

DHAKA TUESDAY NOVEMBER 4, 2025

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXV No. 282

KARTIK 19, 1432 BS

www.thedailystar.net

JAMADIUL AWWAL 12, 1447 HIJRI

16 PAGES PLUS LIFE STYLE : TK 15.00

BNP banks on a blend of old and new faces

Announces a list of 237 potential candidates; Fakhrul hints at some changes after talks with allies

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP yesterday unveiled a list of potential candidates for 237 constituencies, including three for its chairperson Khaleda Zia and one for acting chairman Tarique Rahman.

Khaleda will contest from Bogura-7, Dinajpur-3, and Feni-1, while Tarique will run from Bogura-6 (Sadar), his ancestral constituency and a seat once held by his mother.

Although he has played a key role in devising the party's political strategy and election plans for nearly two decades, this will be Tarique's first time contesting an election.

Bogura, the birthplace of late president Ziaur Rahman, has been a BNP stronghold since the party's founding. Khaleda has repeatedly contested from the district – first from Bogura-7 (Gabtali and Shahjahanpur) in 1991, and later from Bogura-6 (Sadar) since June 1996. She won both times. The three-time former prime minister was born and brought up in Dinajpur, while Feni is her ancestral home.



Khaleda Zia
(Dinajpur-3
Bogura-7, Feni-1)



Tarique
Rahman
(Bogura-6)



Mirza Fakhrul
Islam Alamgir
(Thakurgaon-1)



The construction of the six-lane TT Para underpass near the Kamalapur Railway Station has been completed and is awaiting inauguration. Once opened, this infrastructure will enable vehicles to pass smoothly beneath the railway lines, eliminating the risk of collision and ensuring uninterrupted train movement overhead. The underpass has been constructed as part of the Padma Bridge Rail Link Project.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

JULY CHARTER, REFERENDUM DISPUTE Resolve differences, preferably in 7 days

Govt asks political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid the raging dispute over the referendum and the July charter implementation order, the interim government has called on political parties to settle their differences and reach a unified decision as soon as possible, preferably within a week.

Law Adviser Professor Asif Nazrul made the call at a press conference following an emergency meeting of the advisory council, chaired by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at his Tejgaon office yesterday.

According to Asif Nazrul, the meeting discussed finalising the July charter implementation order as well as the date and content of the referendum.

The council noted that despite prolonged discussions between the consensus commission and political parties, disagreements remain over several reform recommendations, the timing and subject matter of the referendum, and amendments to the Representation of the People Order.

BNP wants the referendum on the July charter on the election day, while Jamaat wants it to be held by November.

Also, the government is considering stepping back from an amendment to the RPO that it approved recently.

The amendment, endorsed at an advisory

“Anti-fascist political parties have been in dialogue over the past 15 years, reaching numerous decisions and standing united through difficult times. The government now expects these parties to hold discussions and present a unified decision.”

Law Adviser Asif Nazrul

council meeting on October 23, made it mandatory for each party in an alliance to contest the polls with its own symbol instead of a common one. If reversed, it would allow parties in an alliance to use a common symbol in the election.

While the BNP supports the government's move to undo the amendment, Jamaat-e-Islami, the NCP, and Khelafat Majlis oppose it, saying it would unfairly benefit a particular political party.

In light of these issues, Asif Nazrul said

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Bangladeshis getting tricked into Russia's war BRAC report reveals

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

A growing number of Bangladeshis are being tricked into travelling to Russia under the guise of legal migration, only to be forced into fighting in the Russia-Ukraine war, according to a new investigation by the BRAC Migration Programme.

The report titled "Promises Written in Blood: How Legal Migration Turned into Forced Recruitment in the Russia-Ukraine War," is based on survivor accounts and family testimonies. It details how at least 10 Bangladeshi men, lured by promises of secure jobs and decent pay, ended up in combat zones. Some of them are feared dead.

According to the report, the men travelled to Russia with valid work visas, believing they had secured well-paying jobs in oil, construction, or logistics. Instead, upon arrival, their passports were confiscated, and they were coerced into auxiliary combat units and sent to military camps near the front lines.

The report urged immediate, coordinated action by the government and international actors, warning that "untrained foreign labourers are being used as expendable manpower".

BRAC found that the victims followed proper migration procedures -- obtaining authentic work visas, departing from recognised airports,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

circus

It's suffering, not a circus.

Where lies prevail,

truth always stands alone.

And *truth is courage.*

প্রথম আলো

BNP's potential nominees for polls

Total Seats -- 300

Candidates declared -- 237

Vacant -- 63

Panchagarh-1 -- Barrister

Mohammad Nawshad Zamir

Panchagarh-2 -- Forhad Hossain

Azad

Thakurgaon-1 -- Mirza Fakhrul

Islam Alamgir

Thakurgaon-2 -- (Vacant)

Thakurgaon-3 -- Md Zahidur

Rahman Zahid

Dinajpur-1 -- Md Monjurul

Islam

Dinajpur-2 -- Md Sadik Riaz

Dinajpur-3 -- Khaleda Zia

Dinajpur-4 -- Md

Akhtruzzaman Mia

Dinajpur-5 -- (Vacant)

Dinajpur-6 -- Prof AZM Zahid

Hossain

Nilphamari-1 -- (Vacant)

Nilphamari-2 -- AH Md

Saifullah Rubel

Nilphamari-3 -- (Vacant)

Nilphamari-4 -- Md Abdul Gafur

Sarkar

Lalmorirhat-1 -- Md Hasan

Rajib Prodhan

Lalmorirhat-2 -- (Vacant)

Lalmorirhat-3 -- Asadul Habib

Dulu

Rangpur-1 -- Md Mokarram

Hossain Sujon

Rangpur-2 -- Mohammad Ali

Sarkar

Rangpur-3 -- Md Samsuzzaman

Samu

Rangpur-4 -- Mohammad

Emdadul Haque Bhorosa

Rangpur-5 -- Md Golam

Rabbani

Rangpur-6 -- Md Saiful Islam

Kurigram-1 -- Saiful Islam Rana

Kurigram-2 -- Md Sohel Hossain

Kaykobad

Kurigram-3 -- Tajvir Ul Islam

Kurigram-4 -- Md Azizur

Rahman

Gaibandha-1 -- Khandaker Ziaul

Islam Mohammad Ali

Gaibandha-2 -- Md

Anisuzzaman Khan Babu

Gaibandha-3 -- Prof Dr Syed

Moinul Hasan Sadik

Gaibandha-4 -- Mohammad

Shamim Kaysar

Gaibandha-5 -- Md Faruk Alam

Sarkar

Joypurhat-1 -- Md Masud Rana

Prodhan

Joypurhat-2 -- Abdul Bari

Bogura-1 -- Kazi Rafiqul Islam

Bogura-2 -- (Vacant)

Bogura-3 -- Abdul Muhit

Talukdar

Bogura-4 -- Md Mosharof

Hossain

Bogura-5 -- Golam Mohammad

Siraj

Bogura-6 -- Tarique Rahman

Bogura-7 -- Khaleda Zia

Chapainawabganj-1 -- Md

Sajahanj Mia

Chapainawabganj-2 -- Md

Aminul Islam

Chapainawabganj-3 -- Md

Harunur Rashid

Naogaon-1 -- Md Mostafizur

Rahman

Naogaon-2 -- Md Samsuzzoha

Khan

Naogaon-3 -- Md Fazle Huda

Babul

Naogaon-4 -- Ikramul Bari Tipu

Naogaon-5 -- (Vacant)

Naogaon-6 -- Sheikh Md Rezaul

Islam

Thakurgaon-2 -- (Vacant)

Thakurgaon-3 -- Md Zahidur

Rahman Zahid

Dinajpur-1 -- Md Monjurul

Islam

Dinajpur-2 -- Md Sadik Riaz

Dinajpur-3 -- Khaleda Zia

Dinajpur-4 -- Md

Akhtruzzaman Mia

Dinajpur-5 -- (Vacant)

Dinajpur-6 -- Prof AZM Zahid

Hossain

Nilphamari-1 -- (Vacant)

Nilphamari-2 -- AH Md

Saifullah Rubel

Nilphamari-3 -- (Vacant)

Nilphamari-4 -- Md Abdul Gafur

Sarkar

Lalmorirhat-1 -- Md Hasan

Rajib Prodhan

Lalmorirhat-2 -- (Vacant)

Lalmorirhat-3 -- Asadul Habib

Dulu

Rangpur-1 -- Md Mokarram

Hossain Sujon

Rangpur-2 -- Mohammad Ali

Sarkar

Rangpur-3 -- Md Samsuzzaman

Samu

Rangpur-4 -- Mohammad

Emdadul Haque Bhorosa

Rangpur-5 -- Md Golam

Rabbani

Rangpur-6 -- Md Saiful Islam

Kurigram-1 -- Saiful Islam Rana

Kurigram-2 -- Md Sohel Hossain

Kaykobad

Kurigram-3 -- Tajvir Ul Islam

Kurigram-4 -- Md Azizur

Rahman

Gaibandha-1 -- Khandaker Ziaul

Islam Mohammad Ali

Gaibandha-2 -- Md

Anisuzzaman Khan Babu

Gaibandha-3 -- Prof Dr Syed

Moinul Hasan Sadik

Gaibandha-4 -- Mohammad

Shamim Kaysar

Gaibandha-5 -- Md Faruk Alam

Sarkar

Joypurhat-1 -- Md Masud Rana

Prodhan

Joypurhat-2 -- Abdul Bari

Bogura-1 -- Kazi Rafiqul Islam

Bogura-2 -- (Vacant)

Bogura-3 -- Abdul Muhit

Talukdar

Bogura-4 -- Md Mosharof

Hossain

Bogura-5 -- Golam Mohammad

Siraj

Bogura-6 -- Tarique Rahman

Bogura-7 -- Khaleda Zia

Chapainawabganj-1 -- Md

Sajahanj Mia

Chapainawabganj-2 -- Md

Aminul Islam

Chapainawabganj-3 -- Md

Harunur Rashid

Bagerhat-3 -- (Vacant)

Khulna-1 -- (Vacant)

Khulna-2 -- Nazrul Islam Monju

Khulna-3 -- Rokibul Islam Boluk

Khulna-4 -- Azizul Bari Helal

Khulna-5 -- Mohammad Ali

Asgor

Khulna-6 -- Monirul Hasan

Bappi

Satkhira-1 -- Md Habibul Islam

Habib

Satkhira-2 -- Abdur Rouf

Satkhira-3 -- Kazi Alauddin

Satkhira-4 -- Md Moniruzzaman

Barguna-1 -- Md Nazrul Islam

Molla

Barguna-2 -- Nurul Islam Moni

Patuakhali-1 -- Air Vice Marshal

(retd) Altaf Hossain Chowdhury

Patuakhali-2 -- (Vacant)

Patuakhali-3 -- (Vacant)

Patuakhali-4 -- ABM Mosharraf

Hossain

Bhola-1 -- Golam Nabi Alamgir

Bhola-2 -- Md Hafiz Ibrahim

Bhola-3 -- Major (retd) Hafiz

Uddin Ahmed Bir Bikrom

Pubali Bank PLC's

SUBORDINATED BOND

Approved by Bangladesh Securities & Exchange Commission for Individual & Corporate

Profit Rate: ✓ Average of the highest 6-month FDR rate + 3%
✓ Earn Profit Every Six Months!

Tenure: ✓ 7 years

AAA
Rated Bankপুবালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি.
PUBALI BANK PLC.ISO/IEC
27001:2022

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

Open your
Account
from anywherePI
PI Banking-
a Pubali Bank apps

“



Bangladesh now stands at a very critical moment. Which direction we will move towards as a nation and as a country and how we will walk along the path of democracy – these things depend on the next election.

AMM NASIR UDDIN
Chief Election
Commissioner after
inspecting a training
programme of Ansar
VDP members



Rusha affectionately gathers her friend Marufa's hair to tie it into a ponytail on their way to school. The simple gesture reflects the warmth of childhood friendship. The photo was taken in Jhalakathi of Barishal yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Primary schools not getting music and PE teachers Govt withdraws plan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has withdrawn its plan to create posts for music and physical education (PE) teachers in government primary schools, weeks after several religion-based organisations opposed the move.

The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education issued a revised gazette on Sunday, amending the Government Primary School Teachers Recruitment Rules 2025.

The amended version dropped the two new teaching positions that had been included in the earlier gazette published on August 28.

Masud Akhtar Khan, additional secretary of the ministry's School Division, said, "A revised gazette has been issued. While the earlier version listed four categories of teachers, the new one includes only two. The posts of assistant teachers for music and physical education are no longer included."

He, however, declined to comment on whether the decision came under pressure from any particular group, saying, "Please speak to the higher authorities about that."

The earlier gazette had introduced two new assistant teacher categories -- one for music and another for physical education -- alongside the existing assistant teacher posts.

Educationists had initially welcomed the move, calling it a long-overdue step towards encouraging creativity and well-rounded learning at the primary level.

However, the plan quickly drew strong criticism from several Islamist organisations, including Hefazat-e-Islam, Islami Andolan Bangladesh, Jamaat-e-Islami, Khelafat Majlis, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis and Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan, that demanded its cancellation.



Candidate list 'disappointing and full of godfathers'
Says Patwary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

NCP Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary yesterday said BNP's announced list of candidates for the upcoming national election is "disappointing" and "most of them are godfathers".

"We had expected that after the mass uprising, BNP would nominate some good candidates. But it seems they have tactically sidelined the young members of the Chhatra Dal and Jubo Dal. We welcome those young leaders to join our party," he said at a press briefing at the party office in Bangalmotor.

"NCP had learned that Tarique Rahman might return soon. We want to sit together and resolve issues through discussion." He lauded Khaleda Zia for securing nominations in three constituencies and described her as a "symbol of democracy".

Patwary also voiced support for Prof Muhammad Yunus. "Dr Yunus is being intimidated -- sometimes by BNP, sometimes by Jamaat. I want to tell the chief adviser: If you are afraid, we are here. We fear no one -- not BNP, not Jamaat."

Patwary also voiced support for Prof Muhammad Yunus. "Dr Yunus is being intimidated -- sometimes by BNP, sometimes by Jamaat. I want to tell the chief adviser: If you are afraid, we are here. We fear no one -- not BNP, not Jamaat."

DHAKA CONSTITUENCIES BNP nominates 13, keeps 7 seats open

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has prioritised a combination of old guards and new faces while nominating candidates for the Dhaka constituencies in the upcoming 13th national election.

The party yesterday announced its probable candidates for 13 of the 20 constituencies in Dhaka. It has yet to announce candidates for Dhaka 7, 9, 10, 13, 17, 18 and 20.

BNP sources said these seats are either being kept for possible alliance partners or are under further consideration.

Among the alliance candidates, Bangladesh Jatiya Party Chairman Andaleeb Rahman Partho is expected to contest from Dhaka-17, the same seat he ran for in 2018.

Meanwhile, Nationalist Democratic Movement Chairman Bobby Hajaj has reportedly received BNP's approval to contest from Dhaka-13.

In Dhaka 1, Khandakar Abu Ashfaque, president of Dhaka district BNP, has been nominated. He also contested the 2018 election from the same seat.

In Dhaka 2, former state minister Aman Ullah Aman has been selected. His son, Irfan Ibne Aman, was the BNP candidate in 2018.

Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, a BNP standing committee member, will contest from Dhaka-3, as he did in 2018.

Tanvir Ahmed Rabin, member secretary of Dhaka City South BNP and son of former MP Salahuddin Ahmed, not Jamaat."

has been nominated for Dhaka 4. Salahuddin contested the seat in 2018.

Nabi Ullah Nabi has been nominated for Dhaka 5, a seat he also contested in 2018.

Ishraq Hossain, son of late Dhaka City Corporation mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, has been chosen for Dhaka-6.

In 2018, Gano Forum leader Subrata Choudhury contested this seat as an alliance candidate.

BNP standing committee member Mirza Abbas will again contest from Dhaka 8, where he also ran in 2018.

In Dhaka 11, MA Quaiyim, founding president of Dhaka City North BNP, has been nominated. His wife, Shamim Ara Begum, contested the seat in 2018.

Former Dhaka City North BNP president Saiful Alam Nirob has been nominated for Dhaka-12. He also ran in 2018 with BNP's ticket.

In Dhaka 14, Sanjida Islam Tuli, coordinator of Mayer Daak, a platform for families of victims of enforced disappearance, has received the primary nomination.

In 2018, Syed Abu Bakar Siddique, son of former BNP lawmaker SA Khaleq, contested the seat from BNP.

For Dhaka 15, Shafiqul Islam Khan, former acting general secretary of Jubo Dal, has been nominated. In 2018, Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Md Shafiqur Rahman contested this seat as an alliance candidate.

Aminul Haque, convener of Dhaka

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Five more die of dengue, 1,147 get hospitalised

UNB, Dhaka

The dengue crisis continues to worsen as five more patients died and 1,147 were admitted to hospitals across the country in the 24 hours leading up to yesterday morning.

With the latest fatalities, the total number of deaths from the mosquito-borne disease has risen to 288 this year, according to the DGHS.

Three of the new deaths were reported in Dhaka division (outside city corporations), and one each in DNCC and Rajshahi.

During this period, 1,147 more patients were hospitalised with the viral fever, bringing the total number of cases to 72,822 so far this year.

Currently, 1,076 patients are receiving treatment in Dhaka, while a total of 3,082 patients are undergoing treatment at hospitals across the country.

HC stays circular to recruit Dhaka Wasa MD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday stayed the effectiveness of a notification issued for appointing the managing director of Dhaka Wasa on a contractual basis for a period of three years.

The bench of Justice Fatema Najib and Justice Fatema Anwar issued the order and rule following a petition filed by Md Liakot Ali challenging its legality. The member secretary of the Financial Management Assistance Committee on August 14 issued the circular for appointing the MD.

In the petition, Liakot said only the board of directors of Dhaka Wasa is entitled to appoint its MD in accordance with the Dhaka Wasa Authority Act, 1996.

MEDICERAM IN MALAYSIA 190 Bangladeshis fired for protesting exploitation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A Malaysian gloves manufacturer has terminated 190 Bangladeshi workers for protesting against exploitative practices, including the non-renewal of their visas.

The migrant workers at the Kuala Lumpur-based company Mediceram told The Daily Star yesterday that the management handed termination letters to all Bangladeshi employees on October 31 and has begun cancelling their visas to deport them.

"I heard visas of six Bangladeshis have already been cancelled and the company will do the same for others," said one worker.

We also went to the Malaysian labour court and immigration department with a legal counsellor, but we were told that we cannot file any complaint.

A SACKED WORKER

"We also went to the Malaysian labour court and immigration department with a legal counsellor, but we were told that we cannot file any complaint," the worker said.

Over the past two years, since 2023, Mediceram workers have gone on strike multiple times, demanding payment of unpaid wages and recruitment fees.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Drainage work by the Dhaka South City Corporation has left the Alu Bazar area of the Old Dhaka in a dilapidated state. As a result, pedestrians are forced to walk on the road, while vehicles have little space to pass through. Locals alleged that the work has been going on for nearly three months, causing immense suffering. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Just Published
SHAKUR'S
**TEXTBOOK OF PEDIATRIC
GASTROENTEROLOGY
HEPATOLOGY &
NUTRITION**
UPDATED, UNIQUE, AUTHENTIC
AND EVIDENCE BASED

Author's Other Books

Available at an Affordable Price at
Salim Centre, Shakur's Child Health & Research Centre,
19/2, West Panthapath (Adjoining Square Hospital), Dhaka-1205.
Phone: +88 01748 154068, +88 01618 846449
Books can be sent by courier

AUTHOR
Prof (Dr) Md. Salim Shakur PhD
MBBS(DMC, DU), DCH(Dublin), DCH(Glasgow),
MRCP(UK), PhD(DU, Nutrition),
FRCP(London, Edinburgh, Glasgow), FRCPCH(UK)
Senior Consultant, Department of Pediatrics,
United Hospital Ltd, Dhaka.

Formerly
• Professor, Head of Department of
Pediatric Gastroenterology & Nutrition and
Academic Director, Bangladesh Institute of Child Health.
• Director Dhaka Shishu Hospital (Current Name BSH&I)

B'BARIA VIOLENCE
Another victim dies, death toll rises to twoOUR CORRESPONDENT,
B'baria

A youth, who was critically injured in a series of attacks and counterattacks between two rival gangs in Nabinagar upazila of Brahmanbaria on Saturday, died yesterday, raising the incident's death toll to two.

The deceased, Yasin, from Alannagar village in Nabinagar municipality, succumbed to his injuries around dawn while undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said his brother Shaheen.

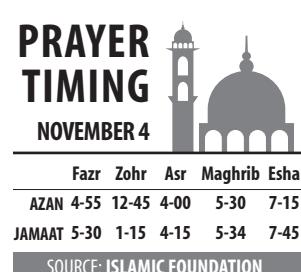
Shipon Mia, 30, son of Monnaif Mia also known as "Manek Dakat" from Thokkandhi village, died on Saturday, the night of the incident.

Quoting locals, Shahinur Islam, officer-in-charge of Nabinagar Police Station, said the first attack took place around 9:00pm on Saturday at a roadside eatery near Gani Shah Mazar in Barikandi union.

Shipon was chatting with others when a group of armed men stormed in, opened fire and fled the scene immediately.

Shipon and two restaurant employees, Yasin, 20, and Nur Alam, 18, were shot.

According to locals, there has been a long-standing dispute between the two gangs over control of the area's criminal activities.



Job Announcement: Secondary Guidance, History, and English Teachers

GEG Bangladesh Limited is seeking three qualified and experienced Class 6-12 Teachers to teach in a respected English-medium American Curriculum Christian School in Chittagong. GEG Bangladesh Limited is committed to academic excellence in American traditional education, moral development, and leadership. We welcome applicants who have strong English, experience with traditional American education, and share our core values of respect, responsibility, integrity, service, discernment, and compassion.

Position Title: Secondary Teacher
Location: Chittagong, Bangladesh
Reports To: GEG Bangladesh Limited Board
Employment Type: Full-time
Contract Duration: Two years (renewable)
Salary and Benefits: Competitive salary and benefits commensurate with experience and educational degrees.
Deadline: Applicants must apply by 20 November 2025 along with CV, educational certificates, experience certificates, and other relevant documents.

Key Responsibilities:

- Plan and deliver lessons in accordance with American curriculum standards and school requirements
- Create and issue assignments, tests, and other educational materials
- Assess student abilities, strengths, and weaknesses, and provide feedback by grading assignments, homework, and exams
- Develop and enforce school and classroom rules and policies to create a safe and respectful environment
- Communicate regularly with school administration and parents about student progress through grade reports, conferences and emails
- Collaborate with colleagues and administrators by participating in professional development activities
- Develop and maintain an international culture that prepares students for higher education abroad, and cultivates a love for Bangladesh that encourages students to study abroad and return to Bangladesh to further develop their motherland

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree earned from an American University (required); Master's degree in Education or a related field (preferred)
- Proficiency in subject related studies: English, History, or Student Guidance
- Leadership experience in working with children, preferably in an international or cross-cultural setting
- High level of personal integrity, professionalism, and commitment to serve others in a cross-cultural setting
- Excellent English communication and interpersonal skills
- Practicing Christian with a mature faith and alignment with GEG's mission, vision, and values

Application Instructions:
To apply, please submit the following documents:

- A current CV or résumé
- Educational Certificates and/or Transcripts
- Contact information for 2 professional and 2 personal references

GEG Bangladesh Limited is an equal opportunity employer. We encourage applications from individuals of all backgrounds who are committed to excellence and integrity in American education. Please send applications by email to ggbldd@gmail.com

Address: GEG Bangladesh Limited, Ground Floor, 1986/A, Zakir Hossain By-lane, East Nasirabad, Chittagong 4000, Bangladesh



People crowd around this TCB truck in the Mohammadpur area of the capital yesterday to purchase daily essentials at subsidised rates. For many, such facilities have become a beacon of hope amid the rising prices of commodities.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

HABIGANJ SADAR HOSPITAL

Patients fall prey to theft gangs, broker syndicates

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Broker syndicates and theft gangs have been operating at Habiganj 250-bed District Sadar Hospital for years, leaving patients and their attendants in constant fear and distress.

Service seekers alleged that brokers, in collusion with some hospital staffers, often harass visitors to lure them into private clinics while demanding extra money. Thieves take advantage of the chaos to steal wallets, phones, and other valuables from visitors.

Last week, Abdul Kuddus from Baniachong brought his wife to the hospital for treatment. Within minutes, his wallet, containing cash, ID cards, and important papers, was gone. "I didn't even notice when it happened. Now I'm in deep trouble," he said.

Sumona Akter from Chunurughat said her mobile phone was stolen while she was standing in a queue for a doctor's appointment.



facilities, and collaborate with nearby pharmacies and diagnostic centres for hefty commissions.

According to the hospital authorities, records show that in 2018 the hospital management committee formed a sub-committee to evict brokers. In

A man approached me, offering help with my serial, and soon after my phone vanished," she said.

Subhan Mia, a local shop owner, said the syndicates operate openly both inside and around the hospital. They demand bribes to speed up treatment, lure poor patients into costly private

February 2019, a list of 28 identified brokers — including individuals from Habiganj town, Baniachong, and Chunurughat — was publicly released. Yet, years later, the problem persists.

"The situation has worsened recently. We received numerous complaints from victims. Acting on a tip-off, we conducted a raid at the hospital on October 29 and detained nine brokers," said Shah Alam, company commander of Rab 9 (CPC) 3.

Executive Magistrate Md Mohsin Miah said they are continuing their drives against brokers.

Dr Aminul Haque Sarkar, superintendent of the hospital, admitted the problem. "Some brokers have been caught, but many others are still operating. A coordinated effort from everyone is needed to completely eliminate them. If we receive any specific complaint against any doctor or staff member, we will take legal action."

Three specific demands were placed before the authorities: swift legal action against those involved in inciting communal violence, enhanced security for all temples and religious institutions, and strict monitoring of social media to curb the spread of provocative misinformation.

ISKCON is being falsely portrayed on social media as a "militant" and "extremist" organisation, he added.

He said that certain groups with vested interest are deliberately spreading falsehoods, rumours, and propaganda against ISKCON and the Hindu community in an attempt to disrupt Bangladesh's longstanding tradition of religious harmony and social cohesion.

ISKCON is being falsely

portrayed on social

media as a "militant" and

"extremist" organisation, he added.

Three specific demands

were placed before the

authorities: swift legal

action against those

involved in inciting

communal violence,

enhanced security for

all temples and religious

institutions, and strict

monitoring of social

media to curb the

spread of provocative

misinformation.

ISKCON is being falsely

portrayed on social

media as a "militant" and

"extremist" organisation, he added.

Three specific demands

were placed before the

authorities: swift legal

action against those

involved in inciting

communal violence,

enhanced security for

all temples and religious

institutions, and strict

monitoring of social

media to curb the

spread of provocative

misinformation.

ISKCON is being falsely

portrayed on social

media as a "militant" and

"extremist" organisation, he added.

Three specific demands

were placed before the

authorities: swift legal

action against those

involved in inciting

communal violence,

enhanced security for

all temples and religious

institutions, and strict

monitoring of social

media to curb the

spread of provocative

misinformation.

ISKCON is being falsely

portrayed on social

media as a "militant" and

"extremist" organisation, he added.

Three specific demands

were placed before the

authorities: swift legal

action against those

involved in inciting

communal violence,

enhanced security for

all temples and religious

institutions, and strict

monitoring of social

media to curb the

spread of provocative

misinformation.

ISKCON is being falsely

portrayed on social

media as a "militant" and

"extremist" organisation, he added.

Three specific demands

were placed before the

authorities: swift legal

action against those

involved in inciting

communal violence,

enhanced security for

all temples and religious

institutions, and strict

monitoring of social

media to curb the

spread of provocative

misinformation.

ISKCON is being falsely

portrayed on social

media as a "militant" and

"extremist" organisation, he added.

Three specific demands

were placed before the

authorities: swift legal

action against those

involved in inciting

communal violence,

enhanced security for

all temples and religious

institutions, and strict

monitoring of social

media to curb the

spread of provocative

misinformation.

ISKCON is being falsely

portrayed on social

media as a "militant" and

"extremist" organisation, he added.

Three specific demands

were placed before the

authorities: swift legal

action against those

involved in inciting

communal violence,

enhanced security for

all temples and religious

institutions, and strict

Nepal SC halts interim govt's decision to recall 11 envoys

REUTERS, Kathmandu

The Supreme Court in Nepal has ordered a halt to the recall of nearly a dozen ambassadors, a lawyer said yesterday, in a setback for Prime Minister Sushila Karki and her interim government.

Karki, a former chief justice who was appointed as the country's first woman leader in September after deadly anti-corruption protests, recalled 11 ambassadors to countries including China, the United States, Britain and Japan, who were appointed by her predecessor K P Sharma Oli.

In seeking the envoys' removal, the government said it was not satisfied with their performance.

"The government could not justify its charges against the ambassadors in the court," Ananta Raj Luitel, an independent lawyer who challenged Karki's decision, told Reuters.

Luitel said all ambassadors would continue to work as usual in their positions. Jagdish Kharel, minister for communications and information technology, said the government would "respect the order of the Supreme Court."

The 73-year-old Karki is tasked with holding fresh elections to the lower house of parliament by March 5 and has appointed a small cabinet of reform-minded figures with anti-corruption credentials.

Seventy-six people were killed and more than 1,300 injured during the protests in early September by the Gen Z movement, named for the age of its mainly young supporters.

NCP preparing list

FROM PAGE 12

The Dhaka-12 has two names on the NCP's list of possible candidates -- Senior Joint Member Secretary Nahida Sarwar Niva and Jatiya Jibto Shakti Convenor Tarikul Islam.

Senior Joint Convenor Ariful Islam Adib will likely run in Dhaka-14.

Contacted, Samantha Sharmin, senior joint convener of NCP, told this newspaper, "This is a party of ordinary people. From rickshaw pullers to garment workers, even those who have never been in politics can contest the polls. Their sacrifices during the July uprising helped free Bangladesh from fascism, and we want people from all walks of life to join us in this election."

According to party sources, general secretary SM Shahriar and joint member secretary Arif Sohel have been shortlisted from Dhaka-5 and Dhaka-7, respectively.



Relatives bid farewell to 17-year-old Palestinian Jameel Hanani, who was killed by Israeli forces, during his funeral in Beit Furik, near Nablus in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Hamas 'determined' to stick to Gaza truce

Erdogan tells OIC delegates in Istanbul

AGENCIES

Hamas is "determined" to stick to the Gaza truce, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday, adding it was crucial that Muslim nations play a leading role in the Palestinian territory's reconstruction.

"It seems that Hamas is quite determined to adhere to the agreement," Erdogan told delegates from the Organization of Islamic States (OIC) gathered in Istanbul for their annual

COMCEC economic cooperation summit.

His remarks came as Turkey prepared to host the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Pakistan and Indonesia for talks on Gaza's reconstruction as fears grow for the shaky October 10 ceasefire. The talks were set to begin at an Istanbul hotel later yesterday. "At this point, we need to deliver more humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza and then begin reconstruction efforts," he said.

Hasan Ali, may run from Chattogram-14 and NCP's central joint member secretary Mir Arshadul Haque from Chattogram-16.

In Cox's Bazar-2, the division's organisational secretary SM Suza Uddin is already campaigning.

Cumilla-6 may be given to central joint chief coordinator Navid Nawroz Shah, while Brahmanbaria-3 to central chief organiser Md Attaullah.

In Barishal-5, central joint member secretary Mahmuda Mitu may run.

In Patakhali-1 constituency, joint member secretary Zahidul Islam Musa; in Patakhali-2, joint convener Mujahidul Islam Shahin; and in Jhalakathi-1, joint chief coordinator Ariful Islam Tuhin are likely candidates.

In Khulna-2, NCP will likely pick the party's central committee joint member secretary Faridul Haque as a candidate.

In Chattogram division, Chattogram-10 may be given to metropolitan Jibto Shakti convener Irfad Ibrahim. NCP's central joint convener, Muhammad

Haque as a candidate.

The adviser did not comment when asked about the complaint by political parties that many of the issues discussed with the consensus commission were not included in the July charter.

JAMMAT WANTS REFEREE'

Later in the day, Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher urged Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus to play the role of a "referee" in holding dialogue among political parties.

"We welcome the decision taken by the advisory council. However, I would like to add one point: if the council believes its responsibility is now over and that it will no longer take any initiative and leave everything to political parties, then there may be a need for a referee in the process. That's why I hope the chief adviser will play a referee-like role, as he has done in the past," Taher told a press conference at the Khelafat Majlis office in the city yesterday.

Akther alleged that the government is attempting to shift the responsibility for reforms onto the political parties, rather than taking action itself.

"A faction within the government is trying to sabotage the reform process and disrupt the election," he said, adding, "It is disappointing to see the government trying to derail the election through formalities."

He also criticised political parties for failing to implement the reform pledges they made in July.

"The July charter implementation order must be issued as soon as possible. People will not support any actions that derail reforms or disrupt elections."

Akther called for immediate steps to honour the referendum decision.

reforms, alleging that it is stalling the process instead of implementing agreed-upon decisions.

Speaking at a press conference at the party office yesterday, he said all parties had reached a consensus through the consensus commission, and the government was supposed to issue an order based on those recommendations.

"Instead, the government is asking the political parties to again discuss the matters over the next seven days. It seems the government is playing snakes and ladders on reforms."

Akther alleged that the government is attempting to shift the responsibility for reforms onto the political parties, rather than taking action itself.

"A faction within the government is trying to sabotage the reform process and disrupt the election," he said, adding, "It is disappointing to see the government trying to derail the election through formalities."

He also criticised political parties for failing to implement the reform pledges they made in July.

"The July charter implementation order must be issued as soon as possible. People will not support any actions that derail reforms or disrupt elections."

Akther called for immediate steps to honour the referendum decision.

The adviser did not comment when asked about the complaint by political parties that many of the issues discussed with the consensus commission were not included in the July charter.

REFFEE'

Later in the day, Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher urged Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus to play the role of a "referee" in holding dialogue among political parties.

"We welcome the decision taken by the advisory council. However, I would like to add one point: if the council believes its responsibility is now over and that it will no longer take any initiative and leave everything to political parties, then there may be a need for a referee in the process. That's why I hope the chief adviser will play a referee-like role, as he has done in the past," Taher told a press conference at the Khelafat Majlis office in the city yesterday.

Akther alleged that the government is attempting to shift the responsibility for reforms onto the political parties, rather than taking action itself.

"A faction within the government is trying to sabotage the reform process and disrupt the election," he said, adding, "It is disappointing to see the government trying to derail the election through formalities."

He also criticised political parties for failing to implement the reform pledges they made in July.

"The July charter implementation order must be issued as soon as possible. People will not support any actions that derail reforms or disrupt elections."

Akther called for immediate steps to honour the referendum decision.

The adviser did not comment when asked about the complaint by political parties that many of the issues discussed with the consensus commission were not included in the July charter.

REFFEE'

Later in the day, Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher urged Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus to play the role of a "referee" in holding dialogue among political parties.

"We welcome the decision taken by the advisory council. However, I would like to add one point: if the council believes its responsibility is now over and that it will no longer take any initiative and leave everything to political parties, then there may be a need for a referee in the process. That's why I hope the chief adviser will play a referee-like role, as he has done in the past," Taher told a press conference at the Khelafat Majlis office in the city yesterday.

Akther alleged that the government is attempting to shift the responsibility for reforms onto the political parties, rather than taking action itself.

"A faction within the government is trying to sabotage the reform process and disrupt the election," he said, adding, "It is disappointing to see the government trying to derail the election through formalities."

He also criticised political parties for failing to implement the reform pledges they made in July.

"The July charter implementation order must be issued as soon as possible. People will not support any actions that derail reforms or disrupt elections."

Akther called for immediate steps to honour the referendum decision.

The adviser did not comment when asked about the complaint by political parties that many of the issues discussed with the consensus commission were not included in the July charter.

REFFEE'

Later in the day, Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher urged Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus to play the role of a "referee" in holding dialogue among political parties.

"We welcome the decision taken by the advisory council. However, I would like to add one point: if the council believes its responsibility is now over and that it will no longer take any initiative and leave everything to political parties, then there may be a need for a referee in the process. That's why I hope the chief adviser will play a referee-like role, as he has done in the past," Taher told a press conference at the Khelafat Majlis office in the city yesterday.

Akther alleged that the government is attempting to shift the responsibility for reforms onto the political parties, rather than taking action itself.

"A faction within the government is trying to sabotage the reform process and disrupt the election," he said, adding, "It is disappointing to see the government trying to derail the election through formalities."

He also criticised political parties for failing to implement the reform pledges they made in July.

"The July charter implementation order must be issued as soon as possible. People will not support any actions that derail reforms or disrupt elections."

Akther called for immediate steps to honour the referendum decision.

The adviser did not comment when asked about the complaint by political parties that many of the issues discussed with the consensus commission were not included in the July charter.

REFFEE'

Later in the day, Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher urged Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus to play the role of a "referee" in holding dialogue among political parties.

"We welcome the decision taken by the advisory council. However, I would like to add one point: if the council believes its responsibility is now over and that it will no longer take any initiative and leave everything to political parties, then there may be a need for a referee in the process. That's why I hope the chief adviser will play a referee-like role, as he has done in the past," Taher told a press conference at the Khelafat Majlis office in the city yesterday.

Akther alleged that the government is attempting to shift the responsibility for reforms onto the political parties, rather than taking action itself.

"A faction within the government is trying to sabotage the reform process and disrupt the election," he said, adding, "It is disappointing to see the government trying to derail the election through formalities."

He also criticised political parties for failing to implement the reform pledges they made in July.

"The July charter implementation order must be issued as soon as possible. People will not support any actions that derail reforms or disrupt elections."

Akther called for immediate steps to honour the referendum decision.

The adviser did not comment when asked about the complaint by political parties that many of the issues discussed with the consensus commission were not included in the July charter.

REFFEE'

Later in the day, Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher urged Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus to play the role of a "referee" in holding dialogue among political parties.

"We welcome the decision taken by the advisory council. However, I would like to add one point: if the council believes its responsibility is now over and that it will no longer take any initiative and leave everything to political parties, then there may be a need for a referee in the process. That's why I hope the chief adviser will play a referee-like role, as he has done in the past," Taher told a press conference at the Khelafat Majlis office in the city yesterday.

Akther alleged that the government is attempting to shift the responsibility for reforms onto the political parties, rather than taking action itself.

"A faction within the government is trying to sabotage the reform process and disrupt the election," he said, adding, "It is disappointing to see the government trying to derail the election through formalities."

He also criticised political parties for failing to implement the reform pledges they made in July.

"The July charter implementation order must be issued as soon as possible. People will not support any actions that derail reforms or disrupt elections."

Akther called for immediate steps to honour the referendum decision.

The adviser did not comment when asked about the complaint by political parties that many of the issues discussed with the consensus commission were not included in the July charter.

REFFEE'

Later in the day, Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher urged Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus to play the role of a "referee" in holding dialogue among political parties.

"We welcome the decision taken by the advisory council. However, I would like to add one point: if the council believes its responsibility is now over and that it will no longer take any initiative and leave everything to political parties, then there may be a need for a referee in the process. That's why I hope the chief adviser will play a referee-like role, as he has done in the past," Taher told a press conference at the Khelafat Majlis office in the city yesterday.

Akther alleged that the government is attempting to shift the responsibility for reforms onto the political parties, rather than taking action itself.

"A faction within the government is trying to sabotage the reform process and disrupt the election," he said, adding, "It is disappointing to see the government trying to derail the election through formalities."

He also criticised political parties for failing to implement the reform pledges they made in July.

"The July charter implementation order must be issued as soon as possible. People will not support any actions that derail reforms or disrupt elections."

Akther called for immediate steps to honour the referendum decision.

The adviser did not comment when asked about the complaint by political parties that many of the issues discussed with the consensus commission were not included in the July charter.

REFFEE'

Later in the day, Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher urged Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus to play the role of a "referee" in holding dialogue among political parties.

"We welcome the decision taken by the advisory council. However, I would like to add one point: if the council believes its responsibility is now over and that it will no longer take any initiative and leave everything to political parties, then there may be a need for a referee in the process. That's why I hope the chief adviser will play a referee-like role, as he has done in the past," Taher told a press conference at the Khelafat Majlis office in the city yesterday.

Akther alleged that the government is attempting to shift the responsibility for reforms onto the political parties, rather than taking action itself.

"A faction within the government is trying to sabotage the reform process and disrupt the election," he said, adding, "It is disappointing to see the government trying to derail the election through formalities."

He also criticised political parties for failing to implement the reform pledges they made in July.

"The July charter implementation order must be issued as soon as possible. People will not support any actions that derail reforms or disrupt elections."

Akther called for immediate steps to honour the referendum decision.

The adviser did not comment when asked about the complaint by political parties that many of the issues discussed with the consensus commission were not included in the July charter.

REFFEE'

Later in the day, Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher urged Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus to play the role

Govt must act on power sector corruption

Controversial electricity deals need further probe

A damning interim report by a national committee has laid bare entrenched corruption in the country's power sector during the Awami League regime. It uncovered a corrosive nexus of private entities, high-ranking bureaucrats, and top government officials, including now-ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. For instance, the so-called "zero-risk" power purchase agreements (PPAs) guaranteed immense profits for investors, even when the power was not used. They were meticulously engineered, allegedly under the direct influence of Sheikh Hasina, who also held the power ministry portfolio. This dual role centralised control and removed critical checks and balances. The report highlights the repeated interference of officials from the Prime Minister's Office, lending weight to the claim that the rot was structural, not incidental.

The committee also probed the abuse of the now-repealed Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provisions) Act, 2010, passed to address power shortages but instead used as a license for impunity. It allowed the government to bypass competitive bidding and oversight, enabling a culture of "rent-seeking" that enriched a handful of influential people while trapping the nation in long-term financial obligations. Capacity payments were fundamentally designed to protect private greed at public expense.

The case of the Adani Power deal to import electricity from India stands as a high-profile example of this procedural decay, according to the report. The revelation that Adani Power itself allegedly drafted the PPA and that Bangladesh Power Development Board officials were simply instructed to sign it exposes the staggering lack of regulatory independence. It suggests that the nation's energy policy was dictated by the interests of a foreign entity rather than the oversight of its own civil servants.

It is therefore essential that the interim government act with firm resolve to reverse this damaging trend. First, the interim report must be made public immediately. Secrecy is the oxygen of corruption, and the first step towards reform is full, unvarnished transparency. Second, the authorities must aggressively pursue the procedural flaws and evidence of fraud found in the Adani contract and others. The interim government, however, faces serious legal and economic challenges ahead. Power Adviser Fouzul Kabir Khan has rightly acknowledged the dilemma: cancelling these contracts without cause entails the risk of incurring massive liquidation damages. Therefore, these deals require urgent investigation, potentially by the Anti-Corruption Commission, to establish a definitive legal basis for action.

Bangladesh is currently caught in a multi-billion-dollar energy trap, but accountability is the key to escape it. Dismantling the legacy of impunity requires more than just re-negotiating excessive profits; it demands prosecution for the "massive corruption, collusion, frauds, irregularities and illegalities" that took place during the Awami League regime. Only by holding the architects of this system to account can the nation ensure that its future energy security serves public interests.

Mob violence cases need firmer police pursuit

Police's business-as-usual approach cannot rein in this trend

We are quite disturbed to learn of the business-as-usual approach that the police have seemingly adopted in dealing with the cases of mob violence. According to a report by Prothom Alo, there has been negligible progress on the 46 incidents of fatal mob violence that its correspondents have followed up on. Out of these 46, only 36 had formal cases filed, while 10 had none. In the 36 cases filed, more than 9,000 individuals were "named" as suspects, mostly unidentified. Among them, 27 cases saw 114 arrested—representing an arrest rate of just 1.27 percent—while nine saw zero arrests. Moreover, chargesheets have been submitted only in six cases.

This state of affairs is frustrating, as it shows that the sheer scale of the problem has not been met with commensurate action, despite repeated promises. While the government keeps saying that mob violence will not be tolerated, its resolve has not translated into better police performance. One could understand why certain officers on duty might be hesitant or afraid to act in the face of a seemingly spontaneous mob outburst, but what's preventing them from taking effective legal action afterwards? In the 13 months since August 2024, at least 220 people have been reportedly killed in mob violence across the country. Add to that the numerous non-fatal incidents reported every now and then. How many incidents had cases filed, or properly followed up on? Leave alone trial or conviction, the picture that emerges from the assessment of primary legal interventions like arrests and chargesheets is deeply troubling.

Ironically, it is this very lack of legal action, and the trust deficit it creates, that are also responsible for why the so-called "mob justice" happens in the first place. Add to the mix personal motives like vengeance, political rivalry, or trade/property disputes, and the whole thing becomes extremely dangerous and exploitative. Even women, children, and persons with disabilities have not been spared from this madness. The Prothom Alo analysis also reveals another disquieting pattern: mob incidents that drew media attention or public outrage saw greater police activity, while those that remained "unnoticed" saw slower progress or none at all. After many such incidents, families of victims were too scared to even file cases, while the police simply chose to look the other way.

We, therefore, urge the government and police leadership to immediately bring mob violence cases under central monitoring, so that the real status of every case is known and acted on. The state must also support and rehabilitate the families of victims. Overall, it must show greater sincerity in dealing with such cases so that mob violence doesn't occur.

EDITORIAL

Central bank autonomy is key to economic stability



MACRO MIRROR

Dr Fahmida Khatun
is the executive director at the Centre for
Policy Dialogue.
Views expressed in this article are the
author's own.

FAHMIDA KATUN

An independent central bank is the cornerstone of economic stability and public trust as it can make operational and technical decisions, such as setting interest rates, regulating banks, and managing foreign reserves, without political interference. Independence ensures that economic realities—not short-term political interests—guide monetary policy decisions. A central bank's independence signals professionalism, credibility, and commitment to long-term stability, essential for maintaining confidence among citizens, investors, and markets.

Unfortunately, in Bangladesh, successive governments have undermined the autonomy of the Bangladesh Bank (BB), established under the Bangladesh Bank Order, 1972, with the mandate to safeguard monetary stability. BB has increasingly been treated as an extension of the government rather than an independent authority, eroding its freedom to take timely and effective decisions vital for maintaining the country's financial health and price stability. The prolonged interference is now evident in the fragility of the banking sector, which is suffering from weak governance, poor oversight, and delayed or misguided policy actions.

Non-performing loans (NPLs) have reached alarming levels. As of March 2025, total NPLs accounted for 24.13 percent of all loans, while those of state-owned banks stood at a staggering 45.79 percent. The Asset Quality Reviews (AQRs) conducted by international auditors have exposed the severity of the problem. Five Shariah-based Islamic banks were found to have NPLs almost equal to their total disbursed loans, revealing symptoms of deeper institutional weaknesses, often stemming from the central bank's inability to act independently of political and vested interests.

Sadly, without institutional autonomy, the central bank cannot respond to the challenges Bangladesh is currently facing—high inflation, currency volatility, and weak banking discipline—with the speed and consistency required. When key policy decisions, such as raising interest rates or allowing the exchange rate to adjust, depend on political clearance, credibility erodes, and policy effectiveness diminishes.

Under these circumstances, the BB's recent initiative to revise the 1972 order is timely and necessary. The proposed

amendments include granting greater administrative and financial autonomy, reducing the number of bureaucrats on its board to curb government influence, strengthening tenure protection for the governor, and establishing a formal Monetary Policy Committee (MPC). These steps, if implemented sincerely, could restore the central bank's credibility.

However, the new law must clearly state BB's primary objective. The central goal should be price stability. Other goals should include promoting economic growth and employment generation. In recent years, BB refrained from tightening monetary policy and instead capped lending interest at nine percent and deposits

at only qualified professionals are selected for the position. Current or former bureaucrats should not be appointed as governors or deputy governors, since that compromises neutrality and raises conflicts of interest. Although the 1972 order includes this safeguard, previous governments routinely ignored it, appointing loyal bureaucrats to serve political ends. Leadership integrity and expertise must be the foundation of institutional independence.

Regarding the MPC, it should not be a symbolic advisory group but a legally mandated body comprising both internal and external experts. It should meet regularly, publish minutes, and explain the rationale behind its policy decisions. Such transparency would enhance the bank's accountability and strengthen its independence by demonstrating that decisions are based on evidence and analysis rather than government directives. An empowered MPC would enable monetary policy to reflect economic reality rather than the prevailing political mood.

There must also be coherence in exchange-rate policy. The government can suggest the overall exchange-



FILE ILLUSTRATION: BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

at six percent, despite persistent double-digit inflation. This policy served politically connected borrowers but penalised ordinary savers, whose returns remained far below inflation. Therefore, price stability must take precedence, even if high interest rates temporarily burden businesses already facing higher costs from corruption, infrastructure gaps, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. Delay in adopting a contractionary monetary policy, coupled with incoherent fiscal policy, kept inflation elevated for nearly three years. Now that inflation is easing, interest rates should be adjusted gradually—guided by data, not politics—to reduce business costs.

Also, the appointment and removal of the governor and deputy governors must be transparent and merit-based. Their tenures should be fixed and protected from arbitrary dismissal. A search committee should oversee appointment processes to ensure

rate regime, but operational control over interventions should rest with BB. The central bank should have a clear and published foreign exchange intervention policy, supported by regular reporting. The previous government's decision to maintain an artificially high value of taka, while competitor countries allowed their currencies to depreciate, damaged Bangladesh's export competitiveness and distorted market signals. When taka was finally allowed to depreciate, it did so abruptly, contributing to inflationary pressures and import disruption. A gradual, market-based adjustment, monitored by the central bank within a coherent framework, would have mitigated these shocks.

Meanwhile, the government's borrowing practices must be disciplined. In recent years, weak domestic resource mobilisation and high public expenditures have driven the government to increasingly rely on borrowing from both commercial

banks and the BB to meet fiscal shortfalls. Borrowing from commercial banks squeezes out private sector credit, while borrowing from the central bank effectively amounts to printing money. This fuels inflation and erodes macroeconomic stability. To prevent fiscal dominance and encourage prudent debt management, such borrowing must be strictly limited. The government should, instead, focus on improving revenue collection and reducing inefficiencies in public spending.

Independence, nevertheless, must be balanced with accountability to prevent opacity and mismanagement. BB should enjoy full control over its budget, staffing, and operations, while being subject to rigorous ex-post oversight. This means publishing audited financial statements, submitting performance reports to the parliament, and maintaining transparent communication with the public. The credibility of an independent central bank ultimately depends on both integrity and transparency.

Lastly, the central bank's internal capacity and culture must change. Even with legal independence, BB's effectiveness will remain limited if it lacks professional competence and analytical strength. The bank must invest in building expertise in monetary analysis, data-driven decision-making, and financial supervision and promote a culture of integrity, evidence-based policymaking, and ethical conduct.

True independence of the central bank will inevitably face resistance because it reduces the discretion of powerful interest groups. Finance ministry's Financial Institutions Division (FID) may view the central bank's increased autonomy as a loss of control, while vested interests within the banking sector may resist stronger supervision and tighter regulations. Overcoming these barriers requires strong political commitment and public awareness. The independence of the central bank is not a technocratic concern; it is central to ensuring economic stability and protecting citizens' savings from the consequences of poor policymaking.

Ultimately, passing a new law is only the beginning. The real challenge lies in implementation and its effectiveness will depend on future governors' handling of political pressure, BB's transparency in communicating its policy decisions, and consistently applying rules across all banks—whether public, private, large, small, politically connected or not.

Institutional independence is not achieved overnight. If the principles of integrity, professionalism, and accountability are upheld, then Bangladesh Bank can finally function as the independent guardian of monetary and financial stability that the country urgently needs.

Rethinking our ties with Malaysia



Md Shameem Ahsan
served as the high commissioner/ambassador
to Malaysia, Italy and Nigeria and the elected
president of the executive board of the World
Food Programme in Rome.

MD SHAMEEM AHSAN

Bangladesh enjoys cordial bilateral relations with Malaysia, the first Southeast Asian country to recognise our independence. Since then, bilateral relations between the countries have grown in depth and dimensions. Our vibrant expatriate community in Malaysia has strengthened the economies of both countries while deepening the people-to-people bond.

There have been notable developments between Bangladesh and Malaysia in recent times. During my tenure as high commissioner to Malaysia, two high-level visits took place: the Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim visited Bangladesh on October 4, 2024, the first visit of any head of the government since the assumption of office by the interim government, and the Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus' visit to Malaysia around mid-August this year.

The chief adviser's visit witnessed the signing of five MoUs and three Exchange of Notes in areas such as energy, higher education, defence, training of diplomats, halal ecosystem, collaboration between think tanks, and the business communities. This

added substance to the visit widely considered as a watershed moment in the bilateral relations. Three more instruments were signed relating to research, pharmaceuticals, and fertiliser during my tenure in Malaysia. All these serve as significant steps for shifting the current narrative of Bangladesh-Malaysia relations from a labour export-import prism to eventually a strategic partnership. I have been advocating for this shift as the large Bangladeshi community in Malaysia should not be the only defining factor of our Bangladesh-Malaysia relationship.

It is encouraging that during the visits, both the leaders identified trade and investment, digital economy, halal economy, renewable energy, STEM research, entrepreneurship, and people-to-people contacts, among others, as potential areas for cooperation. They reaffirmed their commitment to transform Bangladesh-Malaysia relations into a "deeper, future-oriented strategic partnership." Malaysian dignitaries earlier expressed their desire to reset the labour relations with Bangladesh

and diversify the bilateral relations by exploring potential for collaboration as development partners in other areas, such as trade and investment.

Around 8,000 of the approximately 18,000 stranded workers who missed the May 31, 2024 deadline—the final day before Malaysia's recruitment freeze on Bangladeshi labourers—are expected to enter Malaysia once a roadmap for their recruitment is finalised. It is noteworthy that Bangladeshi expatriates currently comprise 37 percent of the foreign workforce, putting us as the top source country for Malaysia. During the two high-level visits, both sides agreed to work towards establishing a fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory recruitment process. Thanks to vigorous persuasion, in August 2025, the Malaysian government agreed to grant multiple entry visa facilities to the Bangladeshi workers. Besides, the country has become one of the most preferred destinations for higher education for Bangladeshi students, with over 10,000 currently residing there.

Moreover, Bangladesh is Malaysia's second largest trading partner in South Asia. Trade and investment were high on the agenda during the latest visit, which was marked by business forums with top business leaders in the audience. To further promote our bilateral relationship, the signing of a free trade agreement (FTA) will be critical. Both countries are currently working on it. Although Malaysia is Bangladesh's third-largest source of foreign remittances, contributing over

\$3 billion, it is also Bangladesh's ninth-largest foreign investor.

Obviously, the issue of the Rohingya figured prominently during the bilateral discussions. The chief adviser sought Malaysia's increased role as the current chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) to initiate Rohingya repatriation. In response, Malaysia placed the Rohingya crisis on the regional agenda, including the plan to send a joint Asean delegation to Myanmar. It has also played an active role to mobilise humanitarian support. Bangladesh has substantial stakes as a non-member or non-partner of Asean and is keen to become Asean sectoral dialogue partner. As Dr Yunus asserted, Bangladesh could be a bridge between Asean and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc).

On August 13, 2025, during his Malaysia visit, Prof Yunus said, "Bangladesh and Malaysia have walked together in many ways. We have supported each other in our journeys toward growth and prosperity. I truly believe that with stronger collaboration in education, research, and trade and investment, Bangladesh and Malaysia can become a model for sustainable development and social progress." The future pattern of bilateral relations with Malaysia finds expression in the above remarks. If appropriate and necessary actions are taken properly as a follow-up to the recent visits, both Bangladesh and Malaysia will benefit in the coming days.

What does 'good history' look like?



Dr Adnan Zillur Morshed
is a public thinker and academic.

ADNAN ZILLUR MORSHED

It is impossible not to ask this question, given the current state of *history* as a public discourse in Bangladesh. But what is "good history" in the first place? What does the qualifying adjective *good* imply? The question, ahem, might be understood less as an inquiry than as a provocation—a prompt for indulging in a bit of soul-searching about such perennially indeterminate concepts as nationhood and national identity, and about their intersection with history.

Since Bangladesh's independence in 1971, the history of the country's liberation war has been the site of competing political claims, denials, suppressions, glorifications, centralisations, and partisan orthodoxies.

In the wake of the August 2024 uprising, a new generation of spontaneous efforts has emerged to revisit the "history" of Bangladesh's Liberation War, ranging from reassessments of the roles of different historical figures to renewed debates over the political origins of the war itself.

What has unfolded since independence—especially before and after August 2024—is a systematic erosion of history as a subject of critical inquiry, one grounded in evidence and pluralism.

Given our civil society's failure to cultivate a robust public understanding of history, one driven by fact-based research and reasoning rather than personal beliefs or social media-driven partisanship, it is crucial to articulate what "good history" is or could be in the sociopolitical context of Bangladesh.

It would not be illogical to assume that the question—*what does good history look like?*—should be a worthwhile public conversation on history as a key driver of human capital, citizenship, and nation-building.

When, last year, Badruddin Umar stated, albeit in a sensationalising tone, that 80.90 percent of the "official" history of Bangladesh's Liberation War is false, he must have had some thoughts on what "not

false" history might be instead. I wish he were alive today to articulate his thoughts on the question of good history.

No historian should be able to answer the question on good history without a degree of trepidation, ambivalence, and uncertainty. Yet a serious historian, or anyone who believes in history as a reasonable way of understanding the past, would at least pose a counterquestion: How does one define "good history"? And that, in turn, gives rise to another difficult question: What is history in the first place?

Let's imagine some hypothetical scenarios. If we asked Aristotle what a good history of Bangladesh's Liberation War would look like, he might suggest examining the war objectively and sincerely, narrating what actually happened on the ground and what caused those events. He would recommend distinguishing between history and poetry or philosophy, which, in his view, are primarily concerned with what could or should happen.

German philosopher Hegel would answer the question differently. He would present history of the war as the Bangalee nation's progressive journey toward reason and freedom, a piece in the puzzle of macro-history's self-rationalising movement toward the highest consciousness. If we posed the same question to another German, Leopold von Ranke, he would advise us to write the war's history based on empirical sources. The task of the historian, he would argue, is not to judge, but to understand how things happened by examining hard evidence, while avoiding philosophy and speculation.

How would Rabindranath Tagore define the history of the Liberation War? If Hegel's history represented the forward march of reason—of which Bangladesh's Liberation War was one part, as was the French Revolution—then Tagore's history of the war would be the Bangalee nation's journey towards spiritual realisation, a humanist and

moral unity that transcended nationalist and *swadeshi* narratives. If we asked Mahatma Gandhi the same question, he would likely encourage us to write the history of the war from the perspective of the masses (*aamjanota*) and the *Muktijoddhas* with their armed struggles, rather than from the grand narratives of heroic leaders.

Thus, the question—what is history?—depends on whom you ask. The diversity of

peoples, regions, nations, and cultures have encountered one another through broad networks of trade, human mobility, cultural exchange, technology transfer, and what the American sociologist and historian Immanuel Wallerstein called world-systems—a unitary economic system that binds all nation-states of the world.

The interaction of macro- and micro-histories produces a wider range of perspectives

exuberance, and sweeping generalisation. Unfortunately, critical, unafraid-to-tell-the-whole-truth histories have faced severe backlash over the last few decades, particularly in the United States. What has been pejoratively described as "woke" histories—those that bring to the fore the experiences of marginalised peoples and uncomfortable truths—have become political targets. In these uncertain times, many nations and their political leaders continue to weaponise history to advance partisan or nationalistic agendas.

The current US administration, for instance, seeks to create a "beautiful" American history—one unblemished by the histories of slavery, racial and gender discrimination, the traumatic struggles for civil and human rights, and genocide. In this discriminatory view, history must serve as an uplifting project that reinforces political domination. Similarly, anti-immigrant politicians in Europe frequently invoke the historical and racial unity of European civilisation, now allegedly threatened by the "invasion" of incompatible communities.

In Bangladesh, the recent "reset button" proclamation has unwittingly promoted a history of erasure in the name of building a brand-new future. The reset argument seems to imply: *What is the point of getting stuck in the past?*—as if the past has nothing to do with the way the future takes shape.

We are indeed passing through a crisis of conscience. We find ourselves increasingly unsettled by the militarisation of history—its ability to divide and make people confrontational, to invent new nationalist myths and alternative triumphs, to provoke radical religiosity, and to cultivate a convenient culture of amnesia in which the past becomes a playfield for selective remembrance. Can a public conversation on "good history" serve as an antidote to this growing culture of weaponised history?

Is there a "good" history that we can champion, one that keeps us committed to the pursuit of knowledge as a fundamental means of understanding our existence, or to public interests greater than ourselves, our parties, and our self-comforting, social-media-shaped beliefs? Ultimately, the question about a "good" history should be understood less as a question than as an aspiration, one essential to a democratic society.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

answers itself indicates history's power to tell human stories from myriad angles. There is, indeed, a history of histories.

Today, within liberal academic circles, the fair-minded historian tends to view history as a broad disciplinary practice in which the "grand old histories" of civilisational scale—meta-narratives, causation, teleological progress, hagiography, and "Western civilisation"—have been extensively challenged by critical histories of "other" peoples and their experiences, social history, cultural history, economic history, gender history, histories of technology, and, more importantly, an empathetic and justice-oriented search for historical evidence that has been traditionally ignored or silenced in favour of the triumphant narratives of victors.

Contemporary critical historians tend to avoid either/or dichotomies, linear narratives, and false nation-centrism. Instead, they reveal

on any historical event. The global and the national interweave in infinite varieties to give rise to histories of multiple dimensions, scales, and philosophies. From this angle, any contemplation of "good" histories must be a dynamic and open-ended process of thought. How, then, can we begin to situate 1971 within the broad arc of "good" histories?

Myeedul Hasan's *Muldhara '71* (1986), M. R. Akhtar Mukul's *Ami Bijoy Dekhchhi* (1993), Archer Blood's *The Cruel Birth of Bangladesh* (2002), Nurul Islam's *Making of a Nation* (2003), and Gary Bass's *The Blood Telegram* (2013), among others, are all valuable sources for constructing an intellectually nuanced history of Bangladesh's Liberation War.

Whether a particular approach to history is acceptable or not is less important than understanding history as a vigorous inquiry that avoids the traps of deterministic certainties, linear causalities, hagiographic

BTRC's new policy undermines the affordable internet goal



Mahmudul Hasan
is a journalist at The Daily Star.

MAHMUDUL HASAN

After assuming office as Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) chairman, Maj Gen (retd) Md Emdad ul Bari, known for his practice of listening to all stakeholders before making any decision, expressed his intention to lower internet prices, stating that they should be brought down to the cost of water to increase digital penetration.

He took multiple steps, from simplifying the complex licensing process and lowering bandwidth costs to ultimately reducing broadband prices.

Though many users alleged they were still paying the previous prices and some broadband providers claimed they had recently doubled bandwidth while keeping prices unchanged, the initiative demonstrated a commitment to affordability.

However, in the proposed guidelines, which are part of the broader Telecommunication Network and Licensing Policy 2025, the internet regulator seems to take a complete U-turn.

The introduction of new taxation provisions by the BTRC to different licensing layers could increase costs for broadband service providers, potentially pushing up prices for end users and undermining the chairman's previous efforts.

On the other hand, the new "Regulatory and Licensing Guidelines for Fixed Telecom Service Providers" could have a significant impact on broadband internet providers, particularly small and mid-sized operators already operating with thin profit margins.

The most contentious aspect of the guideline is the mandatory 5.5 percent annual revenue sharing with the regulator, in addition to a one percent contribution to the Social Obligation Fund (SOF). Earlier, BTRC used to collect a SOF fee only from top ISPs. In the proposal, the charge applies to all, including small and medium providers.

While these provisions mirror those imposed on mobile operators, the two industries operate under vastly different market dynamics.

Unlike mobile operators, broadband providers cannot adjust their internet prices freely, as the internet regulator has imposed a price cap for broadband internet.

This restriction prevents providers from offsetting the new financial burdens

through pricing adjustments. It could also erode profitability, forcing many small internet service providers (ISPs) to scale back operations, delay infrastructure expansion, or even exit the market.

Investment in network upgrades and service quality could also take a serious hit, as providers may struggle to expand fibre coverage or adopt newer technologies like Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) with reduced financial flexibility.

The cost pressure could also slow innovation in customer service and local content delivery networks, ultimately affecting user experience and internet speed.

The BTRC's new move appears rooted in its dual role as regulator and revenue-collector. The experts have long been arguing that BTRC is increasingly functioning more like the National Board of Revenue than a sector-enabler. The commission has shifted its focus from facilitating growth to imposing higher fees, revenue shares, and licensing burdens.

According to the World Bank's "Digital Progress and Trends Report 2023," Bangladesh remains behind its regional peers in overall internet usage, smartphone penetration, and connection speed, despite notable progress in affordability, digital transactions, and coverage expansion.

The report, published in March 2024, shows that only 39 out of every 100 people in Bangladesh use the internet—higher than Pakistan (36 percent) but lower than India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.

In terms of speed, the World Bank cites International Telecommunication Union (ITU) data showing that Bangladesh's average mobile download speed is 16.1 Mbps, while fixed broadband average is 36 Mbps—both below the South Asian averages of 26.7 Mbps and 43 Mbps, respectively.

However, according to experts, Bangladesh performs relatively well in broadband affordability, as a single broadband connection costs only Tk 400-500 per month.

The BTRC's recent proposals could undermine this sole advantage of low broadband prices in Bangladesh, where broadband internet penetration stood at 8.24 percent as of September, 2025. Fixed broadband contributes more to economic output than mobile internet does because it provides stable, high capacity and low latency connectivity, essential for digital industries, cloud computing, e-commerce, and remote work.

While mobile internet expands access, fixed broadband drives productivity and innovation across sectors. According to a research finding, a 10 percent increase in broadband penetration can raise GDP per capita by 1-1.5 percent, and research across the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries shows that doubling broadband speed can increase GDP by 0.3 percent. If broadband becomes more expensive or less accessible, these potential economic gains could be reduced, limiting Bangladesh's ability to leverage digital infrastructure for sustainable growth.

According to the ICT use survey by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics published in August, only 48.6 percent of individuals in Bangladesh use the internet, but just nine percent use a computer in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2024-2025. This indicates that participation in computer-based activities, which generally rely on broadband connections and contribute more directly to economic output, is already very low. If fixed broadband becomes less accessible or slower, the potential for growth in sectors that depend on high-speed, reliable internet, including e-commerce, IT services, and digital entrepreneurship, could be negatively affected.

However, the financial burden does not stop at broadband providers' revenue-sharing and SOF contributions. The BTRC has also proposed higher taxes on the international broadband supply chain and increased licensing fees across different categories under the new guidelines. These measures could lead to higher internet prices for both broadband and mobile internet users, making access less affordable.

The BTRC's new move appears rooted in its dual role as regulator and revenue-collector. The experts have long been arguing that BTRC is increasingly functioning more like the National Board of Revenue than a sector enabler. The commission has shifted its focus from facilitating growth to imposing higher fees, revenue shares, and licensing burdens.

The regulator should revert to its foundational role, such as promoting

competition, safeguarding service quality and easing market entry rather than prioritising tax-like collections.

The fixed broadband sector in Bangladesh is already in a precarious state, partly due to the previous regime granting thousands of licenses without ensuring quality or capacity. If the BTRC seeks to streamline the sector through new levies, it risks burdening users and providers without addressing the root problems. A more effective approach would be to rationalise the number of

licenses and cancel those held by operators who fail to maintain compliance or service standards.

For BTRC to function as a true sector regulator, it must prioritise improving service quality, fostering investment, and ensuring market efficiency rather than relying on fees and levies. Strategic innovation in licensing and enforcement would strengthen the broadband ecosystem without penalising consumers or responsible operators.



Jagannath University
Faculty of Life and Earth Sciences
Master of Pharmacy (Professional) Program
Department of Pharmacy
Admission Circular (Batch: 09P)
Spring 2026 (February-July)

Key Features of the program

Degree/Award: Master of Pharmacy
Major: 1. Industrial Pharmacy, 2. Pharmaceutical Marketing
Course duration: One year (2 semesters)
Class time: Friday and Saturday
Application fee: Tk. 1,000.00
Application open: Till January 14, 2026 (9 am - 3:30 pm, week-days only)
Admission test: January 16, 2026, Friday. Test Result: January 19, 2026
Admission period: January 20, 2026 to February 05, 2026
Orientation: February 06, 2026

Eligibility for submission of application

A. Minimum 16 years of schooling; having S.S.C. (or equivalent) 10 years, H.S.C. (or equivalent) 2 years and Graduation (or equivalent) 4 years. B. Graduated in Pharmacy or pharmaceutical sciences or relevant areas (CGPA 3.00 or more out of 4.00). C. No third class/division (or equivalent).

Application submission

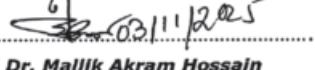
A. Filled-up application form (available in www.jnu.ac.bd or http://jnu.ac.bd/department/portal/pharmacy), B. Attested 3 copies of passport size photographs, C. Copies of the certificates and mark-sheets of all the previous examinations (attested by the Chairperson of the department of graduation) and D. Application fee.

Completed application can be submitted to the office of Dean, Faculty of Life and Earth Sciences, Jagannath University. Or, the application fee (1000 taka and transfer charge 20 taka) can be sent to 01670117946 by bKash and then the full application set can be mailed to monir@pharm.jnu.ac.bd as the PDF file along with the bKash reference number.

N.B. The authority keeps the right to cancel the application/admission at any time due to submission of incorrect application or misleading information

Contact (Application form and further information)

Office of the Dean, Faculty of Life and Earth Sciences
6th Floor, New Academic Building (029587900 Office)
Department of Pharmacy (02226638755, 01731742040 Office)
Dr. Md. Monir Hossain, Program Director (01670117946)


Prof. Dr. Md. Monir Hossain
Dean
Faculty of Life and Earth Sciences
& Convener, M. Pharm. (Professional) Program Admission Committee

RITWIK GHATAK AT 100

Rajshahi home lies in ruins

Ritwik's early exposure to Rajshahi's culture and landscape left a profound imprint on his filmmaking," Liton said. "When he made 'Ajantrik', a story about a car, it was a radical departure from the mythological themes dominating Indian cinema at the time.



PHOTOS: SHOHANUR RAHMAN RAFI

his early years here, studying at Rajshahi Collegiate School and Rajshahi College before his family migrated to India after Partition. The home was later listed as vested property under the district administration, as the family had left the country in 1947.

In 1985, Rajshahi Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital authorities purchased the leased land. The building, however, remained intact for decades.

"We did not want the house to be demolished," said Dr Anisur Rahman, principal of the college. "We used it as an outdoor facility for the hospital. Some of our former students planned to demolish it, but we had forbidden them. Unfortunately, one evening they went ahead and brought it down. Still, the annual programme marking Ritwik Ghatak's birth anniversary will continue there, as it does every year."

Ritwik Ghatak Film Society President Ahsan Kabir Liton said the filmmaker spent one of the most important periods of his life in Rajshahi, and the city's environment deeply influenced his later work. "The Padma River, the Varendra Museum, and even the nearby public library—all these shaped his sensibility," he said. "When we formed our film society in 2008, most people didn't even know Ghatak had lived here. We

Animal welfare demands

FROM PAGE 12

on private organisations, while feeding unsterilised dogs has since driven the population from 38,000 to 73,000."

Rubaiya added that while vaccination drives have halved rabies deaths since 2014, culling continues. "There's still time... But humane management cannot be sustained without regulation, funding, and political will."

Legal expert Dr Cynthia Farid said animal welfare faces an enforcement crisis rather than a legislative one. "There are many shortages in Bangladesh, but the shortage of laws is not one of them – the real challenge lies in enforcement."

She said welfare is an intersectional issue tied to governance and science. "Whether it's controlling dog populations or managing city pollution, we must rely on data and expert guidance – not emotion."

Farid pointed out that while the Animal Welfare Act-2019 exists, the rules are yet to be framed, leaving gaps in jurisdiction and enforcement.

"Even well-intentioned efforts fail without legal clarity. Coordination and education must be our priorities."

Lawyer Saqueb Mahbub cited the 2021 case against Dhaka South City Corporation's removal of stray dogs as evidence of institutional resistance. "Section 7 of the act clearly bans relocating or culling ownerless animals, yet political pressure stalled enforcement."

The discussion was hosted and moderated by Naziba Basher, senior sub-editor at The Daily Star.

No more RPO edits

FROM PAGE 12

From there, they have announced to organise mass rallies on November 6 to submit a memorandum with their demands to the Chief Adviser.

"The amended RPO must be retained as it is – we do not accept any exclusion, addition, or modification," said Khilafat Majlis Ameer Maulana Mamunul Haque at yesterday's briefing.

Besides, they will prioritise three demands: the immediate issuance of the order to implement the July Charter, holding the referendum before the national election and retaining the amended RPO in full.

"These are now our core demands. We hope that through dialogue, all political parties can reach a solution, and the next election will be held based on the legal foundation of the July Charter."

He also warned that if the demands are not met, the alliance will hold a protest rally in Dhaka on November 11.

SHOHANUR RAHMAN RAFI

Once a proud ancestral residence, the Rajshahi home of legendary filmmaker Ritwik Kumar Ghatak now stands in ruins—its walls weathered, rooms overrun by wild growth, and memories fading into dust. Today marks the 100th birth anniversary of this iconic filmmaker.

The remnants of the house in the Ghoramara area of Miyapara sit like a chronicle of neglect: mounds of red bricks under the open sky, a moss-covered broken boundary wall, and fragments of the structure strewn across the ground. Faded murals on cracked walls, including one commemorating Ghatak's birth anniversary, offer a final glimpse of a place that once nurtured a cinematic mind.

The dilapidated structure was demolished last year. What remains are piles of brick and a few fragments of its former form—markers of the childhood home of one of Bengal's most brilliant filmmakers.

Born in 1925, Ghatak spent



began organising festivals and tributes from his ancestral home and renamed the group Ritwik Ghatak Film Society in 2009."

He added that the house once had a drawing room, bedrooms, a courtyard, and an old well, with a homoeopathic college established on the vacant land during the Ershad regime. "We demanded preservation and even received an official estimate of Tk 52 lakh from the administration for its restoration. But the initiative never materialised," he said.

"Ritwik's early exposure to Rajshahi's culture and landscape left a profound imprint on his filmmaking," Liton said. "When he made *Ajantrik*, a story about a car, it was a radical departure from the mythological themes dominating Indian cinema at the time. His thought process was far ahead of his era."

The society continues to commemorate Ghatak's birth anniversary on November 4 each year. "This year, however, there is no house left to hold the event," Liton continued.

"Still, we hope the site can someday be turned into a museum or film institute in his memory."

Mahmud Hossain, general secretary of the Ritwik Ghatak Film Society, echoed the demand. "We have long urged that something be established there in Ghatak's name. With the help of the then deputy commissioner, we found records showing the land was originally under the name of Indubala Devi, Ghatak's mother. The college authorities cannot simply claim ownership—it was leased to them during the Ershad government," he said.

Professor Mozammel Hossain Bokul, moderator of the Rajshahi University Film Society and chairman of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, said that after the demolition, legal steps became difficult. "They took the leased land and prepared documents to declare it as college property," he said.

When contacted, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Education and ICT) Tuktuk Talukdar, who chairs the governing body of the college, said, "When the building was demolished, I was not in charge. So, I am not fully aware of the circumstances. The principal can better explain the ownership and demolition issues."

Despite the loss, those who cherish Ghatak's legacy remain determined to keep his memory alive in Rajshahi. To them, the decaying remains of his ancestral home are fragments of history that once nurtured a filmmaker who reshaped Indian and Bangla cinema.



'SNL' spoofs NYC mayoral debate with Miles Teller and Ramy Youssef

The latest episode of *Saturday Night Live* opened with a sharp parody of the New York City mayoral debate, featuring an ensemble of spot-on impersonations. Miles Teller portrayed former Governor Andrew Cuomo, poking fun at his past controversies, while Ramy Youssef played Assembly member Zohran Mamdani, satirising liberal guilt and gentrification.

Shane Gillis appeared as Curtis Sliwa, and Kenan Thompson took the moderator's seat in the hilariously chaotic exchange. The sketch captured the absurdity of political showmanship, from Sliwa's bizarre anecdotes to Mamdani's flirtatious charm. It wrapped up with James Austin Johnson's Donald Trump crashing the stage, announcing he might enter the mayoral race himself.

Adnan Al Rajeev's 'Ali' wins another international accolade



Bangladeshi filmmaker Adnan Al Rajeev's short film *Ali* has won the Youth Jury Award at the 70th Valladolid International Film Festival (Seminci) in Spain, one of Europe's oldest and most prestigious cinematic platforms.

The film, which continues to earn international acclaim, has already received a Special Mention at the 78th Cannes Film Festival and another at the Kyiv International Short Film Festival.

It was also nominated for Best Short Form (Scripted) at the Asian Academy Creative Awards 2025. The latest recognition at Valladolid further cements Adnan Al Rajeev's reputation as one of Bangladesh's most promising contemporary filmmakers.

NEWS

Design, building

FROM PAGE 12

audit will guide replacement of any defective components.

Both the incidents – the latest and the one last year – occurred under Contract Package CP-05.

"The defect liability period for this contractor was supposed to end on June 29, but we have not accepted it because a number of outstanding works, deficiencies and defects still exist. Until these are repaired, we will not accept the defect notification period."

The financial implications like performance bond, performance security and the final bill could not be released as the work had not been fully completed.

"The project remains under the defect notification period, and the contractor has to address all remaining defects."

Following last year's incident in September, DMTCL conducted a full-corridor drone survey in October and recorded visuals of each pier.

The company then carried out physical inspections of every pillar, with the report completed two months ago.

"We found deformation in some locations. Notifications were issued immediately and rectification and mitigation measures taken. We installed barricades beside the columns to prevent further movement," he said, adding that the contractor had been instructed to replace certain bearings.

Teams had revisited all piers after the latest incident.

"Where minor displacements within tolerance were observed, we placed barricades and tightened mechanical fixtures as immediate measures. But the ultimate solution is replacement. Wherever defects have been notified, we are seeking bearing replacement."

He also announced a new monitoring initiative using CCTV cameras on metro rail bearings to track their functionality in real time, calling it "a new concept".

However, he clarified that this would only be a temporary measure.

"It might offer some relief or quick response, but it can't be the ultimate solution. If we start putting CCTV everywhere, the whole country would fall under surveillance. What we need is a permanent solution," he said.

On October 26, a pedestrian died when a bearing pad from pillar 433 of a metro rail station fell on him in Dhaka's Farmgate area. Two other people were also injured.

Mamdani leads as NYC votes today

FROM PAGE 12

as an independent after losing his party's primary contest to Mamdani.

The Republican party candidate polling in third place is Curtis Sliwa, 71, who has a colourful past as founder of the Guardian Angels vigilante group, a prolific broadcaster and cat lover.

The latest Quinnipiac University poll conducted October 23 to 27 gives Mamdani 43 percent of the vote, followed by Cuomo on 33 percent and Sliwa on 14 percent.

The race has centred on cost of living, crime, and how each candidate would handle Trump, who has

threatened to withhold federal funds from the city.

"Mamdani is an unusual political figure and really captures the spirit of the moment. This is a moment where a loud anti-Trump voice in America's biggest city is going to get new," Lincoln Mitchell, a politics professor at Columbia University, told AFP.

"Frankly, a Muslim candidate for mayor of New York is an enormous story."

Mamdani, 34, has attacked his opponents for Islamophobic rhetoric and smears, calling out both Republicans and Democrats for "anti-Muslim sentiment that has grown so

Renewed, betrayed, manipulated

FROM PAGE 12

It is this document, a contract of sorts between the people and the government, that differentiates a monarchy from a democracy. And the beauty of this charter lies in its adaptability. Since it is seldom perfect, the constitution has the ability to adapt to the needs of the times. Bangladesh's constitution has gone through 17 amendments itself. But some of these were hardly in the interest of the people and they did not bode well for the republic.

Only two and a half years after Bangladesh's constitution was adopted, the fourth amendment transformed the democratic constitution into a one-party system on January 25, 1975. The parliamentary system was changed into a presidential one where the president was vested with sweeping powers and it was made mandatory for all MPs to join the Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BKSL) or lose their seats.

The 14th amendment on May 16, 2004, was an attempt to extend the retirement age of judges and thereby influence the position of the then head of the caretaker government, which eventually led to two-year state of emergency in 2007-08 when a military controlled caretaker government was at the helm.

The 15th amendment on July 3, 2011, abolished the provision for a caretaker government to oversee elections and virtually paved the path to a series of questionable elections that eventually led to the July uprising.

There have been other amendments, the fifth and the eighth, that were

necessary to ensure continuity of the constitution since both were means to legitimise the martial law regimes of Ziaur Rahman and Hussein Mohammad Ershad. The constitutional amendments in their own way also recount history of the country and helps gain understanding of the events of those times.

One must also look back to the events that preceded the Bangladeshi constitution to truly appreciate the efforts and commitment behind it. After independence from British rule in 1947, one of the expectations of the people of both Pakistan and India was that they would have a new constitution. India managed to draft one within two and a half years (on November 26, 1949).

Pakistan took nine years (until March 23, 1956) to produce its first constitution. Within just two and a half years, however, Ayub Khan's military dictatorship suspended it on October 7, 1958. Under the second military ruler, Yahya Khan, a legal framework order (LFO) was issued, and the 1970 general election was held with two clear objectives: first, that the elected representatives would frame a constitution within 120 days in the constituent assembly; and second, that they themselves would govern the state under that new constitution. But the Pakistani junta did not allow that to happen either.

After independence, Bangladesh succeeded in drafting a constitution within nine months – a task Pakistan had failed to accomplish in 24 years. Fifty-three years on, this constitution day finds us confronting divisive

questions over reforms, many of which aim to undo changes that undermined public interest in favour of those in power. Yet that, too, is a testament to the strength of the document. Through vibrant discussion and impassioned debate, the constitution should, as always, continue to evolve, adapt, and embody the aspirations of the people.

ICT-1 expresses

FROM PAGE 12

The tribunal intervened immediately, asking, "What benefit do you expect from this question? The fact remains that her husband was killed. The witness did not even name your clients."

When Amir responded that such questions might help his clients, the tribunal then said, "You talk too much. You make remarks that embarrass the court. Earlier, you dragged a simple point into a long discussion. What will you gain from such questions?"

In her testimony, Niha also alleged that police tried to take away her husband's body after locals brought it home. "We hid the body. Protesters gathered around our house and suddenly teargas shells were fired from a helicopter targeting our building," she said, adding that her mother narrowly escaped injury when a shell exploded on their rooftop.

Another witness, Md Yakub of Rampura also testified as the fourth prosecution witness in the case. He described how the area turned into a "war zone" on July 19.

BIRTH CENTENARY OF RITWIK GHATAK

“WHY SHOULD I LEAVE?”

The Partition in the cinema of Ritwik Ghatak

Ritwik Ghatak (1925–1976)

DEBALI MOOKERJEA LEONARD

Author, playwright, and film director Ritwik Kumar Ghatak was born on November 4, 1925, to Rai Bahadur Suresh Chandra Ghatak, district magistrate, and Indubala Devi. During the 1940s, the Ghatak family, originally from Dhaka, relocated—first to Berhampore, and later to Kolkata. Ghatak was profoundly affected by the social and political events of the 1940s—the Second World War, the Great Bengal Famine, and, particularly, the Partition. His fiction, the plays he composed for the leftist collective—the Indian People's Theatre Association—and his films chronicle the upheaval caused by the Partition, the displacement of numerous Hindu families from eastern Bengal to India, and the ensuing crisis of a syncretic Bengali culture.

Beginning with Ramu's multiple relocations in *Nagarik* (The Citizen, 1952, released in 1977) and his mother's dreams of a better home, many of Ghatak's films allude to the Partition, but it is *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (The Cloud-Capped Star, 1960), *Komal Gandhar* (E-Flat, 1961), and *Subarnarekha* (1962, released in 1965) which constitute his Partition trilogy. His contemporary Satyajit Ray noted in the foreword to *Ghatak's Cinema and I* that “Thematically, Ritwik's lifelong obsession was with the tragedy of Partition. He himself hailed from what was once East Bengal, where he had deep roots. It is rare for a director to dwell so single-mindedly on the same theme; it only serves to underline the depth of his feeling for the subject.” Film scholar Bhaskar Sarkar has described him as “the most celebrated cinematic auteur of Partition narratives” (*Mourning the Nation*).

Ghatak's *Komal Gandhar* opens sometime after Partition with the

evoking refugee migrations.

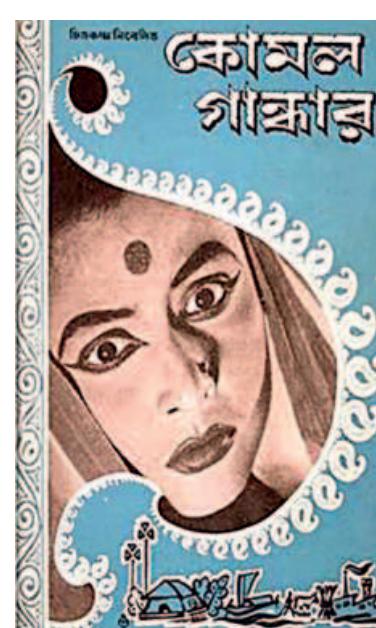
The agony over Partition-related uprootings from home and homeland suffuses Ghatak's cinema. If the above scene dramatizes the torment of emigrating from the land of one's birth, a later sequence in the film captures the melancholy of the displaced. Actors Anasuya and Bhrigu (who plays the reluctant migrant in the opening scene) arrive in Lalgola, where they are scheduled to perform. Lalgola is an Indian border town situated on the banks of the Padma. The two pause on the riverbank at a set of stopped train tracks and gaze meditatively across the waters into the far horizon. Then, Anasuya says, “On the other side of the river is East Bengal, you know! ... Somewhere on that bank is my ancestral home. ... The word, I think, is tranquillity. That's what my grandma used to say, and that tranquillity, it seems, is something we'll never get back. ... Whenever I think of home, the

in the Indian subcontinent during the mid-1940s reached their horrific climax in the Partition of August 1947. Decolonisation was achieved at the cost of partitioning the colony into India and Pakistan as sovereign nation-states. As a result of Partition, provinces were allocated to independent India or Pakistan according to a census logic of ethno-religious majoritarianism, with two provinces—Punjab in the northwest and Bengal in the east—being split between the two countries. The process of Partition was marked by unprecedented violence, violence that led to the largest migration in human history.

Countering Partition's logic of religious incompatibility, in *Komal Gandhar* Ghatak interfaces Muslim boatmen's songs with Hindu wedding songs to articulate a syncretic Bengali culture. The wedding songs, according to Ghatak, prefigure more than just

Express. Reporting on the event, *The Times of India* (April 15, 2008) noted that “Ritwik Ghatak's immortal scene from *Komal Gandhar* had captured the grief of a generation torn asunder by Partition and war. But had his protagonist Bhrigu lived now, his dream of reaching there wouldn't have remained just a dream.”

If *Komal Gandhar* addresses Partition-related melancholia, *Meghe Dhaka Tara* explores the struggle for survival and the social crisis engendered by Partition, particularly its impact on the lives of women. In this film, Neeta's participation in wage labour is indicative of wider social changes ushered in by the Partition. The political and economic vicissitudes attending Partition compelled women in displaced families to pursue gainful employment. The family's economic collapse, whether due to looting or forced evacuation and the consequent loss of landed property, could be



Poster of the film
Komal Gandhar (1961)

stoked by memories of the 1943 Bengal Famine—compel Neeta's mother to plot to keep her daughter single. The family's survival depends on Neeta's earnings, so her mother refuses to let her daughter marry and take her salary elsewhere. With low cunning, she foils Neeta's romance with Sanat.

The shot of Neeta—tubercular and self-isolating—standing at the window of her room, watching her mother and siblings in the courtyard, with crisscrossing bamboo bars fragmenting her face, suggests her incarceration within the family,

together with alluding to the Partition. Nurturing and generous but exploited and dying, she embodies post-

Partition “crumbling Bengal” (*My Films*). The refugee woman as an analogue for Bengal reappears in *Komal Gandhar* in

Anasuya's question when compelled to

choose between Bhrigu

and her fiancé Samar: “Am

I also divided in two?” Similarly,

about *Subarnarekha*, Ghatak writes that “The divided, debilitated Bengal that we have known ... is in the same state as Seeta in the brothel” (*My Films*).

Finally, Neeta's words to her elder brother Shankar, when he visits her at the sanatorium—“Dada, ami je banchite boro bhalobashi” (“Dada, I really love living”)—illuminate the resilience of displaced women who picked up the pieces of their broken lives and set about rebuilding new ones in new places, among people they had not known before—people who had different food habits and spoke a different dialect of Bangla.

In *Subarnarekha*, the third film in Ghatak's Partition trilogy, ten-year-old Seeta asks if the Nabajiban refugee colony in Kolkata, where she has recently relocated with her brother Ishwar—her only surviving family member—is her new home. As her life unfolds, Seeta, like her mythical namesake, is serially displaced—from her village in East Bengal to the refugee colony in Kolkata, from there to Chhatimpur (her brother's workplace) on the banks of the River Subarnarekha in the interiors of western Bengal, and, eventually, to

a refugee colony in Kolkata after she marries Abhiram. Seeta's question, “Is this my new home?” ricochets through the film, and when her son Binu asks Ishwar, “Are we going to our new home?” the plot suggests that the trauma of homelessness has filtered into the next generation.

In addition to the political division of Bengal, *Subarnarekha* also exposes other social fault lines—provincialism and caste. Kaushalya and her son Abhiram from Dhaka district are denied a place in the refugee colony because the occupants of that section are from Pabna; in a seemingly ironic reflection on the Partition, a former Pabna resident tells her, “What would be left of us if we can't even hold on to the differences between the districts?” But was the refusal of shelter based on Pabna–Dhaka differences alone, or was caste prejudice also in the mix, given that Kaushalya is of a lower caste? The disruptive potential of caste is brought up later in the film when Seeta's brother Ishwar, a Brahmin, learns that Abhiram, the child he adopted after his mother Kaushalya was abducted from the refugee colony, is of the Bagdi caste. Ishwar, worried that his “pious” employer might dismiss him for sheltering a lower caste man and, further, to thwart his sister's romance with Abhiram (for the same reason), asks the latter to leave.

Subarnarekha brings to a full circle a question broached by the first film in the trilogy, *Meghe Dhaka Tara*—who is responsible for so much suffering? Upon learning of his daughter's tuberculosis, Neeta's father exclaims, “I accuse!” looking directly into the camera, his index finger also pointing towards it, thus including the viewer within the scope of his gaze and his accusation; but he withdraws it. Ishwar, on the other hand, drunk and sightless without his glasses, staggers into a brothel in Kolkata, unaware that he is his widowed and penniless sister's first client; upon seeing him, Seeta kills herself. (Ishwar's “He, Ram!” in response to her suicide connects her death with Gandhi's assassination and the political turmoil in the subcontinent.) After Ishwar's claim that he is guilty of murdering Seeta is dismissed by the court, he tells a journalist, “You are guilty too ... you, me, all of us.” The faltering “I accuse!” has transformed into a definitive assertion of collective responsibility for the making of a “divided, debilitated Bengal” (*My Films*).

I conclude with Ghatak's reflections on the condition of Bengal in the twentieth century:

In our boyhood, we have seen a Bengal whole and glorious. ... This was the world that was shattered by the War, the Famine, and when the Congress and the Muslim League brought disaster to the country and tore it into two to snatch for it a fragmented independence. Communal riots engulfed the country. ... Our dreams faded away. We crashed on our faces clinging to a crumbling Bengal, divested of all its glory. ... I have not been able to break loose from this theme in all the films I have made recently. (*My Films*)

Ritwik Ghatak passed away on February 6, 1976.

Debali Mookerjea Leonard is the *Roop Distinguished Professor of English* at James Madison University.



A scene from the film *Komal Gandhar*

waters and the little crossings come to mind.”

They wander along the riverbank. Then, after a long pause, Bhrigu replies: “My ancestral home is also over there. There—you can see the houses. So close, and yet I can never reach them—it's a foreign country. Do you know what I was doing when you said that somewhere on that side is your ancestral home? I was looking for my own home, because my home is there and nowhere else. On the train tracks where you and I were standing, there I used to get off the train from Calcutta. A steamboat would take me to the other side, where Ma would be waiting ... The train lines, then, denoted a bond; now they mark a split. The land has been ripped in two.”

For Anasuya and Bhrigu, like others displaced by the Partition of India, the ancestral homeland—their *desh*—is a place of memories: memories of childhood, memories of an accustomed way of life. It is also a place of tranquillity, a place whose topography and ecology were theirs. And it is a place they lost. Their *desh*—homeland or ancestral land—is now *bidesh*, foreign land, and inaccessible. The Partition wrenched apart Anasuya's and Bhrigu's birthplace from their homeland, rewriting in the process the histories and geographies of belonging.

Escalating communal hostilities

Anasuya and Bhrigu's relationship: “I desire a reunion of the two Bengals,” noted Ghatak in his 1966 essay *Amar Chhobi* (“My Films”), “hence the film is replete with songs of union.” Similarly, Anasuya's mother, in her diary entry from November 1946 in the aftermath of the riots in Noakhali, quotes Tagore's lines “God, may the brothers and sisters in Bengali homes be united” from *Banglar Mati, Banglar Jol* (“Bengal's Soil, Bengal's Waters”), a poem composed to protest the first partition of Bengal in 1905. The lines testify to Ghatak's longing. (He stated, in an interview, “I am not talking about a political union of the two [parts] of Bengal ... I am talking about a cultural [reunion.”) The boatmen's “Dohai Ali” chant—in the name of Ali” or “Mercy, Ali”—invokes protection against misadventures on the Padma's waters, and it returns in a subsequent scene, this time with women frantically pleading “Dohai Ali” as the camera speeds down the train tracks to the buffer on the disabled railroad (where Anasuya and Bhrigu were standing in a previous scene). When the camera encounters the buffer, the screen goes dark, indicating that “the old road to eastern Bengal has been snapped off” (*My Films*).

On April 14, 2008, Bengali New Year's Day (1415), train service between Dhaka and Kolkata was restored with the launch of the *Maitree* (Friendship)

salvaged, at least partly, through women's labour in white, pink-, and blue-collar occupations.

Like so much of Bangla literature of the period, Ghatak's cinema celebrates the quiet courage of these formerly homebound women who, without knowing or intending to, set off a transformation in the mindscape of both displaced and non-displaced women, especially middle-class women—making their employment outside the home socially acceptable. That Neeta, the elder daughter, becomes the family's economic crutch bears testimony to this.

However, Neeta's entrance into the labour market is tantamount to enslavement to the needs of everyone she loves. Overextending herself at work and living in insalubrious conditions, she contracts tuberculosis. The disease operates as a metaphor on two levels: (i) to intensify her feeling of entrapment within her needy family, where there is no air left for her to breathe; and (ii) to indicate a broader social rot, by which norms of ethical conduct and decency have withered away to the point that the compassionate and unselfish suffer. Displacement-induced poverty and the very real fear of starvation—fears



Poster of the film *Subarnarekha* (1962)

“Niriksha” theatre troupe staging a play. In the play, an elderly man speaking an East Bengali dialect of Bangla asks angrily, “Why should I leave?” adding, “Why should I leave behind this lovely land, abandon my River Padma, and go elsewhere?” His interlocutor tells him that emigration is his only chance of survival and advises him to register as a refugee. The old man responds with only a string of “chhe!” (shame). While this proceeds in the foreground, a steady stream of human silhouettes treks across the white screen in the background,

FROM MOGA TO SUMMIT Kaur's 1983 moment



AGENCIES

Many years ago in the fields of Moga, Punjab, a young girl with a dupatta tied around her waist sent leather thudding into turf with astonishing pace.

Her school uniform flapped as she bowled to boys twice her size, undeterred and unaframed. Coach Kamaldeesh Singh Sodhi still remembers that morning jog when destiny introduced itself. "I had never seen any girl of her age bowl with that kind of pace and guile," he recalled. "I knew she was special."

That girl -- Harmanpreet Kaur -- would go on to redefine Indian cricket. On a glorious night in Navi Mumbai, she became India's

"1983 inspired an entire generation to dream big and chase those dreams. Today, our women's cricket team has done something truly special. They have inspired countless young girls across the country to pick up a bat and ball, take the field and believe that they too can lift that trophy one day. This is a defining moment in the journey of Indian women's cricket."

India legend Sachin Tendulkar

her future the day she was born.

He bought a tiny shirt that read "Good Batsman." "I just did it out of joy," he once said. "But I always knew she'd be a sportsperson." The dream, however, was not easily funded.

Training in a private academy 30 kilometres away seemed impossible -- until Kamaldeesh promised to bear the cost himself. Thus began a partnership built on faith, sweat and unyielding belief.

From captaining Moga to nine straight Punjab Inter-District titles to breaking window panes with sixes in Patiala, Harmanpreet's rise was fuelled by a fearless heart.

Her coaches remember her learning to hit against stronger boys -- an apprenticeship in courage that later produced the 91-metre six against Ellyse Perry and that legendary 171 not out against Australia in 2017. "She's been hitting sixes on her own will since the start," Yadwinder Sodhi said proudly.

That fearless spark now illuminates an entire generation. In the 2025 World Cup

semifinal, Harmanpreet's 89 in partnership with Jemimah Rodrigues symbolised calm authority and tactical genius.

And though she made only 20 in the final, her decision to toss the ball to young Shafali Verma changed the match -- and India's history. As the final wicket fell, the tears that rolled down her face carried years of heartbreak and resilience.

"We have lost so much, and from every loss, we have learned something," she told the ICC, voice trembling with emotion.

When she lifted the trophy -- eyes wet, smile trembling -- the echoes of 1983 seemed to return. Kapil Dev's men had once shocked the world at Lord's, winning their first-ever World Cup title, and forty-two years later, Kaur's women rose in Navi Mumbai, igniting another revolution.

Batting legend Sachin Tendulkar called it "a defining moment in the journey of Indian women's cricket."

For Harmanpreet, the triumph was more than victory -- it was redemption. She had played five World Cups, endured near-misses, and carried the weight of expectation on her shoulders. "I'm numb," she confessed after the win. "We only looked at our goal [and] nothing else."

Standing alongside her that night were her mentors -- Jhulan Goswami, Mithali Raj, Anjum Chopra -- the pioneers who paved the road she walked. "It was emotional," she said.

"We were all waiting for this. Finally, we touched the trophy."

In that moment, under the roaring lights of DY Patil Stadium, the little girl from Moga finally came home, rewriting history in her own handwriting of grit, grace, and glory.

PHOTO: ICC/INSTAGRAM

BCB counters boycott threat with relegation rule

SPORTS REPORTER

The standoff between several Dhaka-based clubs and the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) deepened yesterday, with the clubs issuing a letter to threaten a boycott of all leagues and the board responding by adding a clause guaranteeing relegation for non-participation.

A total of 43 Dhaka-based clubs from across four divisions sent a letter to the BCB after a meeting yesterday, claiming grievances over the recent BCB elections and said they will refrain from all leagues organised under the current administration.

Eight Premier Division, eight First Division, 12 Second Division and 15 Third Division clubs signed the letter which was sent to the BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury.

"We had a meeting regarding the letter we sent and discussed that we have to be united and together on this move through thick and thin," Legends of Rupganj owner Lutfor Rahman Badol told The Daily Star following their meeting at Dhanmondi on Monday.

The letter read that clubs had already lodged a formal complaint on October 22 to the BCB Chief Election Commissioner concerning "grave irregularities and procedural violations" surrounding BCB elections, demanded the current board be dissolved and a fresh election be held.

Just hours later, the BCB endorsed a non-participation and withdrawal clause in the rules, regulations, and playing conditions of all leagues under the jurisdiction of the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM).

"If any team fails to participate in the league, either in full or partially, including complete withdrawal from the competition after its commencement, such action shall result in the immediate disqualification and relegation of the defaulting team," the BCB said in a press release sent on Monday night.

The impact of this standoff could be felt in the upcoming First Division Cricket League, scheduled from November 18. The league usually consists of 20 teams, but if the aggrieved clubs follow through on their threat, it could end up becoming a 12-team competition.

Alonso returns to Liverpool with high-flying Real

Real Madrid coach Xabi Alonso returns to Anfield to face his former side Liverpool in the Champions League after an almost flawless start in Spain. While Liverpool have won just twice in eight Premier League games, Alonso's Madrid are thriving, having won 13 of 14 matches this season. A 4-0 rout of Valencia and a Clasico triumph over Barcelona highlight their intensity and defensive solidity. Stars like Mbappe, Vinicius, and Bellingham are flourishing under Alonso, who has reshaped Madrid with pressing, discipline, and a renewed identity. He aims to make his Anfield return a statement in Europe.



of the previous seven.

**Liverpool have won 20 of their last 22 home Champions League group stage games.

**Mohamed Salah is set to play his 200th game at Anfield for the Reds and needs two more goals to become the first African to score 50 times in the Champions League.

Harry Kane does keepy uppies as Bayern Munich travel to European champions Paris Saint-Germain in a top-of-the-table clash of the UEFA Champions League in Paris tonight. Bayern have won 15 from 15 matches in all competitions so far this campaign, setting a new record for the best start to a season in the top five European leagues, and their English skipper has scored 22 goals in those 15 games.



PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Rajshahi earn first win in NCL longer version

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi Division registered their first victory in the ongoing first-class competition National Cricket League (NCL) with a convincing seven-wicket win over Khulna Division on the third day of the second-round fixture at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur on Monday.

Chasing a modest 113, opener Habibur Rahman Sohan led from the front with a blistering 62 off 68 balls as Rajshahi comfortably reached the target in the final session.

Earlier, Khulna resumed the day on 68 for one but failed to build on their position and were eventually bowled out for 255 in their second innings.

Rajshahi's pace duo Nahid Rana and Ali Mohammad Walid picked up three wickets apiece to dismantle Khulna's batting order. Mehidy Hasan Miraz top-scored for Khulna with a fighting 48 off 62 deliveries.

In Sylhet, responding to Dhaka Division's first innings tally of 310, veteran batter Mushfiqur Rahim remained unbeaten on 93 and while captain Zakir Hasan contributed 43 as Sylhet Division reached 260 for seven at stumps after resuming on 33 without loss.

Meanwhile, persistent rain and a wet outfield disrupted play in Cox's Bazar, where the Mymensingh-Rangpur clash saw no play at all, and only 15 overs were possible in the Barishal-Chittagong encounter. Barishal moved from their overnight 115 for two to 166 for two before stumps.

SHORT CORNER

Fitness race on for Sohan, Shoriful

Fast bowler Shoriful Islam and wicketkeeper-batter Nurul Hasan Sohan are expected to recover in time for Bangladesh's three-match T20I series against Ireland later this month, according to team physio Bayyedul Islam Khan. Both players picked up injuries during Friday's T20I against the West Indies in Chattogram, with Sohan twisting his right ankle and Shoriful suffering a right hamstring strain.

Trott to step down as Afghanistan coach

Afghanistan coach Jonathan Trott will leave the position after next year's Twenty20 World Cup, the country's cricket board (ACB) said on Monday.

International cricket returns to Faisalabad

International cricket is set to return to Faisalabad's Iqbal Stadium after 17 years with the three-match one-day international series between Pakistan and South Africa from Tuesday. The central city in Punjab province last staged an international match in 2008 when Pakistan and Bangladesh played an ODI.

Oldest former Olympic champion dies

The world's oldest former Olympic champion, ex-track cyclist Charles Coste, has died aged 101, French sports minister Marina Ferrari announced Sunday. Coste won gold at the 1948 London Olympics and was a torch bearer at the 2024 Paris Games.

Read full stories on The Daily Star's website.



BSRM
THE ONLY STEEL FACTORY IN BANGLADESH TO RECEIVE THE
GREEN FACTORY AWARD 2025



**Best Brand Award
Winner Every Year**

No more RPO edits Says eight-party bloc led by Jamaat; calls rallies on Nov 6

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight political parties, including Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Andolok Bangladesh, have reiterated their firm stance on retaining the recently amended Representation of the People Order (RPO).

No further exclusion, addition or modification of the RPO would be accepted under pressure from a particular party, they said.

The BNP stood against Article 20 of the recently amended RPO, which states that candidates of any party must carry their own party's electoral symbol, even if they are part of an alliance with a larger party.

Earlier, it was possible to carry the alliance's electoral symbol.

The Jamaat-led parties have been in a simultaneous movement with a five point demand since October 18. Yesterday, the parties held a meeting at the central office of Bangladesh Khilafat Majlis in the capital's Paltan area.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3



A man buys a cauliflower from a vegetable vendor in Hatirpool Bazar for Tk 65 yesterday. Even though there is adequate supply of winter vegetables, prices remain high in kitchen markets across the capital.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

NCP preparing list of 150 polls candidates

SHAMIMA RITA

After accepting "Shapla Koli" (water lily bud) as its electoral symbol, the National Citizen Party is now gearing up to finalise 150 candidates in as many seats.

According to party sources, the newly formed party has prepared a candidate list and some on the list have received the party's green signal to start election preparations in their constituencies.

Three of the party's top leaders have already hit the ground, ramping up campaigns and preparations in their constituencies.

NCP Convener Nahid Islam is being considered for Dhaka II constituency.

Speaking to this correspondent, he said, "I grew up in Badda, but I spent part of my childhood in Khilgaon, where many of my relatives still live. So, I could contest from either Dhaka-II or Dhaka-9. Dhaka-II is my first choice, but I'll decide for certain when the election gets closer."

Joint Convener Tasnim Jara may run in Dhaka-9. Her husband, Khaled Saifullah, a member of the party's central committee, may run from Rajbari-1.

The spokesperson of the party, Nasiruddin Patwary, will most likely contest from Dhaka-18.

Hasnat Abdulllah, chief organiser of the NCP's southern region, has obtained the green signal to contest the polls from Cumilla-4.

Other members of the top leadership, NCP's Member Secretary Akhtar Hossain and Chief Organiser of the northern region Sarjis Alam have been given the nod to run from Rangpur-4 and Panchagarh-1 respectively.

Senior Joint Chief Coordinator Abdur Hannan Masud may contest from his home constituency, Noakhali-6.

The neighbouring constituency, Noakhali-2, may go to Sultan Muhammad Zakaria, joint convener and international media cell editor, who has already announced his candidacy under the NCP banner.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Design, building fault behind metro pad fall Says DMTCL MD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The collapse of a metro rail bearing pad was not a sudden mishap but likely stemmed from faults in design, construction, installation or consultancy, said Dhaka Mass Transit Company (DMTCL) Managing Director Md Faruk Ahmed.

"This didn't happen by chance -- there are four possible causes," he told reporters at a press briefing yesterday at the DMTCL office in Uttara.

Faruk cited structural design errors, poor construction, non-compliant installation and consultancy lapses as potential factors for the incident.

More than Tk 1,000 crore was spent on consultancy and it is possible that they misunderstood key technical aspects, he said, adding that the causes may be interlinked.

While an investigation committee is already working, DMTCL has initiated an independent safety audit of the metro infrastructure by an international firm.

"This is a 100-year structure. Bearings are meant to last 50 years. Yet we are seeing failures within two years."

Two French firms have expressed interest in conducting the audit.

"It won't happen overnight, but we are expediting the process with ministerial support," he said, adding that the

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



shortcomings, challenges in seeking justice, illegal breeding practices, the role of the media, and access to veterinary care.

Dr Md Shahinur Alam, director of the Livestock Medicine Store under the Department of Livestock Services (DLS), said cruelty persists despite strong laws. "Recent cases in Gopalganj and Khulna show dogs still being poisoned or beaten -- often with local administration involvement. We need stronger accountability and coordination to protect animals under the Animal

Welfare Act-2019." Stressing that CNVR (catch neuter-vaccinate-release) and vaccination are "scientific imperatives", he said only a structured, humane, nationally led approach can ensure sustainable population control and genuine welfare.

Brig Gen Imrul Quais Chowdhury, chief health officer of Dhaka North City Corporation, said humane dog population management has been "inconsistent" due to legal and institutional gaps. "CNVR is the only proven method for sustainable control. DNCC coordinated with organisations to sterilise 25,000 dogs under a 2016 MoU, but later tenders failed to attract qualified partners."

He noted that the City Corporation Act lacks provisions for large-scale welfare initiatives and urged greater coordination with the DLS and integration of animal welfare into public health policy.

Rubaiya Ahmad, founder and chairperson of Obhoyaronno Animal

Welfare Foundation, said disease and injury among street dogs are at record highs due to state inaction. "Dogs have become the orphaned children of urban governance," she said, adding that no ministry has been tasked or equipped to manage dog populations humanely since culling was banned in 2012.

"Our CNVR programme was never meant to be ad-hoc. Since 2009, our mission has been to end dog culling and promote humane, science-based population control. We signed MoUs with the two city corporations and Humane Society International in 2012, but the plan was never fully adopted."

She said Obhoyaronno has sterilised 25,000 dogs -- the cost of which would be around Tk 60 crore -- but the initiative faltered after former DNCC mayor Anisul Haque's death. "Bureaucratic delays and lack of state support left the programme dependent

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2

Mamdani leads as NYC votes today for mayor

AGENCIES

New Yorkers are set to pick a new mayor today after an unpredictable race that has drawn attention from far beyond the largest city in the US, with President Donald Trump branding frontrunner Zohran Mamdani "a communist".

New York City's mayoral race is always watched closely as the city is the nation's financial capital and its leaders' decisions often influence national political discourse, at least for the locally dominant Democratic Party.

Breakout Democratic Party candidate Mamdani, a naturalised Muslim American who represents Queens in the state legislature, leads former governor and sex assault-accused Andrew Cuomo, running



SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



Afghan earthquake survivors search through the remains of a damaged house in a village in Tashqurghan, Khulm district of Samangan province, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

THE CONSTITUTION Renewed, betrayed, manipulated but still enduring

BAHARAM KHAN

The constitution of Bangladesh was finalised amid joy and celebration on this day in 1972. After nine months of discussions and debates at the constituent assembly, agreement was reached on the national charter on the fourth of November. The constitution, however, came into effect on 16 December 1972, exactly a year after Bangladesh's victory in the Liberation War.

This supreme law of the country essentially lays down the blueprint of the state, the rules that the government must follow and, perhaps most importantly, enumerates the rights of the citizens. It stipulates the inalienable fundamental rights and the basic needs of the people and the basic principles of the state.

Although the now-toppled Awami League regime declared November 4 as "National Constitution Day" in 2022, none of the past administrations observed it with any notable reverence. The current government even revoked its status as a national day a few months after taking office.

This year's constitution day comes against the backdrop of months of intense negotiations over constitutional reforms, with consensus still elusive. The constitution was drafted immediately after the Liberation War. This time too, the reforms under discussion -- the most significant in the 53 years the constitution has been in force -- follow a bloody uprising.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

ICT-1 expresses annoyance at defence counsel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday rebuked state-appointed defence counsel Md Amir Hossain, saying that he "talks too much and often makes remarks that embarrass the court."

Tribunal member Justice Md Shofiqul Alam Mahmood said this during the cross-examination of a prosecution witness in a case filed against five police officials, including former Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Habibur Rahman. Among the accused, only ex-assistant sub-inspector Chanchal Chandra Sarker is in custody.

The case involves the killings of two people and the injury of two others on July 19, 2024, in Rampura during the July uprising. Amir was representing four absconding accused, including Habibur.

Witness Tabassum Akhter Niha, wife of victim Nadir Mizan, testified about how police and BGB personnel opened fire that day, killing her husband. "Locals brought him home around 2:30pm, shot and bled. I saw blood pouring from his abdomen, and I fainted," said Niha, the third prosecution witness in the case.

During cross-examination, Amir asked her, "Did you see who shot your husband?" The prosecution immediately objected, saying, "Chanchal's lawyer had asked the same question earlier, and you [tribunal] objected to it."

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6