and a relentless focus on accountability. If Bangladesh can translate this strategy from paper into practice, it will not only safeguard the health of its women and girls but also secure a more equitable future for the entire nation.

A legal void that fails the metro victims

The absence of clear compensation rules unacceptable

The death of a pedestrian and injuries to two others in Dhaka’s Farmgate area on Sunday from the collapse of bearing pad from a metro rail pillar, have exposed more than a safety failure. They have revealed a deeper flaw in our legal framework: the absence of an enforceable system for compensating victims of metro rail-related accidents. Under the Metro Rail Act, 2015, the Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL) is legally bound to compensate anyone injured or killed during its operations. The act also mandates insurance coverage for passengers and third parties, including pedestrians. However, the corresponding Metro Rail Rules, 2016, fail to specify how such compensation should be determined or who must pay it, leaving victims and their families without any legal avenue for redress.

At present, compensation is only granted if the government chooses to do so or if it is ordered by a court. When the road transport and bridges adviser announced Tk 5 lakh in compensation and a job for one family member of the victim Abul Kalam Azad, he admitted that due to the absence of relevant provisions in the metro rail regulations, he announced the compensation in accordance with the Road Transport Act, 2018. This should not have been the case. Moreover, when DMTCL officials admit that they have not implemented the mandatory insurance provisions due to “enormous financial cost,” they are, in essence, saying that financial convenience outweighs legal and moral responsibility. But should public safety and accountability be conditional on financial convenience?

When it comes to compensating victims of preventable deaths, such as road crashes, fires, or falls into open drains, we see a serious systemic failure across sectors. While the Road Transport Act, 2018, at least specifies compensation amounts, the process is lengthy and complex, and often denies the sufferers timely redress. For metro rail victims, the situation is even worse. The Metro Rail Rules, 2016, contain no provision for compensating accident victims. This legal void exposes the state’s negligence and lack of accountability. The government must therefore urgently amend the Metro Rail Act, 2015 and its rules to define clear procedures and responsibilities for compensating the victims, implement the mandatory insurance under Section 28, and ensure DMTCL provides prompt medical support and compensation, as required by law. Pending amendments must also be finalised and enforced, replacing ad hoc payments with a transparent, rights-based mechanism for all victims.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Ottoman Empire signs treaty with Allies

On this day in 1918, representatives of Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire signed an armistice treaty marking the end of Ottoman participation in the World War I, aboard the British battleship Agamemnon, anchored in the port of Mudros on the Aegean island of Lemnos.

Why the proposed NHRC amendment risks ineffectiveness



Md Abdul Halim
is a practising barrister in the Supreme Court of Bangladesh.

MD ABDUL HALIM

The interim government has recently circulated a proposed amendment to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Act, 2009, to expand the commission’s powers to investigate. At the international level, such commissions function as national human rights institutions (NHRIs) under the auspices of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), which uses the Paris Principles as its benchmark for NHRI compliance. According to the most recent data, GANHRI member NHRIs are divided into “A” status (fully compliant) and “B” status (partially compliant) institutions. Bangladesh NHRC has undergone GANHRI accreditation twice—in 2011 and 2015—and on both occasions was denied “A” status, being classified instead as “B” status.

In contrast, neighbouring NHRIs in Nepal, India, Thailand, and Malaysia achieved “A” status. Against this background, the proposed amendment seeks not only to enhance the investigative powers of the commission but also to broaden the scope of its jurisdiction. However, there are questions about whether these reforms might meaningfully address the commission’s long-standing institutional deficiencies, including its conceptual and procedural gaps.

Section 15 of the proposed amendment stipulates that once prima facie evidence of human rights violations (HRVs) is established, the commission is permitted to initiate an investigation. It further provides that, following such an initial inquiry, a separate investigation may be undertaken within thirty days. The pertinent question, therefore, arises: why should the commission proceed to a further investigation when it has already established HRVs on a prima facie basis? Must the NHRC prove HRVs to the standard of “beyond reasonable doubt”, a threshold typically reserved for courts?

The previous decade of the NHRC’s experience demonstrates that it failed to exercise its investigative powers even in cases where the 2009 Act explicitly granted such powers. The commission has, instead, consistently investigated crime-related offences, matters outside its statutory mandate. This pattern further substantiates the view that



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

the NHRC has not articulated which rights qualify as human rights, nor has it developed a proper framework for investigating HRVs; its recurring focus on criminal offences rather than HRVs reflects this failure. Further, the NHRC’s experience over the past decade reveals an enduring lack of clarity in respect of its institutional role and the evidential standards it should employ when investigating HRVs committed by law-enforcement agencies (LEAs) or public bodies. As an NHRI under the Paris Principles, the NHRC is not required to perform as a court. Indeed, a quasi-judicial body such as the NHRC shouldn’t exercise full judicial powers. Consequently, it is evident that the proposed amendment, if enacted, may prove ineffective. Instead of enhancing the NHRC’s ability to fulfil its statutory mandate, it risks furnishing the commission with further grounds to evade its responsibilities, rather than providing any remedial measures.

Section 15(9) stipulates that, following an investigation, if the NHRC is of the view that HRVs have been established, it shall conduct a hearing before the parties. Section 15(l) further provides that, after such a hearing, the NHRC must determine whether the alleged HRVs have been substantiated; if so, the commission shall treat the matter as a compoundable offence

and refer it to the appropriate court. These provisions reveal a profound lack of both conceptual and procedural understanding of “human rights” and HRVs on the part of the NHRC. This deficiency primarily stems from the fact that the commission bears no responsibility for establishing or refuting criminal liability according to the standard of proof.

aware of how difficult and cumbersome the process of recovering public demands can be. The current statute, the NHRC Act 2009, modelled after similar NHRI laws in neighbouring countries, provides for the direct payment of compensation to victims of HRVs and empowers the commission to direct the government and other bodies on the mode and process of such

Under the original NHRC Act, 2009, particularly Sections 18 and 19, the NHRC’s role in cases involving HRVs committed by LEAs is to request a “report” from the government, which it is legally bound to comply with. Upon receipt, the commission must review and analyse the report. This report-seeking mechanism is an independent and distinctive process, similar to that effectively employed by the Indian NHRC since 1994 under Section 19 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. However, the NHRC of Bangladesh has yet to operationalise this process of identifying non-crime HRVs and address these quasi-judicially.

If the proposed amendment is enacted, the NHRC will forfeit its original power of review and risk becoming an entirely ineffective watchdog for human rights protection. Moreover, the amendment appear does not fully align with the Paris Principles and the procedural nuances involved in establishing non-criminal HRVs against the state, LEAs, and other public authorities.

Unlike the existing statute, the proposed ordinance stipulates that compensation for HRVs, if any, would be recovered as public demands under the Public Demands Recovery Act, 1913 (Bengal Act). Ordinary citizens, including practising lawyers, are well

payments. However, if the proposed amendment is enacted, probably, victims will never receive the due compensation. It is worth noting that the Indian NHRC, in the last 30 years, has recommended compensations of around INR 150,00,00,000 (around \$17 million) in 9,220 HRV cases, and has ensured payment of more than half of the amount. Most fundamentally, the Indian NHRC realises compensation for HRVs not through the PDR Act, but rather through the public law process as developed by the Supreme Court of India.

Under the Paris Principles, NHRIs are not mandated to adjudicate crime-HRVs. However, given the marked conceptual and procedural gaps among stakeholders of the NHRC regarding its jurisdiction and standards of evidence, the proposed amendment should not be enacted in its current form. Rather, the chairman and members should undergo dedicated capacity-building exercises with UN bodies and regional networks to strengthen their institutions internally, including the implementation of rule-making power under Section 30 of the Act. Alternatively, they can engage in comparative learning by examining the Indian NHRC’s experience, whose three decades of “A” status under the Paris Principles exemplify sustained adherence to international standards.

Public exam results must not seal an individual’s fate



Parvez Uddin Chowdhury
is a development worker.

PARVEZ UDDIN CHOWDHURY

Every year, when the results of major public exams like the SSC or HSC are published, emotions run high. They spark discussions about the issues in our education system, especially the cracks in it. Similarly, this year, after a large number of students failed or performed poorly in the SSC and HSC exams, detailed analyses from different perspectives tried to unpack the reasons behind the results. However, one point was missing in these discussions, as usual: the idea of blooming late and the need to create an environment supportive of late bloomers.

After the publication of results, society celebrates and rewards those who achieve GPA-5, while others are often made to feel unworthy of attention. Parents become disheartened by the low grades and often some students die by suicide because of failing or receiving low grades. Our society stigmatises such early academic setbacks.

However, no one can guarantee that those who barely passed or even failed these exams will not be late bloomers. Research shows that human development is not linear; some individuals bloom later than others. Everyone is unique in how they learn and grow. Our ways of thinking are diverse, and our learning processes and strategies differ. Moreover, our

development is certainly affected by the people and the support they give us, and the environment we live in.

A late bloomer is someone who realises their true potential later in life, often possessing abilities or talents that remain unnoticed by others for a long time. Late bloomers typically do not feel comfortable with the rigid, test-based approach to education.

Real-life anecdotes also suggest that late blooming is not fictitious. Some people take time to find their talents, interests, passions, and voices. Yet, this very idea often remains absent from our public discourse. Our society often has little space for people who bloom late.

For instance, some companies set strict eligibility criteria for job applications, where one cannot even apply if they do not meet specific GPA thresholds in the SSC and HSC exams. Universities in Bangladesh also follow a similar pattern in faculty recruitment. Regardless of later academic excellence or professional growth, candidates with lower grades in school and college cannot even apply. This applies to many other public jobs as well. It means that our society does not want to recognise talents that flourish later, and applicants are often judged based on who they were, not who they are.

I know many individuals who achieved outstanding academic

results—like GPA-5 in their secondary and higher secondary exams—and were praised by society for their success in school or college. Yet, they ended up in careers they neither enjoy nor are recognised for. On the other hand, some didn’t excel in early public exams but later thrived in higher studies and professional life, standing out through their creativity and talents.

I know many individuals who achieved outstanding academic results—like GPA-5 in their secondary and higher secondary exams—and were praised by society for their success in school or college. Yet, they ended up in careers they neither enjoy nor are recognised for. On the other hand, some didn’t excel in early public exams but later thrived in higher studies and professional life, standing out through their creativity and talents.

Throughout my school and college years, I was a mediocre or below-average student—a backbencher, as they say. The challenges of being in that position are constant and exhausting. Many who fall into this category have,

at some point, considered dropping out due to feelings of isolation and fear of rejection. Very few of us are fortunate like Ishaan, the character from the Bollywood film *Taare Zameen Par*. The child, struggling with academic failure and parental pressure, blossomed when he received personalised care and attention at his school. Sadly, in our education system, the spotlight is often on those who need it the least, while those who truly require support are left in the shadows. Although many societies welcome diversity, we only celebrate GPA-5 achievers and BCS cadres. We judge endlessly and destroy people’s will.

But that should not be allowed to stop late bloomers from thriving. If you are a low achiever in your SSC or HSC exams, or if you have even failed, do not give up. The journey is not easy for a late bloomer in this society. This may not be a welcoming environment for you. Your talents may go unrecognised and unsupported, and you may not receive a nurturing environment. But dismiss toxic public opinions and move forward.

To the parents, learn to recognise and acknowledge that your child may be a late bloomer. They are still struggling to find their way in school or college. Do not judge them, and do not let them feel disheartened.

And finally, it’s time we reassessed the relevance of SSC and HSC results in job application criteria. What truly matters is not what someone failed to achieve years ago, but what they are capable of contributing today. Judging someone by their past undermines the infinite possibilities of human potential that exist every moment. Human capability is not static; it evolves. Our society and systems should accept and evolve with it.

Bangladesh’s grand politics: Who’s really directing the show?



Shahab Enam Khan is head of Bangladesh Center for Indo-Pacific Affairs at Jahangirnagar University and teaches at the Bangladesh University of Professionals.

SHAHAB ENAM KHAN

Ah, Bangladesh! My beloved nation—perpetually at a “critical crossroads,” much like a master’s student who’s read too much Gramsci to remain confused. “The old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born; now is the time of monsters,” wrote Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci. Clearly, the man had a front-row ticket to Dhaka’s political circus.

If ever there were a residency programme for Gramsci’s monsters, it’s here—as Bangladesh stumbles from kleptocracy towards something vaguely resembling democracy. The real challenge isn’t spotting the monsters; it’s finding anyone with enough brain cells to slay them.

The country’s interim government shoulders a responsibility so heavy it’s practically collapsing under it. To its absolute credit, it prevented an economic meltdown, allowed the financial sector to thrive, and kept social chaos from boiling over. But its weaknesses are dazzling. Governance gaps, unmet reform promises, and a noticeable disconnect from public sentiment have produced a splendid cocktail of confusion.

The erosion of secular political plurality, the gradual rise of far-right populism among our power falcons, and that sporadic mosaic of violence continue to blur the line between who wags whom—the dog or the tail. The interim’s definition of “public” feels alarmingly familiar: much like the Awami League’s version, where “public” meant “our voters,” and the rest were decorative extras.

Yet, after the signing of the July National Charter, Bangladesh has apparently once again become a “new Bangladesh”—a convenient awol that has become a cliché!



FILE VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

Meanwhile, the Election Commission’s roadmap remains elusive. Even Jamaat-e-Islami has expressed exasperation and humming about proportional representation, while the BNP—ever evolving—now talks of restoring the credibility of the electoral process. All parties agree on one point: reform within the interim cabinet, reflecting a growing lack of confidence in some advisers! Irony!

At the same time, social media gladiators, armed with echo chambers and homophily, are busy dismantling institutions in real time.

It’s democracy by dopamine.

As if that weren’t enough, our interim administration has developed an odd affection for “outsider advisers”—plucked from cozy networks rather than shared national purpose. Nepotism thrives, “foreign credentialed saviours” swoop in, and some even question the qualifications of several imported experts. It leaves one wondering how they would ensure they pick the right public officials, beyond

Civil society, meanwhile, has outdone itself in disappointment. Its moral authority now hovers somewhere between a late-night talk show and frustration vented through conferences and meetings.

Unsurprisingly, this blend of chaos and confusion is brewing instability. Anxiety, fear of extremism, and the social post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) of July’s mass murders still haunt the streets. Add to that the coercive

interim seems unable to fill.

Yet, the government’s greatest peril lies elsewhere: the disturbing discourse on the politicisation of the International Crimes Tribunal. Seasoned observers like David Bergman have warned that weaponising war crimes justice for political leverage would destroy the very legitimacy it seeks to preserve.

Bangladesh cannot afford another chapter of selective justice masquerading as national healing. If the tribunal becomes a political instrument rather than a moral reckoning, the “time of monsters” will stretch indefinitely. Time will tell.

Which brings us, inevitably, to the question everyone’s talking about: elections. Delays wrapped in reform rhetoric, “inclusive-exclusive” gymnastics, or constitutional hair-splitting are nothing but transparent excuses. Good thing that a large section of the public is punching these narratives out. The nation awaits a credible election by February 2026.

And if this interim experiment is to drift—plagued by obscurity, elitism, or disconnect—what would be the solution then? BNP recently has asked the interim to play a neutral role like that of a caretaker government at a recent meeting, according to one of the advisers. It is worth noting that narratives of corruption allegations have already returned to the blackboards—this time, the writing is not just about the political parties!

Joseph de Maistre reminded us that every nation gets the government it deserves. Ours might still deserve a fighting chance, unless this current situation continues and the interim, its beloved so-called civil society, and the parties all fail to complete the task at hand.

We can only hope that their collective restraint and sense of national duty may yet determine whether Bangladesh steps towards stability—or sinks into another act of tragic farce. And if they fail, dear reader, the monsters won’t just linger—they’ll throw a costume party. And the shimmering promise of a democratic Bangladesh, envisioned by the fallen souls of July 2024, will remain just that: a dream deferred.

Until then, let’s monitor a credible election—perhaps under the watchful eye of the public—and enjoy the show while the popcorn still lasts.

Why survival in Dhaka feels accidental



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H. M. NAZMUL ALAM

Dhaka has always been a city of contradictions—of ambition and neglect, progress and peril, pride and decay. In recent times, the contradictions have turned fatal. The same projects that symbolise our march towards modernity now routinely remind us how fragile and often expendable human life has become. From the death of Abul Kalam Azad under a falling metro rail component to the fires that devour factories and warehouses, from the plane crash that reduced classrooms to rubble to the toxic air that quietly robs us of years, Dhaka seems determined to prove that survival here is not deliberate but a coincidence.

Abul Kalam Azad, a 35-year-old father of two, was sipping tea at a roadside stall—an ordinary act on an ordinary day—when a bearing pad from the overhead metro rail suddenly hit his head, killing him instantly. The irony could not have been sharper. A project built to elevate the lives of Dhaka’s citizens literally came crashing down upon one. That small, seemingly insignificant part—a bearing pad meant to absorb shock between the pillars and the rail—became a symbol of a much larger shock: how recklessness and negligence have been normalised in this city.

The metro rail, built at a staggering cost of Tk 1,500 crore per kilometre—among the highest in Asia—was meant to be Dhaka’s modern marvel. Instead, it has now become a cautionary tale of misplaced priorities and poor oversight. Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) engineers had reported substandard bearing pads as early as 2020. A similar incident in 2024 saw a bearing pad fall off another section, after which a committee was formed and recommendations made, which, for whatever reasons, were not enough to prevent the fatal accident.

A compensation of Tk 5 lakh was swiftly announced, as if a human life

could be itemised and closed like a project file. A metro rail that could take more than 50 years to recover its costs could not guarantee safety for one of those who paid for it with their taxes—and now, with his life.

The structural fragility of Dhaka is not without moral frailty. Within a week, two major fires broke out in the city—at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport’s cargo village and Mirpur’s Rupnagar area. Thirty-seven fire units battled the airport blaze as flights were diverted to Chattogram and Kolkata. The Mirpur fire killed at least 17 people in a garment factory after an adjacent illegal chemical warehouse exploded.

We have seen this before, again and again. Fires that start with a spark and end with commissions of inquiry. In 2024 alone, Bangladesh witnessed

million—a concentration deemed “immediately lethal.” Even then, crowds gathered at the site—families searching for missing loved ones, onlookers recording footage, and journalists narrating the spectacle. The scene captured both the human cost of failure and the national habit of treating disasters as daily news rather than turning points.

What makes these fires unforgivable is that they are preventable. Most originate from the same few causes, and most could be stopped with basic enforcement and planning. Yet the city continues to grow upward and outward with reckless speed, as if height itself were proof of progress.

If fire exposed our lack of safety, the plane crash at Milestone School in Uttara laid bare our lack of preparedness. When a military training jet plunged into the school compound, killing and injuring children, the tragedy revealed just how unprepared our emergency response remains. There was a shortage of ambulances at the scene, no field hospital, and coordination was chaotic, as if emergency care were a lottery rather than a right.

Burn victims were rushed through choked streets to the few hospitals

to the Air Quality Life Index (AQLI), Bangladeshis are losing 5.5 years of life expectancy due to air pollution. Dhaka residents could live seven years longer if particulate matter levels were reduced to World Health Organization (WHO) standards.

In 2021, over 19,000 Bangladeshi children under five died from pollution-related illnesses, according to UNICEF. The sources are well known: brick kilns, old diesel vehicles, unregulated construction, and industrial waste. Brick kilns alone contribute nearly 60 percent of Dhaka’s air pollution.

The government has declared certain zones “degraded airsheds” and promised cleaner fuels, but policy without enforcement remains wishful thinking. Laws are drafted, agencies formed, and circulars issued—but the air does not obey paperwork. It obeys emissions.

The common thread across these crises—whether a falling bearing pad, a burning warehouse, a crashing jet, or a choking sky—is the same: the absence of accountability. Dhaka’s tragedies are not isolated events; they are the natural consequences of a system that prefers announcements over action, show over vigilance. Our resilience has become a polite word for endurance. We survive not because our systems work, but because individuals—drivers, doctors, firefighters, neighbours—do what institutions fail to do.

And so, every day in Dhaka becomes an act of collective improvisation. We cross roads that might collapse, inhale air that might kill, enter buildings that might burn, and stand under infrastructure that might fall. Yet we call it “development.”

To live in Dhaka is to practice optimism against evidence. It is to wake each morning under the silent prayer that gravity, gas, and governance will all behave today. But when a city demands miracles to survive its own design, something fundamental has gone wrong. Survival should never depend on luck.

Dhaka dwellers deserve better—not as a privilege, but as a basic right. Development must mean more than construction; it must mean safety, foresight, and accountability. Until then, every death like Abul Kalam’s, every fire, every crash, and every breath of toxic air will remind us that in this city, survival itself has become the most uncertain achievement.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

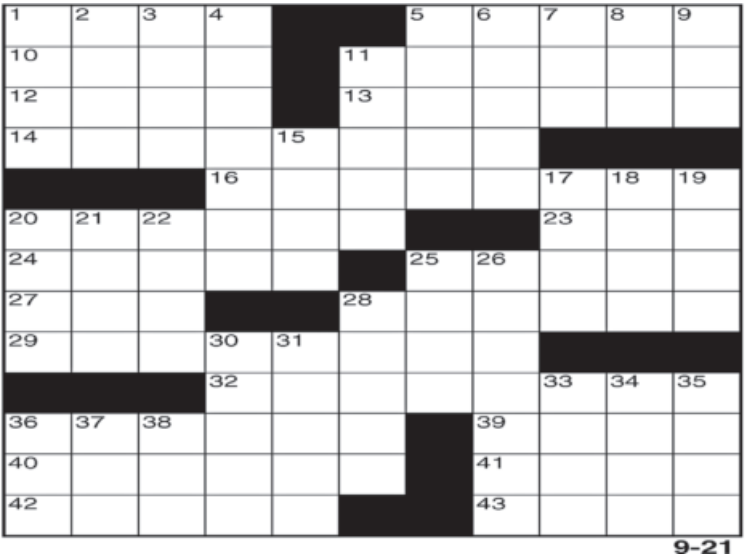
ACROSS

- 1 Cushy
- 5 Square or circle
- 10 Manipulative one
- 11 Outcry
- 12 Singer Fitzgerald
- 13 1966 Paul Newman film
- 14 NFL team
- 16 NFL team
- 20 Phone feature
- 23 Suffer
- 24 Burglar’s bane
- 25 Cut’s counterpart
- 27 Cooking need
- 28 Under arrest
- 29 NFL team
- 32 NFL team

- 36 Looks forward to
- 39 Pump, e.g.
- 40 Like some fog
- 41 Shower square
- 42 Make blank
- 43 Auction cry

DOWN

- 1 Took to court
- 2 Capital on a fjord
- 3 Plummeted
- 4 Fur trader
- 5 Bias
- 6 Draconian
- 7 Band blaster
- 8 “Tamerlane” writer
- 9 Mess up
- 11 Panda’s home
- 15 Injure
- 17 Compass point
- 18 Solemn act
- 19 Iditarod item
- 20 Tube tops
- 21 Bunches
- 22 Deck worker
- 25 Contented sound
- 26 Lends a hand
- 28 Ross of flag fame
- 30 Sprawling tales
- 31 Turning tool
- 33 Canton’s state
- 34 Bridge fee
- 35 Canary snack
- 36 King Kong, e.g.
- 37 Fighting
- 38 One-time



9-21

YESTERDAY’S ANSWERS



Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to dsopinion@gmail.com

“

150 is not a big total. I have to stay there till 13-14 overs. If I was there, the match would have finished earlier.

Bangladesh skipper Litton Das

We knew if we bowled well in the middle, it would be tough at the end. It was a small total so there was no room for errors.

West Indies pacer Romario Shepherd

SCORES IN BRIEF

West Indies

149 for nine in 20 overs (Hope 55, Athanaze 52; Mustafizur 3/21, Nasum 2/35, Rishad 2/20)

Bangladesh

135 for eight in 20 overs (Tamim 61, Litton 23; Shepherd 3/29, Akeal Hossain 3/22, Holder 2/20)

Player of the Match

Romario Shepherd

Result

West Indies won by 14 runs, take series 2-0.



With Bangladesh needing 26 off 12 balls, West Indies pacer Jason Holder stepped up to bowl a crucial penultimate over in the second T20I in Chattogram yesterday. Holder castled Shamim Hossain with a slower yorker off his first delivery before conceding just five runs in the over. [Bottom] Skipper Litton Das' 23 was the second highest behind Tanzid Tamim's 61, as the Tigers found the modest target of 150 too steep, eventually suffering a 14-run defeat that ended their streak of four consecutive T20I series wins. They lost the three-match series against the Windies 2-0 with a game to spare.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Injured Saifuddin named for Hong Kong Sixes

SPORTS REPORTER from Ctg

All-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin was named in the seven-member squad yesterday for the upcoming Hong Kong Sixes 2025, set to take place on November 7-9, even though he is currently out injured.

Although not part of the T20 squad against the West Indies, Saifuddin had travelled to Chattogram with the team. Two days before the first T20I, the 28-year-old twisted his ankle during practice, returned home afterwards and then contracted fever.

Chief selector Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu said that Saifuddin would begin his rehabilitation in Dhaka from today. But BCB's chief physician Debashis Chowdhury told The Daily Star that the all-rounder informed him he planned to travel to the capital on Saturday.

"I haven't seen his current condition. He sent me a picture of his ankle, but since he also has fever, I can only assess his situation properly after meeting him on Saturday," Debashis said. Selector Hasibul Hossain Shanto added that if Saifuddin fails to recover in time, one of the two standbys -- Sabbir Rahman or Habibul Rahman Sohan -- will replace him.

The Bangladesh team, who reached the semifinal in last year's edition, is scheduled to depart for Hong Kong on November 5.

Litton owns up as WINDIES SEAL SERIES

SPORTS REPORTER

"I have to improve myself. If I was there, the match would have finished earlier," Bangladesh captain Litton Das said, his voice heavy with regret, after Bangladesh's 14-run defeat to the West Indies in the second T20I in Chattogram yesterday.

It wasn't just another loss -- it was the end of a home streak, the loss of a series, and perhaps a mirror held up to Bangladesh's recurring frailties.

The evening had begun with hope. At the toss, Litton was confident: if they could keep the West Indies under 180, they would back themselves to chase it down.

The bowlers answered that call -- and more. Mustafizur Rahman's cunning cutters, Rishad Hossain's sharp variations, and Tanzim Hasan Sakib's discipline combined to restrict the visitors to a modest 149-9.

At one stage, the West Indies looked set for a total well past 180. Alick Athanaze and Shai Hope had powered their way to a century stand, both striking fluent fifties. But from 108 for one in the 12th over, the visitors crumbled.

Mustafizur's spell of 3 for 21, backed by Rishad's 2 for 20, ripped through the middle order. Nasum Ahmed added two



wickets in one over, sparking a collapse of eight wickets for just 44 runs.

When the Windies ended on 149 for nine, the crowd sensed this was Bangladesh's night.

But as the lights brightened over the Bir Sreshtho Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman Stadium, the mood began to dim. What should have been a comfortable chase unravelled into frustration and hesitation.

Tanzid Hasan Tamim, calm and composed, anchored the innings with a fluent 61 off 48 balls -- his ninth T20I fifty. Yet, around him, chaos reigned. Saif

Hassan, Litton, Tawhid Hridoy, and Jaker Ali all got starts but none could seize the moment.

Litton himself managed a brisk 23 before Akeal Hossain breached his defense. The skipper's dismissal left a hush over the stands -- a silence that only deepened as the innings wore on.

By the 16th over, Bangladesh were 108 for 3, needing 42 runs from 24 balls. The crowd believed. But the momentum stalled. Singles replaced boundaries, and hesitation replaced intent.

The 17th over brought nine runs, the next seven, then just five. Tanzid's dismissal in the 18th -- top-edging a slog sweep -- was the final turning point. When Akeal returned for the last over, Bangladesh needed 21. They fell 14 short. The innings ended on 135 for 8.

As the final wicket fell, the Chattogram crowd fell silent. Litton faced the cameras afterward, shoulders heavy yet words honest.

"Our bowlers have done a really good job," he said. "I feel sorry for them. 150 is not a big total. We got stuck, and whenever we got stuck, we got out. I had to stay there till 13-14 overs."

It was Bangladesh's second defeat in as many games, sealing the series for the West Indies with one to play. Friday's final match would be just for pride.

Poor show in SA athletics reflects deeper problems

ANISUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh's disappointing results at the recently concluded 4th South Asian Senior Athletics Championships only highlight the long-standing decline of the country's athletics. Bangladesh finished fourth among six nations at the meet in Ranchi, securing just three bronze medals -- all from relay events: the men's 4x100m, men's 4x400m, and women's 4x400m.

A total of 19 athletes, including eight women, represented Bangladesh in 19 of the 36 events during the three-day competition. Hosts India dominated the table with 20 gold, 20 silver and 18 bronze medals, followed by Sri Lanka with 16 gold, 14 silver and 10 bronze medals.

Even Nepal finished ahead of Bangladesh with two silver and four bronze medals -- five of which came from individual events. This stands in stark contrast to earlier years when Bangladeshi athletes regularly achieved respectable results at South Asian competitions.

Adding to the frustration, most Bangladeshi athletes produced below-par timings, with none managing to achieve a personal best, despite being in training since July for next year's South Asian Games in Pakistan.

"We performed really poorly, and it was very tough to compete in an

international tournament within a seven-day gap after giving our best in the Inter-Service Athletics Championships from 12-16 October," said Mohammad Ismail of Bangladesh Navy, who finished sixth in the 100m sprint with a time of 10.83 seconds -- 0.41 seconds behind the bronze medallist.



Of the 11 male participants, 10 had competed in the inter-service championships shortly before the international event. There were no inter-service events for the female athletes.

"There's no excuse for our poor performance, but the travel time and night-time scheduling might have affected us since we're not used to competing under floodlights," said Najimul Hossain Rony of Bangladesh Army, who narrowly missed out on a bronze medal in the 400m hurdles after finishing in the same time --

51.06 seconds -- as India's Karna Bag, who won bronze following a photo finish.

Ismail attributed the team's failure to the lack of planning and inadequate facilities, though he expressed some hope for improvement before the upcoming SA Games.

"There's no proper planning in the training camp. The athletes stay at the NSC dormitory for SA Games preparation, but we have to walk a long way three times a day for meals," he said. "The federation doesn't want to spend a single penny on the athletes -- how can we bear the costs from our small salaries?"

Questions have also been raised about team selection. The country's best high jumper, Mahfuzur Rahman, was dropped, while Golam Sorowar was left out of the shot put -- an event in which the Sri Lankan bronze medallist managed 14.68m, compared to Sorowar's national record of 15.97m.

It was also revealed that 200m sprinters were made to compete in the 4x400m relay as the federation had sent only four relay specialists.

"What needed to be done to achieve good results simply wasn't done," said national coach Abdullah Hel Kafi. "We don't have training facilities, modern equipment, proper planning or a suitable environment."



PHOTO: REUTERS

WOLVAARDT makes records tumble

Skipper Laura Wolvaardt struck a majestic 169 to power South Africa to their first ever Women's World Cup final with a thumping 125-run victory over England in the first semifinal on Wednesday, breaking several records in the process.

- Wolvaardt's 169 off 143 deliveries, her 10th WODI ton and first in World Cups, is the highest score by a South African batter in the tournament, surpassing Marizanne Kapp's 102 not out against Pakistan in 2013.
- It is also the third-highest individual score in Women's World Cup knockouts, behind Alyssa Healy's 170 for Australia against England in the 2022 final and Harmanpreet Kaur's unbeaten 171 for India against Australia in the 2017 semifinal.
- South Africa's total of 319/7 is their highest in the competition, bettering their 312/9 against Pakistan earlier in this edition.
- Wolvaardt's 169 is also the second-highest individual score by a captain in a World Cup match, behind Belinda Clark's 229 not out against Denmark in 1997.



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GREEN FACTORY AWARD 2025

HIGHEST SELLING CEMENT

for more than 20 YEARS



KL to open its labour market to compliant agencies here

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Malaysia is going to open its labour recruitment market to all eligible Bangladeshi agencies under a new, uniform selection system.

While this promise will help expand opportunities for Bangladeshi workers, industry experts warn that only a few agencies have the capacity to meet the stringent criteria issued by the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment yesterday.

In the past, only a select few Bangladeshi agencies were allowed to operate in Malaysia, while agencies from other countries enjoyed broader access, prompting calls for a more equitable and transparent system.

The ministry said the issue was discussed at the 3rd Bangladesh-Malaysia Joint Working Group meeting in Dhaka on May 21-22 this

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4



Despite a ban on vehicles stopping and people crossings on the Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover, the rule is violated regularly. People get off buses, scale over the median, and cross the flyover dodging vehicles at speed and putting their lives at risk. The photo was taken on Tuesday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

DHAKA UNIVERSITY Evictions, bar on outsiders spark debate

MAHATHIR MOHAMMED

Dhaka University's recent move to restrict the entry of non-students and evict hawkers from its campus has sparked debate, as a section of students and teachers fear it may gradually turn the country's premier institution into an isolated space. Meanwhile, authorities describe it as an effort to restore order and ensure students' safety.

Concerns deepened after last year's July uprising, when DU authorities began treating outsiders "unwelcomed" and imposed a ban on their entry in December.

Although the restriction was later relaxed, Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) leaders have recently carried out fresh drives to evict hawkers and so-called "vagrants" from the campus.

Ducusu leaders said the drives, conducted alongside the administration, aimed to make the campus "drug-free" and safer for students.

DU Proctor Saifuddin Ahmed said, "Dhaka University is not a place for setting up habitats. The campus ecosystem was damaged by allowing makeshift shops and stalls. It was disrupted by vagrants who disturbed the natural environment, and we are working to restore that lost balance.

Call grows for free media commission

Journos, media owners say it's needed for independent press

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The formation of an independent media commission is the need of the hour, said senior journalists, editors, and media owners yesterday.

They made the call at a discussion organised by the Prothom Alo at its office in Karwan Bazar in the capital. It was moderated by Prothom Alo Executive Editor Sajjad Sharif.

According to the recommendations made by the Media Reform Commission, all media should be brought under a unified, independent supervisory body tasked with ensuring fiscal transparency in media, setting ethical standards, maintaining journalistic quality, and regulating media licences.

Dhaka University Professor Geeti Ara Nasrin, also a former member of the commission, said the draft law on protecting journalists' rights, prepared by the information ministry, did not include the reform commission's recommendation to establish an independent media commission.

“

Political parties should include in their manifestos for the upcoming election a pledge to form a media commission to ensure the independence of newspapers.

AK Azad, president of NOAB



AK Azad, president of the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh, urged political parties to make a clear commitment to protecting press freedom. He said that political parties should include in their manifestos for the upcoming election a pledge to form a media commission to ensure the independence of newspapers.

Executive Director of Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) Hasibur Rahman Mukur said efforts to establish an independent media commission are "moving in reverse".

"Even if parties include a commitment to establishing an independent media commission in their manifestos, there is a risk that such commitments will remain merely words on paper."

Nagorik Oikya leader Mahmudur Rahman Manna dismissed the interim government's reform initiatives as "sound and fury signifying nothing". "There has been a lot of noise, but no results. What will ultimately come of all this remains unclear."

He noted that the bureaucracy had "removed key sections" from the proposed journalist protection law, and alleged that the current consultations about the law with stakeholders are "an eyewash".

Kamal Ahmed, former head of the Media Reform Commission and consulting editor of The Daily Star, said, "The changes they proposed completely undermine the purpose of the law. It would be better not to have the law at all than to pass it in this form."

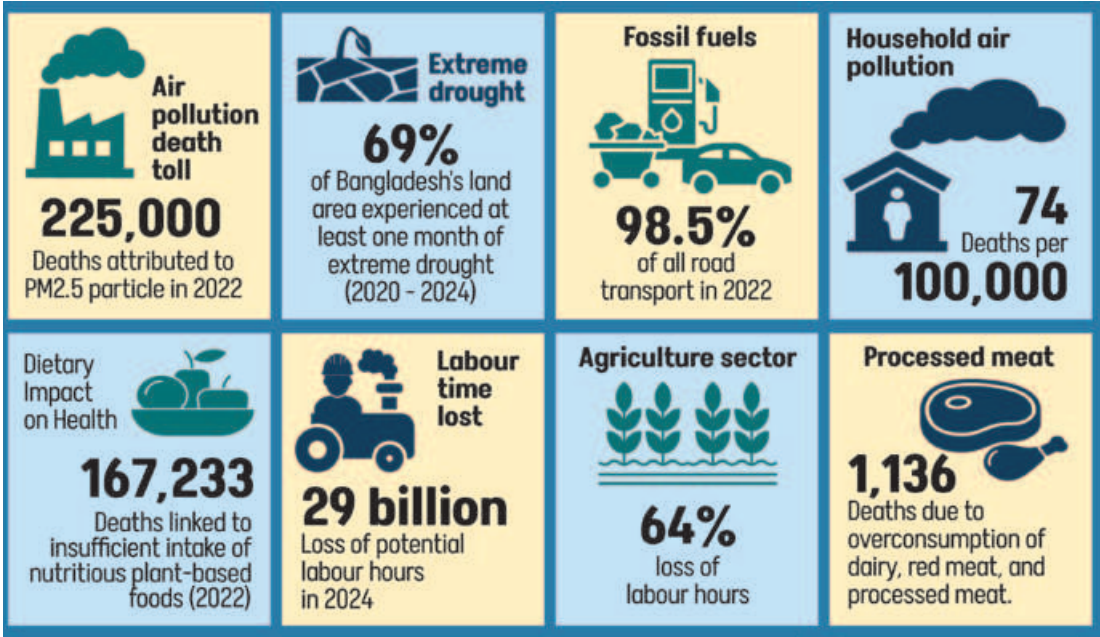
He added that the commission's report was submitted in May, as well as an action plan outlining immediate steps. "Naturally, we expected the government to take at least some quick measures based on those recommendations. Unfortunately, nothing has yet become visible."

The recommendations made by the media reform commission were not reflected in the July Charter because the political parties did not hold any discussions on them, said Md Matiur Rahman Akanda, secretary of the Jamaat-e-Islami's central publicity and media department.

BNP Media Cell Convener Moudud Hossain Alamgir

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4

Air pollution killed 2.25 lakh in Bangladesh in 2022



PINAKI ROY

Bangladesh recorded 225,000 deaths linked to manmade air pollution in 2022, a 28 percent rise since 2010, an international team of experts revealed in a major study yesterday.

At least 30,600 of these deaths were directly attributed to fossil fuels, according to The Lancet's Countdown, a major annual study tracking the health impacts of climate change.

Globally, fossil fuel-related air pollution caused more than 2.5 million deaths in 2022 alone, the study said, criticising the practice of

subsidising fossil fuels. Bangladesh allocated US\$8.2 billion in fossil fuel subsidies in 2023 alone, exceeding its carbon pricing revenue and resulting in net-negative carbon income.

Coal burning, mainly for power generation, accounted for 32 percent of fossil fuel-related deaths, while household air pollution caused 74 deaths per 100,000 people – 88 in rural areas and 50 in urban areas, the report said.

In 2024, Bangladesh endured an average of 28.8 heatwave days, of which 13.19 could have been avoided without climate change,

according to the report.

Extreme heat caused the loss of 29 billion potential labour hours, 92 percent higher than the 1990–1999 average, with agriculture bearing 64 percent of the losses. The resulting income loss reached US\$24 billion in 2024, or 5 percent of GDP.

From 2020 to 2024, 69 percent of Bangladesh's land experienced at least one month of extreme drought per year – nearly four times higher than the annual average between 1951 and 1960. Between 2019 and 2023, 84 percent of the population

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



Police use water cannon with a blue dye to disperse protesting madrasa teachers who are demanding the nationalisation of Ebtedayee madrasas yesterday afternoon. Law enforcers intervened after their procession attempted to break through a barricade to go towards the Secretariat near the Jatiya Press Club.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

50 hurt as cops disperse madrasa teachers' march

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 50 Ebtedayee madrasa teachers were injured when police used water cannons and sound grenades to disperse them when their procession broke through a barricade and attempted to march towards the Secretariat.

The Ebtedayee madrasa teachers are protesting with five demands including swift implementation of the announcement to nationalise all Ebtedayee madrasas in phases, rapid approval and publication of a gazette notification for the 1,089 institutions whose files have already been scrutinised for MPO inclusion.

The other demands include the issuance of a circular inviting MPO applications from recognised, non-grant-receiving Ebtedayee madrasas, creation of pre-primary posts similar to those in primary schools and establishment of a separate directorate for Ebtedayee madrasas.

The Ebtedayee madrasa teachers were supposed to march from the Jatiya Press Club towards Paltan, according to their pre-announced programme.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3