

Take immediate action to prepare for earthquakes

Experts urge govt at Star roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the country shaken three times in just 32 hours and bearing a history of major earthquakes, experts yesterday urged the government to take immediate and coordinated action to minimise casualties and damage.

Infrastructures with high public gatherings like schools, hospitals and critical facilities should be checked without delay, said Israt Islam, a professor at the Department of Urban and Regional Planning of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET).

Inspecting buildings is a major task, she said, adding that government buildings must be checked by the government and private building owners must be compelled to carry out inspections.

"This can be done immediately, and it will reduce the risk," she said at the roundtable titled "Wakeup Call for Dhaka: Earthquake Risks and Public Safety" organised by The Daily Star at its office in Dhaka.

About the hospital readiness, she said the health authorities should identify in the shortest time possible how many hospitals are equipped to handle patients from disastrous events like an earthquake.

"After an earthquake, hospitals won't treat routine illnesses -- they will treat injured people," she said.

If an 8 magnitude earthquake occurs, over 2 lakh deaths and 4 lakh injuries are feared, said Tajul Islam, director of operations of Fire Service and Civil Defence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Short-Term
Inspect, seal off high-risk buildings
Assess hospital capacity, identify alternative routes
Prepare field hospitals for immediate response
Conduct earthquake rehearsals

Mid-Term
Complete building assessments within 6-9 months
Implement 3rd-party structural assessments
Introduce awareness edn at schools, community levels
Set up institute for urban safety, resilience

Long-Term
Establish national earthquake research institute
Enforce Building Regulatory Authority under BNBC
Begin gradual retrofitting of vulnerable buildings
Capacity Enhancement of Rescuers

"How will we treat these patients? Hospitals must be prepared, but 40 percent of the hospital buildings may be in affected zones. We need field hospitals immediately."

He stressed on the golden hour, which is crucial for saving lives.

"We must clear routes, ensure emergency access and coordinate all agencies under the ministry of disaster management and relief."

Field hospitals must have doctors, power backup, oxygen and first-aid capabilities.

"We must identify alternative routes like helicopter and water access as 60 percent of the land routes could be unusable."

He called for a national earthquake rehearsal involving fire service,

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The struggle to cope with rising salinity, depleting sweet water, and diminishing livelihoods continues on the frontlines of climate change in the rural south west. This is the 2nd of a 5-part series.

A daily battle for every drop

Shrinking ponds, salt-filled tubewells leave thousands relying on murky water to survive

WASIM BIN HABIB, back from Khulna, Satkhira

Carrying an aluminium pitcher, 27-year-old Hosneara walks nearly two kilometres through Dakhin Kalikapur village in Khulna's Koyra upazila every morning. Her destination: a shrinking pond that still holds some murky water.

A thin, yellowish film floats on its surface. She sweeps the scum aside with her pitcher and begins filling it with the faintly greenish liquid.

"We filter the water using a piece of cloth and then drink it. The pond is our only source of water. It's our lifeline," said Hosneara, a mother of two, adjusting the pitcher on her hip.

All other nearby ponds turned brackish long ago, and the tubewells in the area spew salty water.

Her family needs two pitchers of water a day, so she returns in the



afternoon for a second round. But when she stays home due to illness, the family must buy a jar of purified water for Tk 20, plus an additional Tk 20 for a rickshaw-van to deliver it.

"For poor people like us, buying water regularly is a luxury. We measure every drop," Hosneara, whose husband works in a small tailoring shop, told this correspondent in mid-October.

Her daily ordeal mirrors the struggle of thousands living along Bangladesh's southwestern coast, where safe drinking water has become scarce due to rising salinity. Close to the sea, Khulna and Satkhira have long battled saline intrusion caused by a combination of climate change and damaging human activities.

Rising sea levels, erratic rainfall, tropical cyclones, tidal surges, reduced river flow due to upstream diversion,

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Every day, these women walk miles in search of fresh water, as local sources turn saline. The photo was taken recently in Khulna's Koyra upazila.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN



Resident students of Dhaka University's Ruqayya Hall leave with their belongings yesterday morning, as evacuation continued till 5:00pm. Following the post-earthquake emergency, the university declared all residential halls closed until December 6.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

16 months on, quake safety assessment facility awaits nod for launch

DIPAN NANDY

A project to construct and equip an institute to assess the seismic vulnerabilities of Dhaka's buildings ended 16 months ago, but the Rajuk renewed preparations for its launch only after three earthquakes shook the country in just 32 hours.

The Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) yesterday sent a letter to the housing and public works ministry, along with a draft Deed of Trust for the proposed institute, namely the Urban Safety and Resilience Institute (USRI).

The construction of a building for the USRI in Mohakhali under the World Bank-funded Urban Resilience Project cost Tk 150 crore while it took another Tk 100 crore to procure specialised equipment from the UK and several European countries.

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Bangladesh on track for LDC graduation

Says govt report to UN panel

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Bangladesh remains on track to sustainable graduation from the least-developed country (LDC) category, reflecting its resilience and strong policy commitment, according to the annual country report sent by the government to the UN Committee for Development Policy (UNCDP).

The report was submitted to the UN panel early this month, said Anisuzzaman Chowdhury, special assistant to the chief adviser.

"The submission of the report does not mean the government is leaning one way or the other on graduation -- this is an annual practice by the governments of all countries."

The UNCDP will assess the report and will give feedback, he said.

The report comes at a time when businesses, especially exporters, are demanding that the government take measures to defer Bangladesh's graduation by up to six years as they are not prepared to face the challenges in the post-LDC era.

Bangladesh is projected to lose around \$8 billion in exports after graduation as the duty-free and quota-free market access it currently enjoys will no longer be available.

The country remains on track to officially leave the LDC category on November 24 next year upon completion of the five-year preparatory period that began in 2021, said the report termed Bangladesh Annual Country Report 2025.

The interim government mentioned the US's reciprocal tariffs, the ongoing energy shortage and rising energy costs, financial sector

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Dhaka again seeks Hasina's extradition after death sentence

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka has once again reached out to New Delhi, formally requesting the extradition of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who was sentenced to death last week by the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) for crimes against humanity committed during the July uprising.

Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain confirmed the matter to reporters at the foreign ministry yesterday.

The foreign ministry had earlier sent a letter to the Indian Ministry of External Affairs for Hasina's repatriation in December last year.

India, however, did not respond.

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Army to extend full support to govt, EC in polls Says General Waker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Army Chief General Waker Uz-Zaman yesterday said the army would extend full cooperation to the government and the Election Commission in the upcoming national election.

"We are heading towards an election, and in that election, we will properly cooperate with the government and cooperate with the Election Commission so that we can have a good election."

He made the remarks while attending a reception for Bangladesh Army's gallantry award recipients, valiant freedom fighter soldiers and their family members, alongside the ceremony for peacetime medal recipients.

The event was held at the Army Multipurpose Complex in Dhaka Cantonment.

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Dhaka, Thimphu reaffirm pledge to strengthen ties

STAR REPORT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation at bilateral, regional, subregional and international levels with a shared goal of promoting peace and prosperity.

They emphasised the importance of advancing regional cooperation through SAARC and BIMSTEC, guided by shared values, mutual respect, understanding and collaboration, according to a joint statement issued yesterday.

At the invitation of the chief adviser, the Bhutanese premier arrived in Dhaka on Friday on a state visit. He is scheduled to leave for Thimphu today.

The two leaders held a bilateral meeting on Saturday, during which both sides signed memoranda of understanding on health cooperation and internet connectivity, and discussed plans to formally begin negotiations on a bilateral free trade agreement.

According to the joint statement, the two sides expressed satisfaction over the establishment of a Joint Working Group to facilitate development of the Bhutanese Special Economic Zone in Kurigram.

The leaders also welcomed progress on the transit agreement, noting that a trial shipment from Chatogram Port to Burimari Land Port is nearing completion.

BIDA Executive Chairman Ashik Chowdhury and leaders of BNP, Jamaat and NCP separately called on Tobgay at a city hotel yesterday.

Dhaka again

FROM PAGE 1

India has been sheltering Hasina, who fled there after her ouster in the face of a student-led mass uprising on August 5 the same year.

Right after the ICT verdict on November 17, the Bangladesh foreign ministry called on India to immediately hand over Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, who was also handed the death penalty in the ruling.

In a statement, the foreign ministry said, "Granting asylum to these convicts... would be extremely unfriendly and an affront to justice," it added.

The interim government had revoked Hasina's diplomatic passport, putting her at risk of extradition. Her extradition falls within the legal framework of the extradition treaty signed between Bangladesh and India in 2013.

According to the treaty that was amended in 2016, "extradition may be refused if the offence for which it is requested is an offence of a political character."

However, it clarifies that certain offences – like murder – "shall not be regarded as offences of a political character" for the purposes of the treaty.

Soon after the verdict was handed down, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs said India noted the verdict concerning Hasina.

It said that as a close neighbour, India remains committed to the best interests of the people of Bangladesh, including in peace, democracy, inclusion and stability in that country, and would always engage constructively with all stakeholders to that end.

Meanwhile, the chief prosecutor's office of the ICT is preparing an application for the foreign ministry to seek Interpol assistance for extraditing Hasina and Kamal to Bangladesh, an official of the prosecution said.

Bangladesh on track for LDC

FROM PAGE 1

fragilities, a sluggish investment environment, high inflationary episodes, higher unemployment and poverty and an increasing burden of external debt servicing as uncertainties ahead.

Moreover, the prevailing political uncertainty and the resulting absence of a forward-looking development plan present additional challenges at this stage, said the report, which the graduating countries send to the CDP under the enhanced monitoring process.

The CDP is expected to hold a meeting tomorrow under the Enhanced Monitoring Mechanism (EMM) on graduating LDCs including Bangladesh.

Continued and enhanced support from the international community, including the UN and development partners, is crucial to sustain the development trajectory in the post-LDC era, the report said.

Businesses, including the different business chambers and trade bodies, have already submitted a letter to the government and the UN for deferment of the LDC graduation for Bangladesh, said Anwar Ul-Alam Chowdhury (Parvez), president of the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries.

"We do want the LDC graduation but we are not ready for it yet," said Parvez, also a former president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

The government will have to continue the efforts for graduation preparation as it has a target, said Mohammad Abdur Razzaque, member of the independent assessment team of the UN.

The independent team of the UN has already talked with the government officials and high-ups, local private sector entrepreneurs, leaders of the major political parties, workers, union leaders and independent economists and gathered information to make the final assessment report on Bangladesh's LDC graduation.

Take immediate action to prepare

FROM PAGE 1

armed forces, paramilitary, health sector, local government and city corporations.

Mehedi Ahmed Ansary, a professor at BUET's Department of Civil Engineering, urged the government to start the assessment of the buildings immediately and finish within six to nine months.

The buildings should be categorised into three colours: green, yellow and red. The buildings under the red category should immediately be retrofitted, he said.

"Each building must be individually checked as adjacent buildings can vary in quality. Countries like Japan and India use third party assessments and Bangladesh should do the same. Rajuk alone cannot manage 21 lakh buildings in Dhaka."

The cost of assessment is Tk 2 lakh per six-story building, while retrofitting costs around Tk 50 lakh – far cheaper than dealing with collapses, rescue and loss of life, he added.

Md Bodruddoza Mia, chairman of the Department of Geology at Dhaka University, emphasised early earthquake education, citing the case in Japan, where children are taught in school what to do before, during, and after an earthquake.

He suggested incorporating earth science education at the school and university levels in Bangladesh as the majority of the students do not have the

required knowledge on this.

"Even at Dhaka University during the recent earthquake, students jumped from the fourth floor – this should never happen. Nowhere else in the world do people do this during an earthquake. Lack of knowledge caused this panic."

He suggested establishing a dedicated earthquake research institute in Bangladesh where students could work on seismology with proper incentives.

People are filling lowlands and water bodies, turning them into plots, constructing narrow roads and building large structures beside them, said Md Sirajul Islam, chief town planner of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC).

"But the structural quality is ignored – soil condition, land spanning, and proper design are not considered."

The authorities responsible for monitoring building structures and land development are extremely negligent, he said.

If all 21 lakh buildings in Rajuk areas are considered, around 8.4 lakh could collapse, and even among 6 lakh engineered buildings, around 75,000 would collapse if an earthquake of 7 magnitude strikes, said Abdul Latif Helaly, former chief engineer of Rajuk.

The potential death toll could be 2.1 to 3.1 lakh, with 2 to 5.5 lakh injured, causing direct economic losses of \$25

billion and reconstruction costs of \$62 billion, he said.

Rajuk had assessed 3,252 buildings including schools, colleges and hospitals in 2022 and had recommended the demolition of 42 buildings and the retrofitting of 200 buildings. However, the work is stalled due to project delays, he said.

The city corporation continuously works on disaster preparedness, said Md Sirajul Islam, chief town planner of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC).

For example, through the Resilience Project, DSCC set up an Emergency Operations Centre, the most active centre in Bangladesh.

"Since earthquakes are extremely dangerous and cannot be accurately predicted in advance, our primary responsibility as the media is to raise public awareness and put appropriate pressure on policymakers – this is our main objective," said Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

The Daily Star has published a series of reports on earthquakes. However, after some time, policymakers tend to forget the issues, he said.

"We do not have the expertise to formulate policies like specialists. Our ability lies in delivering information to the public. From this perspective, we request that scholars and journalists work together to take real, effective action."

harvesting units – each consisting of a storage tank, filters, and a distribution line – by December this year.

Project officials said 170,000 units have so far been installed in households and distribution points. The tender process for another 8,000 units is underway.

However, many residents of coastal villages in Satkhira and Khulna have complained of nepotism in the distribution of rainwater harvesting units.

"Rainwater is our only hope, but we have not yet received any tanks to store it," said Shahidul Islam Gazi from Dakhin Kalikapur.

"I feel lucky when the plant isn't crowded as I can return home within an hour... But sometimes the wait drags on for hours."

The physical toll is immense. "Carrying one pitcher on my hip and another in hand causes severe pain. But I must do it. If I don't, my family will have to drink brackish water," said Sathi, whose father is physically challenged. And her mother works in a crab enclosure.

Residents say the water crisis deepened after Cyclone Aila in 2009, when saline water triggered by tidal surges breached embankments and flooded villages. The stagnant water lingered for months, further intensifying salinity in local water sources.

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"Barely any money is left after buying rice, vegetables, and medicine. Some days, we drink less – not because we want to, but because we have to," said Jahanara, whose husband is a day labourer.

To address salinity and the scarcity of safe drinking water, the government, with assistance from NGOs and donor agencies, has been implementing various projects in the coastal districts through relevant ministries. These include the installation of rainwater harvesting tanks, ROs, and PSFs.

One such initiative is the Safe Water Supply Project in Coastal Areas through a rainwater harvesting system, being implemented by the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) in 10 coastal districts, including Khulna and Satkhira.

Launched in July 2022, the project aims to install 206,872 rainwater



Workers unloading fish from a boat at the port city's Karnaphuli Ghat, where trawlers carrying deep-sea catch lined the shore. Once the trawlers are full, the fish are brought by boat to the cold storage, from where they are sent to different parts of the country. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Officials debate abolishing NTMC

BAHARAM KHAN

Top government officials yesterday weighed whether the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre, long criticised for allegedly enabling the former Awami League government's crackdown on dissent, should be abolished.

The issue surfaced as they discussed key clauses of the draft Bangladesh Telecommunication (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025 at a meeting chaired by Home Adviser Jahangir Alam at his ministry, according to at least three officials familiar with the matter.

Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud, Chief Adviser's Special Assistant Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, and senior officers from the police, Rab, BGB, Ansar, and other agencies were present.

NTMC's technology allows the state to tap any mobile phone in the country, a capability that drew fierce criticism during the AL's tenure over concerns of unaccountable surveillance.

The draft ordinance, prepared by the Posts and Telecommunications Division, raises the possibility of abolishing such an institution altogether.

Taiyeb, who holds the rank of state minister in the division, argued during the meeting that the NTMC should not continue.

He cited alleged unlawful activities by former army officer and NTMC chief Ziaul Ahsan, now under arrest for crimes against humanity.

According to meeting sources, Taiyeb said any phone tapping must require prior court approval.

But senior officers from multiple law enforcement

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16 months on, quake safety

FROM PAGE 1

All the tasks to launch the institute were completed even before the project ended in June 2024, according to Abdul Latif Helaly, former project director of the Urban Resilience Project.

However, the newly built 10-storey facility with two basements remained locked and unused. The high-value equipment has not undergone maintenance for the past 16 months.

According to project documents, 25 categories of advanced devices were purchased for assessing building materials, soil conditions and structural integrity.

These include cyclic and universal testing machines, cross-hole and tri-axial systems, a terrestrial laser scanner with software, parallel seismic instruments, and a pile integrity tester.

Microtremor equipment, rebar scanners, ground-penetrating radar, an ultra-pulse velocity machine, diamond core cutters, and truck-mounted CPT equipment, among others, were also procured.

Officials say these devices can test soil strength, determine material quality, and even detect how many reinforcing bars were used in a building beam.

Contacted, former project director Helaly told The Daily Star the institute's lab remains idle despite a lack of approval.

"The assessment devices are fully ready. Once taken to a building, the scanners can detect the number of rods, strands and the concrete strength. Earlier, these tests had to be done manually at BUET," he said.

Stressing that the approval is urgently needed, he said, "With approval, we can immediately resume crucial disaster mitigation work, especially earthquake-related assessments."

Asked about the delay, Rajuk Chairman Reazul Islam told The Daily Star, "We were going ahead with the project. We've done the paperwork

and had sent letters to the ministry previously."

"We are very positive about launching this institute. We sent a letter again on Sunday seeking approval to start the institute," he added.

The institute will be autonomous and run under a trust. The board of trustees has already been restructured, and Rajuk will even provide a cash fund to support the institute's operations, said Reazul.

Urban planner Adil Mohammed Khan said "I believe such an institute is absolutely necessary. It would allow us to quickly identify vulnerable buildings. And with better knowledge about building conditions, public awareness would also increase."

Contacted for comments, the World Bank said the project aimed at strengthening emergency response capacity and advanced disaster-resilient urban planning in Dhaka and Sylhet.

The project established Emergency Operations Centers, improved inter-agency coordination, and laid the groundwork for risk-sensitive land-use planning and electronic building permitting. Swarna Kazi, senior disaster risk management specialist at the global lender, told this newspaper.

It also built institutional capacity through large-scale drills and training, formed specialised search and rescue teams, and procured modern earthquake resilience tools," she added.

Besides constructing the building and equipping the lab for the institute, the Rajuk had worked with six companies on building vulnerability assessments under the project.

A total of 3,252 buildings belonging to schools, colleges and hospitals were examined. Of these, demolition was recommended for 42 structures, while retrofitting designs for about 200 buildings have already been completed, according to project documents.

Army to extend full support

FROM PAGE 1

Waker said he was pleased to be present at the event, adding that those who fought in the Liberation War earned the country's greatest achievement through their sacrifices.

He described them as the nation's finest sons and thanked them for responding to the army's invitation.

He also expressed gratitude to those who travelled from different parts of the country to join the programme.

The army chief said peacetime assessments have been awarded in the army since 2013 in recognition of courageous and dedicated work at home and abroad.

He congratulated all personnel who received medals for setting bright examples through important and praiseworthy performance in their professional duties.

The army chief said the Bangladesh Army is no longer confined to its own training activities, as it takes part in various social and nation-building programmes and supports the civil administration directly and indirectly.

Waker said Bangladesh Army members have played a distinctive role in global peace by carrying out their responsibilities in peacekeeping missions with professionalism. The army personnel are currently engaged in aid to civil power as part of efforts to maintain law and order, he added.

We need a climate solution built on people, not projects

Says Friendship founder Runa Khan in interview with Star

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Friendship's Earthshot Prize win has shifted the world's view of Bangladesh, from that of a climate-vulnerable country to one capable of offering credible climate solutions, said the its founder Runa Khan.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, she described the honour as both humbling and a validation of over two decades of work in the country's chars and coastal belts.

Friendship is the first Bangladeshi organisation to receive the prestigious award, founded by Prince William and widely referred to as the "Nobel Prize for the Environment". It won in the "Fix Our Climate" category on November 6 and received £1 million (around Tk 16 crore) to scale its climate innovations.

"Bangladesh often appears in international news only for cyclones, floods or other crises. But now, maybe for the first time, we are on the map not for a disaster, but for a solution," Runa said.

She said the organisation did not emerge from a sudden breakthrough, but from a gradual build up of responsibility. Friendship began with a floating



GG You cannot fight climate change with one or two isolated projects. If you don't start holistically from the beginning, you cannot simply add it later.

RUNA KHAN

hospital and later expanded into education, legal aid, disaster preparedness and climate adaptation. The focus has always been on human needs rather than donor-driven targets.

Explaining what set Friendship apart, Runa said its core philosophy defined the difference. "We do not chase money. We chase needs. We never say a project failed because we do not take on projects. We take on human needs. If one method does not work, we try another."

She said the organisation had turned down donor offers amounting to hundreds of crores when the agendas did not match community realities. "Integrity and relevance matter more than volume," she said.

Asked why the judges selected Friendship, she said the award recognised a solution designed specifically for "intra-migrants" – people forced to move within Bangladesh due to river erosion, tidal surges and rising seas. These communities often fall outside formal migration definitions because they do not cross borders.

"We usually go to the world with our problems. But this is the first time a

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Vendors set up makeshift stalls directly on this level crossing in the capital's Jurain. They hurriedly remove their goods whenever a train approaches and return soon after, a risky practice that puts lives in danger. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

8 more die of dengue, 778 get hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least eight dengue patients died while 778 others were hospitalised in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), among the deaths, three were reported from Mymensingh division, two from Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), and one each from Barishal, Chattogram and Dhaka divisions.

With the new deaths and cases, the total number of deaths rose to 364, while total cases rose to 90,264 this year. Currently, 2,458 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country.

EARTHQUAKE FEAR 3 medical colleges, 2 universities suspend classes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid nationwide panic following a series of tremors, authorities have suspended academic activities at three medical colleges and two public universities in the capital.

Dhaka Medical College (DMC), Sir Salimullah Medical College (SSMC), and Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College have suspended classes until November 29.

Following the closure of Dhaka University (DU) on Saturday, Jagannath University (JNU) and Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University suspended their academic activities until November 27 and December 6, respectively.

While not formally closed, North South University (NSU) has shifted regular classes online after cracks were reportedly spotted in some buildings following Friday's powerful earthquake.

When contacted, administrators of the institutions stated that the decisions were made due to safety concerns.

JNU Acting Registrar Prof Md Sheikh Gias Uddin told The Daily Star,

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Honourarium for imams, muazzins if elected Says Tarique

BSS, Dhaka

BNP plans to provide monthly honourarium to imams and muazzins facing financial hardship if it returns to power, said the party's Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday.

He said the state must take responsibility for those who serve as religious and social reformers.

"The job of an imam or muazzin depends on the whims of the mosque committee. I believe this should not be the case; it cannot be. Insha'Allah,



if the BNP gets the opportunity to govern, the BNP government will prioritise the initiative to formulate service rules. The BNP government will certainly take effective steps to implement the other demands also," he said.

Tarique made the remarks while addressing the National Conference of Sammilito Imam-Khatib Parishad at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre.

He said the demands placed by imams and khatibs, including the formulation of Service Rules for imams, khatibs

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Former students of St Gregory's celebrated "Treasured Memories," a reunion organised by The Gregorian Society, at the Kristi Institute Convention Hall on November 22. Nearly 150 former students, including eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain and other distinguished alumni, attended the event.

PHOTO: STAR

Verdict of graft cases against Hasina on Nov 27
STAR REPORT

The verdict of three graft cases filed against 23 people, including deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, her daughter Saima Wazed Putul, and son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, is scheduled to be delivered on November 27.

Judge Mohammad Abdullah Al Mamun set the date after hearing arguments from both prosecution and defence, Ariful Islam, bench assistant of the court, told The Daily Star.

Among the accused, Rajuk former member Mohammad Khurshid Alam is now in jail, while the remaining 22, including Hasina, are absconding.

The trial of three other graft cases filed against 23

TWO CUSTODIAL DEATHS ASK, MSF demand judicial probe

STAR REPORT

Two rights organisations – Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) and Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF) – have expressed concern over the recent deaths of two suspects in the custody of the Detective Branch (DB) of police.

The deceased were identified as Mukhtar Hossain in Dhaka and Shahadat Hossain in Sirajganj, who reportedly died in separate incidents while in DB custody.

Their families have alleged the deaths resulted from torture during detention, according to media reports.

In a statement issued yesterday, ASK called for an independent judicial investigation into the incidents. The organisation stressed that ensuring the safety of individuals under state custody is a constitutional duty of law enforcement agencies. Such deaths raise serious questions about Bangladesh's adherence to human rights, the Constitution, and international standards, and demand fresh scrutiny, they said.

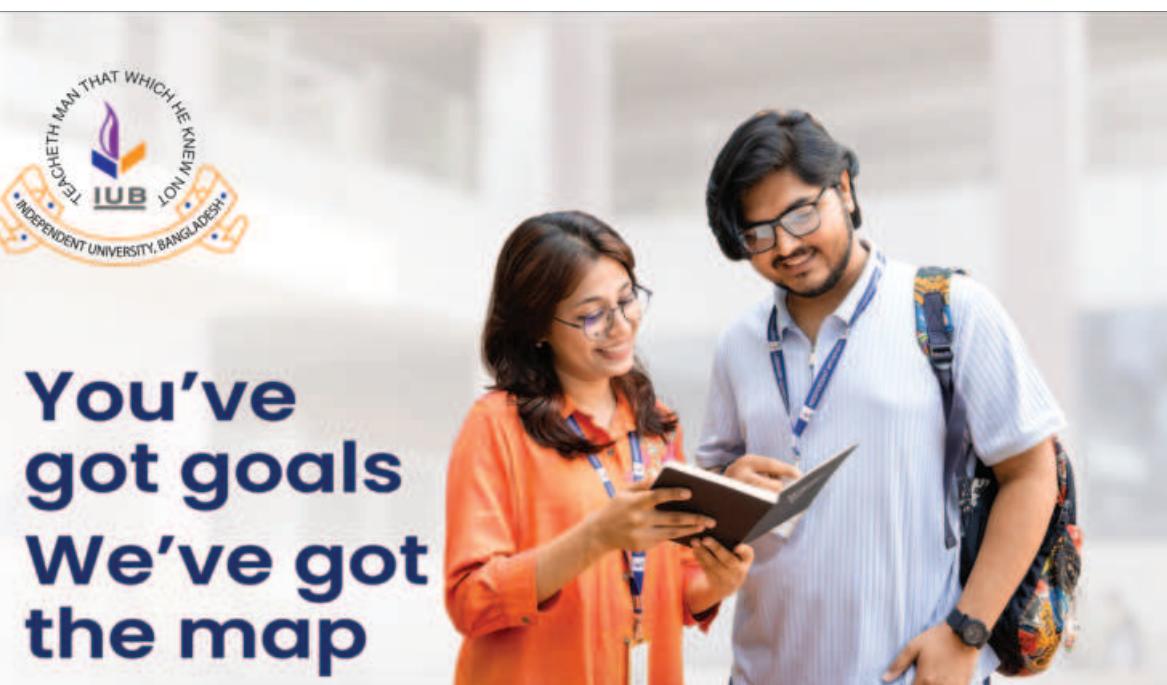
ASK noted that any death in state

custody is a grave violation of the right to life and personal liberty guaranteed under Article 32 of the Constitution. It also breaches fundamental principles of international human rights charters, which obligate the state to ensure detainees' safety.

Citing its records, ASK reported that at least 15 citizens have died in custody – whether in police stations, Rab, PBI, or DB – across the country between January to November 22 in 2025. The organisation said this figure reflects negligence, lack of accountability, and institutional weaknesses.

ASK urged that identifying those responsible for custodial deaths and ensuring legal accountability is a non-negotiable state responsibility. It also emphasised safeguarding the victims' families' rights to security, justice, and legal support.

Meanwhile, MSF, in a press statement yesterday, strongly condemned the deaths and described the allegations of torture-related deaths in DB custody as deeply regrettable and unacceptable violations of human rights.



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Suspected
robber killed
in mob
beatingOUR CORRESPONDENT,
Pirojpur

A suspected robber was killed in a mob beating during a robbery attempt in Pirojpur Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The deceased has been identified as Maharaj, 35, police said without providing further details.

Locals captured another suspect, Sabuj Hawlader, 55, of Dehergati village under Babuganj upazila of Barishal, and beat him up before handing him over to police.

The incident happened at the residence of former UP member Anukul Chandra Roy alias Dulal, at Paschim Durgapur village in the upazila.

Sub Inspector Molla Ramij Jahan Jumma of Pirojpur Sadar Police Station said around 2:30am, while responding to a call, a police team rescued two injured individuals from Paschim Durgapur village. They were taken to Pirojpur Sadar Hospital, where the on-duty doctor declared Maharaj dead.

Meanwhile, other members of the robbery gang managed to flee with looted valuables, while locals chased them, he added.

Dulal's brother, Amalesh Chandra Roy, said five of their members, including his brother, were sleeping inside the wooden house. Around 1:30am, a group of 7-8 robbers broke into the house and at gunpoint, looted three gold chains, four pairs of earrings, two pairs of bangles, and other gold ornaments.

After the robbers entered the house, Amalesh's wife, Lipika Rani, informed him over the phone. Amalesh, who stays in Pirojpur town, said he alerted locals, who gave them a chase, captured two of them, and beat them up.

Police, on information, arrived at the scene and took the two into custody.

PLOT SALE

A plot is available for sale in the Baridhara Diplomatic Zone. Interested and genuine buyers are warmly invited to contact for further details.

Contact: 01973456904

CWASA WATER CONNECTIONS
Rusty pipelines, disrupted supply
Around 40,000 consumers suffer as decades-old system collapses

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

Md Alamgir Hossain, manager of Morium Bhaban in Chattogram's densely populated Akbar Shah area, spends three consecutive nights every week waiting by the motor switch for water from Chattogram Wasa.

As soon as supply starts flowing through the line, usually late at night, he rushes to fill the building's 10,000-litre reservoir before the flow stops after four to five hours.

"The water comes only three days a week, Saturday, Sunday and Monday, that too late at night. So, we stay awake to fill the tank," said Alamgir, who manages the five-storey building housing ten families.

Each family needs at least 500 litres of water every day. With CWasa's irregular supply, residents are forced to spend extra to meet their daily needs.

Documents obtained by this newspaper show why the shortage persists. Ageing uPVC and cement pipelines — many installed 35 to 40 years ago — can no longer handle the pressure required for uninterrupted supply.

CWasa has divided the city

network into six sectors. Of these, five rely on 375 kilometres of outdated pipelines spanning Barik Building to Patenga, Khulshi to AK Khan, Amin Jute Mill to Oxygen, Bahaddarhat to Mohra, and Khaja

occur in the Barik Building-to-Patenga sector, affecting roughly 15,000 consumers.

For many, the shortage means having to buy water at high prices. In Patenga, tea stall owner Belal

them. Rokeya Begum has been paying her monthly minimum bill since 2019. "I have not received a single drop. I just keep paying to maintain the connection," she said.

Nazir Hossain, vice-president of Consumers Association of Bangladesh, said CWasa has failed its basic responsibility. "They have been operating for six decades but still cannot ensure water for their customers," he said.

Contacted, CWasa Executive Engineer Rezaul Ahsan Chowdhury admitted the pipelines are too rusty and leak-prone to sustain pressure. "When we increase pressure, the lines burst. It's impossible to supply water without replacing them," he said.

Against the city's daily demand for 60 crore litres of water, CWasa currently produces around 49.5 crore litres a day, of which 3.3 crore litres come from deep tubewells and the rest from four surface-water treatment plants that draw water from Karnaphuli and Halda rivers.

CWasa Chief Engineer Maksud Alam said they have undertaken a project to replace all old lines by 2029. "We expect to resolve the issue once the new pipelines are installed," he said.



Road to Chakta.

These five sectors serve nearly 40,000 customers, almost half of CWasa's 90,846 billable connections as of June this year.

Only one sector, stretching about 750 kilometres, has been upgraded recently with ductile iron pipelines. The worst disruptions

Uddin said he often buys jars from private sellers to run his business. "Each jar costs Tk 40 to 50. I have no choice," he said.

Despite having official connections, some households have never received a drop through their pipelines. Residents of Mokbul Ali Society in Patenga are among

Cancel travel
agency ordinance

Demand ATAB, HAAB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB) and Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB) yesterday demanded immediate cancellation of the Travel Agency (Registration and Control) Ordinance 2025.

The demand came from a human chain programme organised by ATAB Members' Welfare Unity Alliance in front of the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka.

Addressing the human chain, Mohammad Jalal Uddin Tipu, convener of the Unity Alliance, said the new ordinance — prepared by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism by changing the existing law — would shut down around 5,000 travel agencies in the country if it is implemented.

"As a result, owners, officials and employees would lose their jobs, which would adversely affect the entire sector and the national economy," he said.

Tipu also said, "Many of the amendment proposals in the new ordinance are not consistent with reality. In particular, the ban on buying and selling tickets through other agencies will make it difficult for small travel agencies to survive."

No signs of
security risks
ahead of polls
Says home adviser

STAR REPORT



Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said the government has detected no signs of security risks ahead of the upcoming national election.

"The overall law and order is steadily improving," he told reporters after a law and order meeting held at the Secretariat.

The adviser, in the regular review, said the election remains a major factor, as political programmes, processions, and meetings will increase as polling day nears.

Shut down illegal
brick kilns in Ctg
in 15 days: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the local administration of Chattogram to shut down all illegal brick kilns in the district in 15 days and to submit a compliance report before it.

Eight government high officials, including the deputy commissioner and superintendent of police in Chattogram, director of the Department of Environment (DoE) in the district and UNO of its Lohagara upazila have been directed to implement the order.

The HC bench of Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Md Hamidur Rahman delivered the order during the hearing of a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh, seeking necessary directives to shut down the illegal brick kilns.

The HC fixed December 17 for further hearing and issuing an order on the matter.

During the hearing yesterday, the petitioner's lawyer, Manzill Mursheed, told the HC that following the change of the government, most illegal brick kiln owners have reportedly resumed operations, causing severely harmful effects on the environment in Chattogram.

Rangamati hospital
struggling without
ICU, dialysis

RIKORS CHAKMA, Rangamati

Rashel Chakma of Kalindipur in Rangamati has been suffering from kidney disease for nearly two years and requires dialysis twice a week. His mother, Usha Chakma, said since Rangamati General Hospital has no dialysis facility, Rashel must travel to a private hospital in Chattogram for treatment.

"In his present condition, it takes a toll on him to travel to Chattogram twice a week for dialysis. It also costs around Tk 50,000 a month for his treatment. If the treatment was available here, it would have been more convenient and less expensive," she said.

Rashel's situation is not unique. Many critically ill patients from remote areas in Rangamati have to endure similar hardship as the hospital, established in 1984 to serve patients from 10 upazilas, still lacks specialised facilities including Intensive Care Unit, Coronary Care Unit, and dialysis services even after four decades.

In 2009, a five-storey CCU building was constructed at the hospital, but it has remained unused for 16 years. Since 2014, space inside the building has been temporarily used to run activities of Rangamati Medical College.



In 2019, the foundation stone for an 11-storey building was laid with plans to expand the number of beds and launch ICU, CCU and dialysis units. The health directorate and the public works department are responsible for implementing the project. However, only six floors have been constructed so far, and none could be made operational due to shortage of manpower and lack of equipment and furniture.

According to hospital sources, 200 to 250 patients are currently admitted to the 100-bed facility. Due to lack of space, many patients are treated on the floor. Additionally, around 1,000 to 1,200 people visit the hospital daily for outdoor consultations.

Dr Sawkat Akbar, resident doctor at the hospital, said ICU, CCU and dialysis services cannot be launched without required medical equipment, furniture and adequate manpower.

He said the hospital also has a shortage of staff, particularly in 3rd-4th grade posts, while four out of its 31 sanctioned doctor posts remain vacant.

Hill market turns
popular in Cox's Bazar

PHOTO: STAR

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, Cox's Bazar

Near the Burmese School in Cox's Bazar town, several vendors from indigenous communities, most of them women, were seen on both sides of the road in a simple, modest market setup.

These vendors come on Tuesdays and Saturdays from different hilly areas of neighbouring Bandarban district with leafy vegetables, fruits, sweet potatoes, sticky rice, pumpkins, and hill-style rice cakes.

Tang Tho, a vendor, said the items are either grown in their own fields or collected from their local areas.

Vendors said they arrive at

dawn by CNG-run autorickshaws.

There is very little use of polythene at the market. Items are packaged using banana leaves tied with strips of banana tree bark and kept in bamboo baskets. Buyers bring their own bags.

Here, goods are not sold at any fixed rate based on weight; rather, sellers and buyers bargain to agree on a price. The prices are usually reasonable.

Local Rakhine community members are the main buyers at this market, alongside other hill communities and Bangladeshi.

"Everything here is organic and chemical-free," said Fazlul Karim, a local resident.

Mache Sing, a woman vendor

from Lama upazila, said they travel long distances, so they cannot reduce the prices too much. "Usually, I earn between Tk 1,000-1,500 on a market day."

Alongside vegetables, the vendors also bring various types of hill-style rice cakes.

Some Bangladeshi vendors also sell dried fish at the market.

Several vendors, however, complained of occasionally facing harassment on the way.

"A few indigenous women started sitting here around 2022. Gradually this hill market became popular, with around 30-35 vendors coming twice a week," said Mong Wan Rakhine, an employee of Cox's Bazar Municipality.

Ref. No 53.23.0000.001.03.095.25.7130

Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)

A. Basic Information (Procuring Entity, Assignment, Procurement Method, Source of Fund, etc) for the Consulting Firms:

1 Name of the Organization	Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)
2 Procuring Entity Name & Designation	Md. Mashiar Rahman, Deputy Managing Director
3 Expression of Interest for Selection of	A consulting firm for conducting the Final Impact Evaluation of Pathways to Prosperity for Extremely Poor People-European Union (PPEPP-EU) Project .
4 EOI Ref No and Publishing Date	53.23.0000.001.03.095.25.7130; 24 November 2025
5 Package No.	PKSF/PPEPP-EU/2025-2026/SD-03
6 Procurement Method	Fixed Budget Selection (FBS)
7 Source of Fund and Development Partner	European Union (EU)
8 Project Name	Pathways to Prosperity for Extremely Poor People-European Union (PPEPP-EU) Project
9 EOI submission place, closing date and time.	Date: 15 December 2025; Time: 2:30 PM Place: PKSF Bhaban-1, E-4/B, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Administrative Area, Agargaon, Dhaka.

B. Key Information for the Consulting Firms:

10 Brief description of the assignment (Experience, resource, and delivery capacity required of the Consulting firm)	Please find the detailed REOI in the following website: https://pksf.org.bd/tender/
11 Experience, resources & Delivery Capacity Required	Please find the detailed REOI in the following website: https://pksf.org.bd/tender/

C. Procurement Entity Details

12 Name and Designation of the Official Inviting EOI	Md. Mashiar Rahman, Deputy Managing Director
13 Address of the Official Inviting EOI	Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) PKSF Bhaban-1, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
14 Contact Details of Official Inviting EOI	Telephone: 02-222218331-33, 02-222218335-39 Fax: 02222218341, 02222218343 e-mail: mashiar_rahman@yahoo.com

The Procurement Entity reserves all the rights to accept or reject all EOI proposals.

(Md. Mashiar Rahman)
Deputy Managing Director & PE

INTERNATIONAL

MILITARY MESSAGE

Trump urges jail time for Democrats

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump said late Saturday that six Democrats involved in a video calling on military officers to refuse illegal commands "should be in jail."

The Republican leader's remarks came after he accused the Democrat lawmakers on Friday of "seditious behaviour, punishable by death."

Democrats slammed Trump's comments as "absolutely vile" threats against the six senators and representatives, all of whom have served in the military or intelligence community. Trump took to social media on Saturday night, writing: "the traitors that told the military to disobey my orders should be in jail right now, not roaming the fake news networks trying to explain that what they said was ok."

Iran warns of attempts to target Khamenei

AFP, Tehran

Iran's intelligence ministry has warned of attempts by foreign adversaries, including the United States and Israel, to target Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and destabilise the Islamic republic.

The country's ISNA news agency reported on Saturday that intelligence minister Esmail Khatib cautioned "the enemy seeks to target the Supreme Leader, sometimes with assassination attempts, sometimes with hostile attacks".

While it was not immediately clear if the minister was referring to a specific incident, and Iranian officials often allege foreign plots, statements on threats against Khamenei's life had been rare prior to a 12-day war between Israel and Iran in June.

"Those who act in this direction, knowingly or unknowingly, are the infiltrating agents of the enemy," Khatib added, referring directly to Israel and the United States.

During the conflict earlier this year, Israel targeted senior Iranian military officials, nuclear scientists and sites as well as residential areas, with the US later joining with strikes on key nuclear facilities.



People hold placards during a protest against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in solidarity with the people of Kashmir, on the second day of the G20 Leaders' Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Ukraine's drones hit Russian power station

Fire sparks, heating cut off in Moscow region; US signals room for talks on peace plan

AGENCIES

Ukraine struck a heat and power station in the Moscow region yesterday with drones, triggering a major fire and cutting off heating for thousands in one of Kyiv's biggest attacks to date on a power station deep inside Russia.

In the fourth year of the deadliest European conflict since World War Two, Russia has been pummelling Ukraine's electricity and heat infrastructure while Kyiv has up until now mostly focused on trying to knock out Russia's oil refineries, crude terminals and pipelines.

But early yesterday, Ukrainian



while an unidentified observer cursed in Russian, reports Reuters.

Russia's defence ministry said it had downed 75 Ukrainian drones, including 36 over the Black Sea and several over the Moscow region. Russia's Vnukovo airport halted flights yesterday.

"Some of the drones were destroyed by air defence forces. Several fell on the territory of the station. A fire broke out at the facility," Vorobyov said.

Vorobyov said that backup power had been switched on and that mobile heating systems were being deployed to the area where the temperature was around freezing point.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrived in Geneva yesterday morning for

discussions on a US plan to end the Ukraine war, after Washington signalled room for negotiation on the controversial proposal, reports AFP.

Ukrainian, European and Canadian officials were also gathering in the Swiss city, although the format for the talks remained unclear.

Trump has given Ukraine until November 27 to approve the plan to end the nearly four-year conflict, but Kyiv is seeking changes to a draft that accepts some of Russia's hardline demands.

Trump said yesterday that Ukraine has not been grateful for American efforts related to the war with Russia even as US weapons continue to flow and Europe keeps buying Russian oil.

POST-UPRISING

Over 8 lakh new voters register for Nepal polls

AFP, Kathmandu

Hundreds of thousands of new voters have registered to cast their ballot in Nepal's first polls since a mass uprising in September ousted the government, election officials said yesterday.

Election Commission spokesman Narayan Prasad Bhatarai told AFP there was "a total of 837,094 registered names" of first-time voters.

Bhatarai said that by Friday, 123 established parties had registered to take part in the March 5 parliamentary polls, while another 40 new slates await further verification to be allowed to run.

Interest in participating in the elections has surged, especially among young people who see it as a critical test of whether the demands of protesters who took to the streets against economic hardships and government corruption can translate into meaningful change.

Dikshya Poudel, a student, said the uprising had encouraged her to register her name last week.

"I am excited to cast my vote for the first time in the upcoming election. I will be voting for a new changemaker," she said.

'We want to show law is equal for all'

FROM PAGE 16
under heavy security involving BGB, Rab, and police personnel. They were later placed in the ICT lockup.

The officers are among 28 accused in the two cases. The other accused include deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal.

They were charged over enforced disappearances, secret detention, and torture under the Awami League government between 2016 and 2024.

On October 22, 15 current and former accused officers were produced before the tribunal for the first time. That day, the tribunal ordered to publish notices in two national dailies, ordering fugitive accused to appear within seven days.

As the fugitives did not appear, the tribunal yesterday fixed December 3 for charge framing hearing against 17 accused, 10 of whom were among the officers produced, over the alleged illegal confinement and torture of 14 people in the Rab-run Task Force for Interrogation (TFI) Cell.

In the other case involving alleged torture of 24 detainees in the DGFI-run Joint Interrogation Cell, the tribunal set December 7 for charge framing hearing against 13 accused. Despite three officers linked to the JIC case were taken to the tribunal, they were not produced in the dock.

The names of Hasina and her defence adviser Maj Gen (retd)

Tarique Ahmed Siddique appear in both cases.

The tribunal will also hear the defence pleas for virtual appearance on the same dates.

PANNA TO DEFEND HASINA'

During the hearing, Supreme Court lawyer ZI Khan Panna expressed his willingness to serve as state defence counsel for Hasina.



"If you want to be appointed, we will appoint you," the tribunal chairman responded, adding that a previous attempt by Panna had not materialised because another lawyer had already been appointed and the proceedings had begun.

The tribunal also appointed M Hassan Imam as a state defence counsel for Kamal. At a press briefing,

Tajul confirmed the developments.

Regarding criticism of the trial time of a case involving Hasina, the tribunal chairman said, "Some say the proceedings are hurried; others say they are delayed. But as the saying goes, 'justice hurried is justice buried, while justice delayed is justice denied'." This court has taken the time that was required.

Meanwhile, the tribunal also ordered authorities to immediately remove defamatory comments and digitally manipulated images of its judges circulating in the media and on social platforms.

Initiating a suo moto contempt proceeding, the tribunal yesterday observed that fabricated pictures and distorted statements about its judges were spreading widely, undermining the dignity of the court.

Citizens and the media, it said, enjoy the right to speak and criticise, but only within the bounds of the law and constitution.

The tribunal directed the information secretary and the BTRC chairman to ensure the removal of all derogatory content and instructed them to submit a compliance report by December 3.

On November 17, the tribunal sentenced Hasina and ex-home minister Kamal to death in a case, while former IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun was handed a five-year prison sentence.

NCP won't make

FROM PAGE 16
adding that any political understanding would be openly discussed with citizens.

He alleged that a "media trial" was underway, fuelled by baseless speculation about the party's communications and motives, and urged journalists not to publish misleading analyses.

Expressing concern over the absence of a level playing field, Nahid said the environment needed for a fair election was still missing.

He warned that without firm action from the Election Commission and the government, the country risks returning to a "fascist-era" situation where voters cannot exercise their rights.

NCP Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary said the party had faced

harassment from the Election Commission and administrative offices since the start of the electoral process, including during registration and the symbol allocation stage.

He said although they accepted the "shapla koli" (waterlily bud) symbol for the sake of national interest, the EC had yet to release its design, affecting campaign activities.

The NCP has launched a two-day screening process to shortlist 300 candidates from 1,484 aspirants, with interviews running from 9:00am to 9:00pm until November 24.

The party's divisional units are conducting separate interviews with nomination seekers, and the convener said the timeframe will be extended if needed.

Aspirants are being assessed on qualifications, political vision,

DHAKA MONDAY NOVEMBER 24, 2025

AGRAHAYAN 9, 1432 BS

The Daily Star

5

What did nations agree to at COP30?

AFP, Belém

The COP30 climate summit has drawn to a close after two weeks in the Amazonian city of Belém where protests, street marches and even a fire caused unexpected moments of drama.

But beneath enormous tents erected over a former airport at the edge of the rainforest, nations also adopted some decisions on how to battle climate change.

Here are the main negotiated outcomes, and the voluntary commitments, made during the summit attended by nearly 200 nations:

FOSSIL FUELS

The thorniest issues were bundled into a "mutirao" pact – the summit's slogan, drawn from the Tupi-Guarani word for "collective effort."

The agreement included an initiative for countries to collaborate on a voluntary basis to reduce carbon emissions and strive to limit global warming to 1.5C relative to pre-industrial levels.

It also noted a commitment made by all nations at COP28 in Dubai to "transition away from fossil fuels" – but this exact phrase, which has become politically sensitive, was not included.

FINANCE

The world's poorest nations have long complained they lack the finance for "adaptation" – measures to protect their economies from rising seas, such as building sea walls, and other impacts of climate change.

In a win for developing countries at COP30, the final agreement "calls for efforts to at least triple adaptation finance by

2035."

In 2024, rich countries agreed to provide \$300 billion a year by 2035 in climate finance to developing nations, with no specific amount earmarked for adaptation.

Most of that goes to projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as renewable energy, and not to adaptation – something developing nations have long complained puts them at a disadvantage.

TRADE

For the first time, trade has been included as a pillar of the final text, with a three-year dialogue to take place under the climate framework.

This reflected concerns from countries including China that trade measures – like taxes on carbon-intensive goods – could erode export revenues or throw up barriers to green technology sales.

FORESTS

At COP30, Brazil launched a new global investment vehicle that proposes paying out a share of profits to forest-rich countries for every hectare of trees they leave standing.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva announced during a leaders' summit in Belém last week – even before COP30 officially started – the launch of the Tropical Forests Forever Facility.

The TFFF attracted \$5.5 billion in pledges from Norway, Germany, Indonesia, France and Brazil – the biggest contributors.

Ultimately, Brazil is seeking to raise \$125 billion in public and private investment, but said the fund could start working even without the full \$25 billion in startup capital from governments.

METHANE PLEDGES

Slashing methane emissions – the second-largest contributor to climate change after carbon dioxide – is considered one of the fastest ways to curb global warming.

Although it remains in the atmosphere for about 12 years, the "super pollutant" is roughly 80 times more potent than CO2 over a 20-year period.

At COP30, seven countries – Britain, France, Canada, Germany, Norway, Japan and Kazakhstan – signed a statement vowing to achieve "near zero" methane emissions across the fossil fuel sector.

organisational strength and public engagement. "A total of 1,484 forms has been collected – 761 offline and 723 online. This averages about five candidates per constituency," said a party official.

A member of the party's election monitoring committee, requesting anonymity, told The Daily Star that the final nomination list will be published before November 30.

However, nomination alone will not be enough to contest the polls, as the screening criteria also include a minimum monthly income of Tk 50,000, a clean criminal record and no affiliation with the Awami League or its associated organisations.

The party also plans to nominate at least 15 to 20 women, with the number likely to be higher if more meet the requirements.

Officials debate abolishing NTMC

FROM PAGE 2

agencies argued for keeping the NTMC or an equivalent body, the sources said.

One agency head questioned how they could obtain a court order at 2:00am in a national security emergency.

Another argued that drug and smuggling interdictions often depend on immediate

intelligence, which would be impossible without an institution like the NTMC.

Sources said more than 15 officers from different forces attended the meeting, and nearly all supported retaining the NTMC in some form. Taiyeb, however, held firm.

The home adviser also leaned toward keeping the NTMC, while

the planning adviser urged further review, the sources said.

An official from the posts and telecom ministry said the draft ordinance will be sent to the Advisory Council for approval after another informal meeting today.

The meeting is also likely to consider whether the NTMC could be transformed into a research-focused body under a new name.

3 medical

FROM PAGE 3
"Online classes will continue through December 4, and official notices regarding schedules and instructions will be issued accordingly. All on-campus examinations will remain halted during this period."

To facilitate students leaving Dhaka, the university administration arranged buses to seven divisional cities. The buses were scheduled to leave Dhaka this morning.

Irene Akhter, principal assistant at the Dhaka Medical College office, told The Daily Star that while the administrative office remains open, all classes and examinations are suspended. She added that instructions have been given for students to vacate the residential halls.

Notably, academic activities at DMC were previously suspended for 20 days in June-July this year following student protests demanding the construction of new buildings and the abandonment of risky academic buildings and hostels.

Meanwhile, following Saturday's closure announcement, Dhaka University students were ordered to vacate their halls by yesterday evening.

Visiting the campus yesterday morning, correspondents saw many female students leaving for their homes. Students were also seen leaving the male dormitories. However, those who had not yet left appeared to be in a dilemma.

Some students expressed frustration, citing difficulties due to the sudden instruction to vacate. Many mentioned tuition responsibilities and part-time jobs, questioning where they would stay during the closure.

The DU administration announced on Saturday that all classes and examinations would remain suspended until December 6, and all residential halls must be vacated for a comprehensive post-earthquake inspection, risk assessment, and renovation.

According to BBC Bangla, several schools in the capital, including Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, National Ideal School and College, Ideal School and College, Abdur Razzaque School and College, and Cordova International School & College, also suspended classes and exams yesterday.

Three earthquakes were felt in the country in the last three days. A powerful quake on Friday killed 10 people in several parts of the country, including Dhaka. At least 10 DU students were injured during the tremor.

PRAYER
TIMING

NOVEMBER 24

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5-05 12-45 3-45 5-21 7-00

JAMAT 5-40 1-15 4-00 5-24 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Bachchu Majumdar, 50, trims and cleans a date palm tree in preparation for winter. In a few weeks, he will begin collecting sap that will be sold for making molasses, jaggery, and various pithas. The photo was taken at Pattinibhangha village in Hija upazila, Barishal yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

CHAR MONTOLA IN KURIGRAM

A village entirely devoured by the Brahmaputra

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Once a vibrant and self-reliant agrarian village with around 350 families, Char Montola, a shoal in Kurigram's Chilmari upazila, has disappeared from the map as the Brahmaputra devoured it entirely following two years of intensified river erosion.

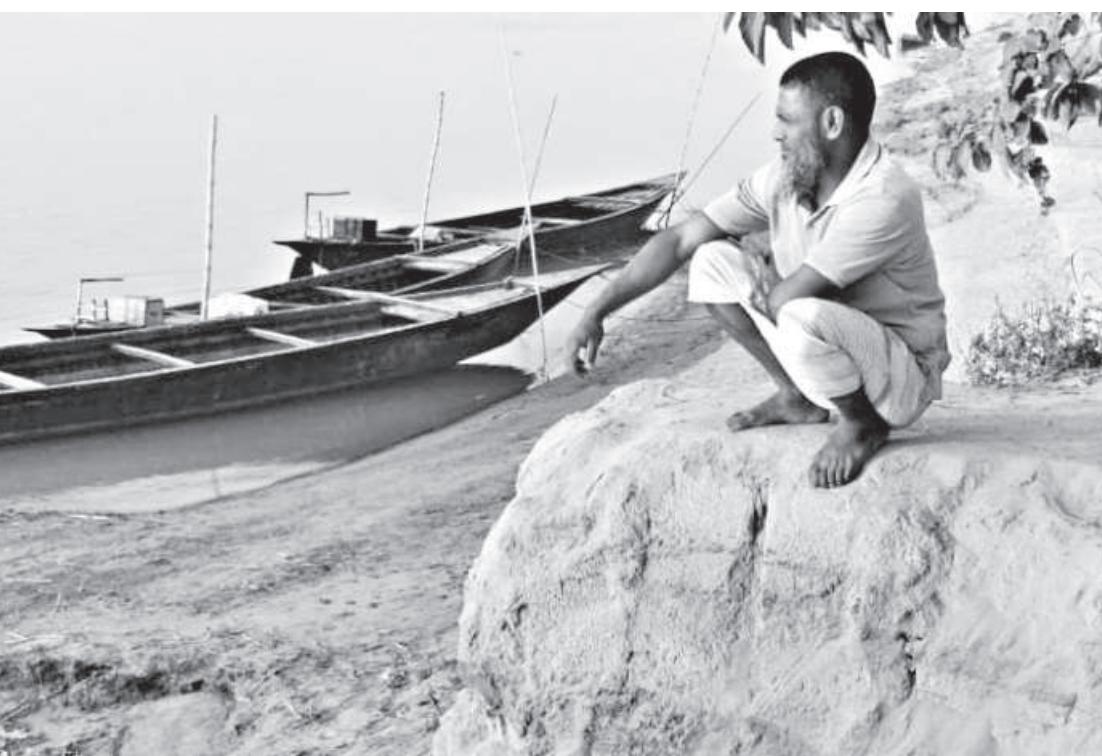
All homesteads, croplands, schools, and places of worship in the village now lies beneath the river's swirling currents, while over a thousand residents of the village have all become homeless, displaced and destitute.

Where lush paddy fields once spanned across 3,000 bighas, there is now only the unending rush of waves.

Many of the displaced families later took shelter on a newly emerged sandbar locally known as 'Manushmara Char', while others moved to relatives' homes or settled on different other shoals in the region.

"About 45 years ago, Char Montola emerged from the Brahmaputra. Nearly every family owned 6-10 bighas of land and lived well through farming. Erosion began two years ago, and on November 10, the last eight families in the village became homeless after the river devoured the last remaining portion of the shoal," said Sabidur Rahman, 85, an elderly resident of the village who had to move elsewhere.

Abdus Samad, 60, who lost all his 12 bighas of land, later relocated to Manushmara Char. "There are seven members in my



Char Montola was once host to over 350 families but has now disappeared completely, consumed by the Brahmaputra after two years of intense river erosion. More than 1,000 residents of the village have all become homeless, displaced, and destitute as a result. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

family, but there is no work here. The land is still not ready for cultivation. I don't know when we can return to a normal life," he said.

For many, the loss is not only material but deeply emotional.

"In Char Montola, everyone lived like family," said Rahima Bewa. "Now we don't even know where others have gone."

According to Chilmari Union Parishad Chairman Aminul Islam,

the village had a government primary school, three madrasas, and two mosques – all lost to the river's womb. While the school has been relocated, the religious institutions could not be rebuilt.

Prof Shafiqul Islam Bebu, convener of the Kurigram Char Development Committee, reiterated the longstanding demand for a separate ministry dedicated to development in shoal areas and reducing the

endless sufferings of shoal dwellers.

Rakibul Hasan, executive engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board in Kurigram, said there is no permanent allocation for protecting mid-river shoal lands.

"During emergencies, we place geo sand-bags to slow down erosion. The same was done for Char Montola, but it could not be saved," he added.

Verdict of graft cases against Hasina on Nov 27

FROM PAGE 3

people, including Hasina, her sister Sheikh Rehana, Rehana's son Radwan Mujib Siddiq Bobby, Rehana's daughters Azmina Siddiq and British MP Tulip Siddiq, is pending at the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka, according to the prosecution.

The anti-graft body -- between January 12 to 14 -- lodged a total of

six separate cases with its Dhaka Integrated District Office-1 over alleged irregularities in the allocation of plots under the Purbachal New Town project.

The ACC alleged that Hasina, in collusion with senior Rajuk officials, unlawfully secured six plots -- each measuring 10 katha, in the diplomatic zone of Sector 27 of the

Purbachal New Town project for herself, Joy and Putul; Sheikh Rehana, her son Radwan Mujib, and daughter Azmina despite their ineligibility under existing regulations.

On March 25, the ACC filed six charge sheets with the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court in Dhaka where Hasina was named as a common accused in all six cases.

Honourarium for imams

FROM PAGE 3

and muazzins, are "extremely logical".

He said BNP has never compromised on the core principles of Islam and would not do so in the future.

Tarique said BNP has always supported Islamic culture and remained vocal against activities that go against the

interests of Islam and Muslims.

He cited the vast network of religious institutions across the country, saying there are over 5,000 madrasas of different categories, including Qawmi, Alia, public, private and unregistered institutions, with millions of students studying there.

He also said around 3.5 lakh mosques employ 1.5 lakh imams, khatibs and muazzins who perform religious duties.

He said achieving sustainable development is impossible if millions involved in mosques and madrasas remain excluded from development initiatives, and BNP has adopted specific action plans accordingly.

MORRELGANJ, SHARANKHOLA

Delayed bridge work worsens sufferings

PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY, Bagerhat

Prolonged delay in construction of the Panguchi Bridge has been causing immense sufferings to around four lakh residents of Morrelganj and Sharankhola areas of Bagerhat.

A project to construct the bridge to connect both banks of the Panguchi river to the Signboard-Morrelganj-Rayenda-Sharankhola road was approved around three years back, but the project has yet to see implementation.

At present, only a handful of ferries and small engine boats are available for thousands of locals, including schoolchildren, workers, officegoers and patients to cross the river daily at much risk, especially during monsoon.

During a recent visit, this correspondent saw long queues were formed on both banks of the river while a single government ferry was operating to manage the surge of passengers, motorcycles, and goods. Nearby, small boats, many without life jackets or basic safety measures, were carrying schoolchildren, elderly passengers, and families across the river.



Shamim Ahsan, manager of Rupali Bank's Nager Bazar branch and a former resident of Morrelganj, recalled surviving a trawler accident on the river in 2017. "I narrowly survived the fatal tragedy," he said.

"Morrelganj remains cut off from the district headquarters largely due to absence of a permanent bridge on the river. After dark, crossing Panguchi becomes perilous. Patients often suffer due to delays in reaching the main hospital across the river," Ahsan added.

Masirul Rahaman Masum, a local journalist, said the prompt construction of the bridge is critical not just for connectivity but for overall development of the region.

"Sharankhola has enormous tourism potential as a gateway to the Sundarbans, and Morrelganj is a major agricultural zone. The bridge could transform the local economy by allowing quicker access," he noted.

Contacted, Md Asraful Islam Prang, executive engineer of Roads and Highways in Bagerhat, said the 1.44-kilometre Panguchi Bridge project was likely approved between 2021 or 2022.

"The project's estimated cost is Tk 912 crore, jointly funded by the government and the Kuwait Fund. The project's international tender, which drew bidders from China, Japan and other countries, is in its final stages with appointment of contractor expected soon," he added.

We need a climate

FROM PAGE 3

holistic, integrated climate solution for intra-migrants has been accepted."

"You cannot fight climate change with one or two isolated projects. If you don't start holistically from the beginning, you cannot simply add it later," she said.

She said several countries had expressed interest in the model. A landlocked African nation has already approached Friendship to replicate its hospital system and integrated development approach. Sharing their tools with national governments would bring greater impact than organisational expansion, she said.

Regarding the use of the prize money, Runa said Friendship had identified areas where its integrated model needed strengthening. The immediate priority was restoring mangroves in the southern coastal belt, which remains Bangladesh's first and strongest line of defence.

"We are not building massive dykes. We don't have that kind of money, and no one gives us that much," she said.

She said mangroves protect biodiversity, create income for local communities and, above all, save lives. With much of Bangladesh only a few metres above sea level, even a one-metre rise poses severe risks without natural protection. The funds will support reforestation and community-led protection work along the coastline.

Asked about global attention and scaling, Runa said Friendship had never believed in expanding for numbers alone. "We work, we expand, then we stop. We strengthen our roots, and only then do we move

forward again. Our vision is not on growth but on depth and quality. That is what ensures sustainability," she said.

She said several countries had expressed interest in the model. A landlocked African nation has already approached Friendship to replicate its hospital system and integrated development approach. Sharing their tools with national governments would bring greater impact than organisational expansion, she said.

Calling young people the "real population" of the country, Runa urged them to safeguard their energy and purpose. "They have courage and hope, but they are often used by others. Do not let yourselves be used. Be careful. You must come first."

"If they could lead a movement like they did last year, they can take it upon themselves to save the world. My hope and my pride are with them," she added.

Earlier yesterday, Friendship organised an event titled Pride for Bangladesh, a Celebration with the Media.

Friendship Chairman Salauddin Ahmed, Senior Director and Head of Climate Action Kazi Amdadul Hoque, and Director and Head of Communications Tanjina Sharmin spoke at the event alongside Runa Khan.

পাওয়ার শ্রিন্মান পিএলজি
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(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

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e-Tender বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাওয়ার শ্রিন্মান জিএমডি, কুমিল্লা দ্বারা আওতাধীন নিয়ন্ত্রিত দরপত্র e-GP পোর্টেলে প্রকাশিত
হয়েছে।

ID	Package No	Title of Works	Last date & time of document selling	Last date & time of security submission
1163918	eT:gmd/cumilla/N/25-26/01	Various tower leg maintenance and tower leg painting work of 132 KV Daudkandi Line of 230/132/33 KV Cumilla (N) Grid Substation under GMD, Power Grid, Cumilla.	17 Dec 2025 at 15:00	18 Dec 2025 at 11:30
1163927	eT:gmd/cumilla/N/25-26/02	Store Building roof Corrugated CI sheet Replacement at Cumilla (N) Grid Substation, GMD, Power Grid, Cumilla.	17 Dec 2025 at 15:00	18 Dec 2025 at 11:30
1166850	eT:gmd/cumilla/N/25-26/04	Installation of a new IP camera set for the 230/132/33 KV Cumilla (N) Grid Substation under GMD Cumilla.	03 Dec 2025 at 15:00	04 Dec 2025 at 11:30

আগ্রহী টিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে www.eprocure.gov.bd সাইটের মাধ্যমে দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

মোঃ জসিম উদ্দিন
নির্বাচী প্রকৌশলী, জিএমডি, কুমিল্লা

PAID CONTENT



Bridging the Skills Gap for a Sustainable Bangladesh

Bangladesh is entering a defining decade that will determine whether its vast youth population becomes the engine of sustainable growth or a missed opportunity. With nearly two-thirds of its population in the working-age group, the country holds a powerful demographic advantage that will gradually narrow over time. Yet this promise is challenged by persistent gaps in education quality, digital and gender divides, and a job market struggling to absorb young talent, most of whom remain engaged in informal, low-wage work. While the nation has sustained impressive economic growth, opportunities for decent, future-focused employment remain limited, calling for an urgent need for modernized education, inclusive digital access, and stronger vocational pathways.

Against this backdrop, Grameenphone organized a roundtable titled "Skills for the Future", bringing together representatives from the ILO, UNDP, BYLC, LightCastle Partners, Innovision, TMSS (Thengamara Mohila Sabuj Sangha), and other youth and industry voices. The discussion, moderated by Farhana Islam, Director and Head of ESG, Grameenphone, focused on how Bangladesh can leverage its demographic dividend through future-ready skills, inclusive digital transformation, and green economic opportunities. Participants highlighted the urgent need to align education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and employability with emerging industry demands driven by AI, sustainability, and global market shifts.



Bijnor Islam
Co-founder and CEO,
Light Castle Partners

"Digital literacy is no longer just about using a computer, rather, it's about knowing what to ask and how to work intelligently with AI."

Bangladesh must urgently strengthen its foundation of employability and future-ready skills to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving global economy. Employers today are prioritizing problem-solving, adaptability, communication, and critical thinking as skills that bridge the gap between academia and industry. As artificial intelligence reshapes how people learn, work, and interact, digital fluency and AI literacy are becoming indispensable. Digital literacy is no longer just about using a computer, rather, it's about knowing what to ask and how to work intelligently with AI. A large proportion of Bangladesh's exports are destined for the European Union, where consumers and regulators are placing strong emphasis on sustainability. Green circularity, with a particular focus on Bangladesh's export-oriented sectors such as garments, textiles, and footwear is key to maintain competitiveness in these markets, and promote sustainability, resource efficiency, and circularity across industries like garments and footwear. Embedding these principles from leadership to factory floors will ensure Bangladesh's industries remain efficient, competitive, and globally relevant.



Ahsan Habib
Deputy Manager, Office of Professional Development, Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC)

"In the future, employers will value problem-solvers over degree-holders."

Equipping young Bangladeshis with both technical expertise and leadership traits is essential for long-term employability. Empathy, teamwork, and adaptability must complement technical skills to build a workforce that can thrive in change. Students under the National University system currently make up the majority of tertiary enrollment and they require targeted, hands-on upskilling through career counseling, physical training centers, and market-aligned curricula. In the future, employers will value problem-solvers over degree-holders. Focusing on STEM, AI, and language training such as Japanese and Chinese can open pathways for overseas employment and help transform Bangladesh's youth from job seekers into global contributors.



Tanveer Mohammad
Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Grameenphone

"Long-term growth depends on our ability to keep learning, not just earning. Social attitudes toward vocational education also need rebranding to make technical pathways aspirational."

Aspirational. By prioritizing language skills, digital literacy, and green competencies, Bangladesh can empower youth to compete globally while ensuring that technology becomes a tool for empowerment, not exclusion.



Sayeda Tahya Hossain
Chief Human Resources Officer, Grameenphone

Artificial intelligence is redefining the workplace just as COVID-19 once redefined digital readiness. The challenge now is to shift employees from task execution to value creation by blending human judgment with AI efficiency. This calls for upskills in data literacy, digital fluency, ethical AI use, and creative problem-solving. At this point, AI is no longer a tool and is rather defining the very environment in which we work. As job roles evolve, workplaces must also adapt to what younger generations value most: flexibility, purpose, and lifelong learning. Moreover, recruitment itself is moving beyond degrees toward demonstrable skills, ethics, and the capacity to adapt responsibly in a tech-driven world.



Saif Islam
Senior Program Officer, International Labour Organization (ILO)

Technology is reshaping both white- and blue-collar jobs, demanding that Bangladesh reposition its workforce to use automation and AI as enablers, not threats. The country's TVET system must become more dynamic, coordinated, and aligned with real labor market needs. The question is no longer whether we can build skills. It's whether those skills lead to real jobs. Strengthening micro-credential programs, investing in future-oriented sectors such as logistics and sustainable packaging, and building sustainable financing models like payroll levies or co-financing will be essential. A national skills strategy that unites BEZA, BIDA, and BEPZA could help ensure Bangladesh's training ecosystem is both responsive and employment-driven.



Jyotish Talukdar
Programme Specialist (Private Sector Partnerships, Strategy & Business Development), UNDP

Each year, around 1.94 million students leave school without a clear path to meaningful employment. Bangladesh must

"The focus must shift from simply seeking jobs to creating sustainable 'work.' We need a national shift from job-seeking to opportunity-creating."

markets like Japan, can expand youth participation in the global economy. A coherent national framework is needed to guide youth entrepreneurship, remote work, and micro-enterprise, ensuring that growth is inclusive and opportunity-rich.



Tasmia Rahman
Portfolio Director, Innovision

"To make skills inclusive, we must start early and make learning both practical and equitable."

Driving large-scale impact in skills development will require extensive collaboration between the private and public sectors. TVET programs should be made free and accessible for marginalized groups, inspired by traditional apprenticeship models that combine learning with practical exposure. To make skills inclusive, we must start early and make learning both practical and equitable. Women's entrepreneurship can be accelerated through micro-business training focused on access to finance, trade licenses, and digital tools.

Future priorities should include AgriTech, smart value chains, and transferable overseas skills, while rigorous impact evaluation ensures accountability and continuous improvement.



Shahir Chowdhury
Founder & CEO, Shikho

Digital education can bridge Bangladesh's skills divide, provided that it is made inclusive and accessible through EdTech platforms. Micro-credential courses that certify industry-specific expertise can help young people quickly align with global job markets. EdTech is the bridge that can take quality education to every corner of Bangladesh.

Expanding language training and embedding employable digital skills into e-learning ecosystems will ensure that education remains relevant, scalable, and future-ready for both local and overseas markets.



Mashrur H. Shurid
Co-founder & CEO, iPage

Credibility in public-private partnerships remains a concern. Building trust requires ensuring that training programs prioritize regulatory compliance and good governance, which is essential not only for sustainable business practices but also for securing access to finance. When large companies engage with early-stage startups, they don't just share expertise, they share credibility. And such collaboration provides those startups with a powerful boost, helping young ventures gain the confidence of investors, partners, and customers.

"When large companies engage with early-stage startups, they don't just share expertise, they share credibility."



Mamunur Rashid
Deputy Director, TMSS
(Thengamara Mohila Sabuj Sangha)

"Empowering women and youth through skills is the surest path to inclusive growth."

TMSS is one of Bangladesh's leading women-focused and female-led non-government organizations, dedicated to empowering women and alleviating poverty. Its initiatives span across skills development, microcredits, human rights, social justice, health and hygiene, disaster preparedness, climate action, and overall livelihood improvement, contributing significantly to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Guided by its mission to ensure a life of dignity for all, TMSS promotes capacity building, adaptability, good governance, and active participation of women in development because we believe that empowering women and youth through skills is the surest path to inclusive growth. By integrating digital literacy, freelancing, and language training, TMSS demonstrates how grassroots-led initiatives can build national capacity and advance equitable development.



Tanzila Akter and Md. Mosharraf Hossain
University Students

"We're still learning coding on paper in an age of artificial intelligence."

Students highlighted several systemic challenges in Bangladesh's education and skills ecosystem. Representing the voice of the youth, both Tanzila and Mosharraf highlighted deep-rooted challenges in Bangladesh's education ecosystem. Outdated curricula, theoretical teaching methods, and an overemphasis on exam results hinder innovation and creativity. They emphasized the need for hands-on learning, progressive course structures, and greater exposure to research and technology. Preparing National University students for meaningful employment requires shifting focus from rote learning to applied skills, curiosity, and innovation-driven education that truly prepares youth for modern work.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Bangladesh's youth population stands at the heart of its development story as a potential powerhouse that can shape a sustainable and future-ready economy. But unlocking this dividend demands bold reform in education, skills, and policy. The coming decade will determine whether the country can harness its youth potential through strategic investments in skills, education reform, and digital inclusion. The nation must bridge the gap between academic learning and employability by investing in future-ready capabilities such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, green technologies, and soft skills by blending technical expertise with creativity and ethics.

Reimagining Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) through flexible, industry-linked, and micro-credential programs will be crucial to ensuring that learning translates into livelihood. Green and digital skills must be mainstreamed across sectors, while targeted language training in Japanese, Chinese, and Arabic can open doors to overseas employment and increased remittances.

To sustain momentum, Bangladesh needs innovative financing models and stronger public-private partnerships that align training with market demand. A dynamic, industry-aligned skills framework supported by expanded micro-credentialing and stronger academia-industry partnerships is essential to ensure that training remains relevant to real-world needs.

The way forward calls for uniting government, academia, and industries under a national skills framework that embeds sustainability, inclusivity, and adaptability at its core to transform Bangladesh's youth potential into a lasting force for growth and resilience.

The urban escape Dhaka didn't know it needed



In a city where lives revolve around deadlines, traffic, and responsibilities, Playard offers a reminder that joy is also a form of care."



REDISCOVERING PLAYING TOGETHER

The philosophy behind Playard stems from the belief that play should not end with childhood, especially for a generation that grew up outdoors, in open fields and neighbourhoods that encouraged real interaction. Millennials and Gen Z parents remember that version of Bangladesh vividly, yet they now raise their children in a Dhaka that is far more crowded, stressful, and very short on

open spaces. That gap creates a sense of guilt and a longing for simpler moments, feelings Playard taps into by creating an environment where adults and children can rediscover joy together. It does not ask adults to supervise from the sidelines; it invites them to participate.

Playard also draws inspiration from a familiar name: Zero Gravity, the small but energetic zone in the Go Karting area of Chef's Table Courtside on Madani Avenue. Zero Gravity became popular because it offered something Dhaka rarely provides—movement, adrenaline, and an escape from your daily routine. Unimart's Playard takes that concept and expands it into a full-fledged ecosystem designed for comfort and inclusivity. Where Zero Gravity felt like a fun chapter, Playard feels like an entire book. Its experience is more curated and purpose is clearer: to create a playful sanctuary inside the chaos of Uttara.

DESIGN THAT RESPECTS ADULTS EXPERIENCE

Walking into Playard, what stands out immediately is that the space does not talk down to adults. The colours, lighting, and layout feel modern and nostalgic at the same time. This is intentional. Millennials and Gen Z carry the fatigue of long work hours, digital overload, and the emotional weight of balancing careers and parenting. Playard functions almost like a reset button for them. It is a place where arcade games, interactive rides, and sensory rooms bring back pieces of their own childhood, only now they get to enjoy it with their



"Here, the lines blur. Parents become playmates, children see a different side of their parents, and the city outside feels a little lighter."

children. You see parents laughing on soft rides, teens competing with their mothers in arcade challenges, and young professionals dropping by to decompress after work. The message the space sends is simple: adulthood doesn't have to be a rigid, joyless routine.

This is also what sets Playard apart from places like Toggy Fun World. While Toggy is a massive, lively amusement zone primarily focused on children, Playard centres itself on shared experiences. It is not trying to overwhelm visitors with a hundred different attractions. Instead, it offers a curated set of high-quality rides, games, and interactive rooms that multiple age groups can enjoy together. The experience is more modern and intentionally built for families who want something enjoyable but not chaotic. The space feels calmer and

more aligned with the mood and taste of today's young parents.

SPACES FOR EVERY AGE GROUP

Inside Playard, even without listing every ride by name, the vibe is unmistakable. There are arcade-style games that ignite friendly competition, soft-play sections perfect for toddlers, and VR corners that pull both teens and adults into surreal virtual worlds. Mini-rides are designed in a way that adults can join without feeling out of place, and sensory rooms offer quiet, soothing environments for anyone who needs a break from overstimulation. The moment you step in, you feel Dhaka's noise fade into the background. It is a controlled playground designed to give you the full experience.

Playard is also conscious of another

truth: not every family in Dhaka can afford such an experience. But it is built for those who can occasionally take the chance—millennials and Gen Z professionals who look for meaningful, premium outings with their children. The intention is not exclusivity but purpose. Playard aims to reclaim the idea of play as something worth investing in and something that strengthens family relationships in a city where everything moves too fast.

CHANGING THE CULTURAL STATEMENT OF DHAKA

Ultimately, Playard is more than a recreation space inside a mall. It is a cultural statement about what Dhaka deserves and what its people have been missing. It gently challenges the belief that children play while adults simply supervise. Here, the lines blur. Parents become playmates, children see a different side of their parents, and the city outside feels a little lighter. In a place where lives revolve around deadlines, traffic, and responsibilities, Playard offers a reminder that joy is also a form of care.

And that is the heart of Unimart's vision. In asking, "Why grow up?" Playard invites Dhaka's residents to experience something we often forget to seek: a moment of uncomplicated fun. It encourages adults to step into a world where laughter is easy, memories form effortlessly, and family time feels genuine again. In a city that rarely slows down, Playard stands as a quiet rebellion, reminding us that sometimes the most grown-up thing you can do is allow yourself to go back to younger times.



Playard has arcade-style games that ignite friendly competition, soft-play sections perfect for toddlers, and corners that pull both teens and adults into surreal virtual worlds.



PHOTOS: PALASH KHAN



Where Movement meets **FAMILY JOY**

WAHID SORWAR,
Business Development Lead, Experiential Service Ventures, United Group

"Our concept is rooted in a social purpose: offering children and young people opportunities to stay active, improve mental well-being, and engage in play that stimulates physical movement and creativity."

Playard, a United Group venture, opened as a family-first entertainment hub offering trampolines, arcades and safe, screen-free play. Designed to boost activity and wellbeing, it runs supervised programs, age-tailored packages and value pricing so families choose active, social outings over spending time on their phones.

The Daily Star (TDS): When did Playard first launch, and what was the inspiration behind it? Are you planning new outlets or expansions outside Dhaka?

Wahid Sorwar (WS): Playard officially opened its doors on 30 March 2025. The idea grew from a simple, heartfelt observation: children, teens, and even adults no longer had enough safe, active, screen-free spaces to unwind. We wanted to create a vibrant environment where families could reconnect and young people could enjoy meaningful physical activity.

In line with this vision, we are now expanding beyond Dhaka. Playard's Sylhet branch is in progress, alongside two additional outlets within Dhaka. All three new locations are scheduled to open by mid-January 2026, allowing us to welcome more communities into the Playard experience.

TDS: What is the average daily or monthly footfall per outlet, and how much of that comes from repeat visitors? What is your year-on-year growth in visitor numbers and revenue since launch?

WS: On average, each outlet receives around 800 visitors per day. During

holidays or festive weeks, this number rises significantly — often crossing 1,500 guests in a single day. A substantial portion of this footfall comes from repeat visitors, especially families and teens who return for the comfort, safety, and consistency of experience. Year-on-year, we have observed steady growth both in visitor numbers and revenue, driven by word-of-mouth, customer loyalty, and increasing demand for active entertainment.

TDS: What is your pricing range for entry and packages? How have customer preferences shaped your pricing model?

WS: Our entry begins at BDT 399, which includes entry plus three arcade rides intentionally designed to keep Playard accessible for a wide range of families. Individual arcade rides are priced between BDT 149 and BDT 299. Bumper cars, one of our most popular attractions, are BDT 349, while trampoline access begins at BDT 699. All prices are exclusive of 15% VAT.

Overtime, we noticed that choosing multiple activities individually often became costly for families or groups. In response, we curated several value-focused packages—Power Kids, Power Teens, Joy Escape, and Supreme Adventure—each tailored to different age groups and interests. These packages offer up to 40% savings, making the experience more enjoyable and economical without compromising quality.

TDS: Which attractions drive the



highest engagement — trampolines, the "Adrenaline" zone, or other gaming features? What age group contributes the most to your total visitors?

WS: Playard's diverse offerings attract a wide mix of age groups. Families with younger children frequently choose our kids' zone for safe, interactive play, while teens are particularly drawn to the Adrenaline Zone, where challenge-based activities keep them engaged. Trampolines and bumper cars also perform strongly across all age groups. Overall, families with children make up the largest visitor segment, though our teen community is growing steadily.

TDS: What safety certifications or international standards do your rides and trampolines comply with?

How much of your spend goes into maintenance and safety training each month?

WS: All our products are sourced from reputable, ISO-certified manufacturers in China. Safety is at the heart of our operations: every ride undergoes a thorough inspection twice daily—once before opening and once before closing—to ensure optimal functionality.

We dedicate approximately 35% of our revenue to maintenance, safety checks, and continuous staff training. This investment reflects our commitment to offering a secure, reliable, and internationally aligned experience for every guest.

TDS: Do you see more adult participation now, and how has that

segment grown?

WS: Yes, adult participation has noticeably increased. Many adults enjoy the arcade section and bumper cars for light-hearted fun, while others choose the trampoline area as a playful way to stay active. Recognising this growing interest, we are working on introducing more adult-friendly attractions so that Playard becomes a lively destination for all age groups—not just children and teens.

TDS: What is your busiest season or month, and how do you manage capacity then?

WS: Eid holidays remain our busiest period of the year, with visitor numbers peaking across all outlets. However, we strive to make Playard a preferred destination throughout the festive calendar, whether it's Pohela Boishakh, Christmas, or New Year. During high-traffic seasons, we increase staffing, enhance queue management, and streamline ticketing to maintain a smooth and enjoyable experience for every visitor.

TDS: Why do you think Playard stands out against other entertainment zones in Dhaka?

WS: Playard stands apart because it pioneers screen-free entertainment—a much-needed alternative in today's technology-driven world.

We believe entertainment should not come at the cost of excessive screen time. Instead, Playard encourages families to reconnect, move freely, and enjoy meaningful experiences that contribute to a healthier, more balanced generation.



LET KIDS RUN, JUMP, FALL AND REPEAT



SADIA ISLAM

When I was a kid, play just happened. There were backyards, rooftops, under mango trees and on the streets. Now, as a teacher in Dhaka and a mother of two, I see how much effort it takes to give kids what we once received for free: space to move, make noise, and be unapologetically young. What used to come with the neighbourhood now must be carved out, scheduled, and sometimes paid for. And it's becoming more important than ever.

Physical play is more than just pastime. It's how kids build their physical, cognitive and emotional selves. In a city where concrete has replaced open fields, indoor play zones like Playard and others offer a cosseted lifeline.

I think of a colleague who noticed her three-year-old's nightly tantrums melt away after weeks of guided play. Better sleep. Fewer screen-time battles. A child less agitated, more engaged. I've witnessed similar stories in my classroom: fidgety bodies that relaxed

after a weekend of climbing and jumping; anxious kids who learned to take risks because they finally had a safe space to fall and get back up.

When kids climb, jump, or even balance on a beam, their bones strengthen, their muscles develop, and their nervous systems learn to regulate themselves. Every wobble teaches them where their bodies end and the world begins. And yes, it even boosts immunity. Movement works wonders on the lymphatic system. Studies show that moderate activity

increases circulating immune cells like lymphocytes and natural killer cells, a little-known fact that becomes obvious when a child starts to fall ill less after months of active play.

One boy, six years old, used to cling to screens like a lifebuoy. At school, he stayed quiet, withdrawn until his parents took him to a play zone regularly. Slowly, he tried the climbing wall. A few weeks later, he was raising his hand in class. His handwriting improved. His confidence grew.

We can't change Dhaka overnight.

But we can give kids the room their bodies and brains are crying out for. Find time to take them somewhere they can jump, run and fall. It's small, intentional, and profoundly necessary to have a space where kids learn by doing, grow by trying, and discover that joy can be physical, not just pixelated.

Sadia Islam, primary school teacher and mother of two tiny hurricanes, writes about education, raising kids and surviving chaos.



PHOTOS: PALASH KHAN



Imran–Nancy's new song to pay tribute to Andrew Kishore

Imran Mahmudul and Nazmun Munira Nancy have reunited for a playback duet. Under the banner of Anupam Music, the two have lent their voices to a new track titled *Ami Pathore Phool Fotobo 2.0*.

Originally featured in the 1997 film *Shesh Thikana, Ami Pathore Phool Fotobo* gained timeless popularity through Andrew Kishore's vocals, lyrics by Milton Khondokar, and music composed by Alam Khan. In the new version, the first two lines of the original have been used as a bridge, which inspired the title *Ami Pathore Phool Fotobo 2.0*.

Imran did the new arrangement, while Ahmed Rizvi wrote the lyrics. Recording for the song was recently completed at Imran's studio.

The upcoming music video will also be a grand production. Director Soikat Reza will shoot the video in Malaysia. Although the shoot is planned for next month, the casting will be finalised beforehand. If all goes well, *Ami Pathore Phool Fotobo 2.0* will be released on Anupam Music's YouTube channel at the very beginning of the New Year.

SUSHANTA GHOSH

A two-day group art exhibition featuring works inspired by poet Jibanananda Das' depiction of nature concluded in Dhaka on Sunday evening. The show, showcasing paintings by 28 artists, was held at the Land Gallery in Lalmatia.

The exhibition was inaugurated on Saturday by eminent artist Shahid Kabir. Artist Abdul Mannan, artist Dr Kazi Mozammel Hossain were presented as chief guests, and Moinuddin Khaled and Shamsul Alam Azad were also presented as special guests at the opening ceremony.

The paintings—created in watercolour, acrylic, and mixed media—portrayed various elements found in Jibanananda's poetry and nature imagery. Motifs such as the Dhanshiri river, the 'chalta flower', 'bhorer doyel pakhi', owls, ducks, dinghy boats, and verses from his poems featured prominently across the works. A total of 33 paintings by 28 artists were displayed.

Artist Abdul Mannan, one of the participants, said Jibanananda's poems capture the timeless beauty of rural Bengal. "That eternal landscape is what we tried to portray in this exhibition," he added.



PHOTO: STAR

Several artists painted their own interpretations of the Dhanshiri River. Artist Tapas Karmakar noted, "The poet wrote, 'I will come back again to the Dhanshiri's bank.' That longing makes me depict this river."

The exhibition was organised by Charukola Barishal. Its coordinator, Sushanta Ghosh, said the show will later travel to Barishal. "Seventy-one years after the poet's passing, this exhibition stands as our tribute to him," he said.

In his inaugural speech, artist Shahid Kabir said, "The nature that Jibanananda brought to life through

his poems has been reimagined here by painters in their own colours and forms. This is our homage to the poet." He added, "No destructive force can diminish the creative spirit of Bengal."

Another chief guest, artist Kazi Mozammel Hossain, said the exhibition not only expresses the artists' admiration for Jibanananda Das but also brings forth the everlasting beauty of Bengal's nature on canvas.

Eminent artist Chinmaye Sikder said artists paid their respects to Jibanananda Das.

The pink-uniformed army is returning to screens in an American adaptation. Following Cate Blanchett's cameo in the final season of *Squid Game*, David Fincher's western version is moving forward, with filming reportedly beginning in February 2026.

The new series titled *Squid Game: America* will be disconnected from the original Korean series. The cast remains undisclosed, including whether Blanchett will reprise her recruiter role. Fincher is known for thrillers like *Gone Girl*, *Zodiac*, and *Fight Club*. The original creator Hwang Dong-hyuk confirmed the American version's existence. The American version is projected for release in February 2028.

Since its 2021 debut, *Squid Game* became a streaming phenomenon, spawning seasons 2 and 3, and reality show *Squid Game: The Challenge*.



'Squid Game: America': David Fincher's project set to begin filming

NEWS

Ex-OC Pradeep was mastermind

FROM PAGE 16

file appeals with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court within 30 days, challenging the HC verdict.

On June 2 this year, the HC bench delivered the verdict after hearing the death reference (trial court documents) and the appeals filed by the convicts challenging the trial court judgement.

In the judgement, the HC upheld the death sentences for Pradeep and Lajpat to death as well as the life imprisonment for six others handed down by the trial court in the same case.

The six are ex-SL Nanda Dulal Rakshit, former constables Sagar Deb and Rubel Sharma, and police informants Md Nezamuddin, Md Nurul Amin, and Md Ayaz Uddin. All eight convicts are in jail.

According to the HC verdict, Sinha arrived in Cox's Bazar on July 2, 2020, with his associates Sahedul Islam Sifat,

Shipra Debnath, and Rupi to film scenic footage of hills, forests, and sea beaches for his YouTube channel "Just Go".

On July 7, 2020, they moved into Nilima Resort and travelled around Cox's Bazar, Teknaf, and Ramu to record videos. During this time, they learnt from locals about various illegal activities of then OC Pradeep and some of his subordinates, including extortion, enforced disappearances, and "crossfire" killings.

When Pradeep learnt this through his informants, he threatened Sinha in mid July 2020 and instructed him to stop such activities and leave the area.

Despite this threat, Sinha continued his work. Thereafter, Pradeep, along with Nanda Dulal, Sagar, Nurul, Ayaz, and Nezamuddin, conspired to kill Sinha.

The HC verdict said these actions are corroborated by multiple confessions, witness testimony, phone records, and the autopsy report.

Polling time, booths likely to increase

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announce the election schedule will be fixed within two to three days.

The EC had earlier said it plans to announce the schedule in the first week of December.

Masud said the EC may need to increase the number of polling booths in the upcoming election. "If possible, voting hours may also be extended so voters have more time to cast their referendum ballots," he said.

National elections typically run from 8:00am to 4:00pm without a break. The starting time may be brought forward in the upcoming polls, officials said.

For the election planned for February, the EC has designated 42,761 polling centres and 244,739 booths

nationwide -- one centre for every 3,000 voters, with one booth for every 500 male voters and 400 female voters.

Officials said these calculations were made only for the parliamentary election. If both votes are held together, the number of booths will need to rise, even if the number of centres remains unchanged, since casting two ballots will take longer.

Some commissioners also suggested deploying more polling officials to ease the ballot count.

Usually, the EC appoints one presiding officer for each centre, one assistant presiding officer, and two polling officials for each booth. These officials are also responsible for counting the votes.

Masud also said the commission

must first be legally empowered to conduct the referendum.

An ordinance must be enacted before the July charter referendum can take place, and it will be ready within three to four working days, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul said at a press briefing in Dhaka on November 20.

Bangladesh has held three referendums so far. Those in 1977 and 1985 were widely seen as attempts to legitimise the military regimes of Ziaur Rahman and HM Ershad, while the 1991 referendum marked the country's return to parliamentary democracy.

The first two referendums were held under the Referendum Orders of 1977 and 1985, and the third under the Referendum Act of 1991.

of democracy.

"Unfortunately, there's no agreement on one effective solution, but it's clear that we need a multi-prong approach, including legal measures and media interventions such as fact-checking and increased accountability," she said.

Nurul Kabir, editor of the New Age, said disinformation existed in the past, but technology has amplified its reach to an unprecedented scale, making fact-checking even more challenging for the media.

There are suggestions that newsrooms employ dedicated fact-checkers, he said, but ultimately, "every professional journalist should be a fact-checker", he added.

Three hurt in attack

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Commissioner's office premises, demanded exemplary punishment for Abul Sarkar.

At one stage, members of Touhid Janata chased Sarkar's followers and beat them up with sticks and hurled brick chips. Some of the victims jumped into the waterbody beside the stadium out of fear, the police official said, adding that law enforcers later rescued them and took them to Sadar Hospital for treatment.

No case was filed over the incident or the filing of this report around 10:00pm.

Meanwhile, the Communist Party of Bangladesh and National Citizen Party strongly condemned the violence and expressed deep outrage over the ongoing attacks, arrests and persecution of bauls, Sufis and members of other minorities.

CPB, in a statement signed by its President Kazi Sazzad Zahir Chandan and General Secretary Abdullah Kafi Ratan, accused the interim government of using police to support such attackers.

It said the government has neglected its commitment to creating a non-communal and equitable Bangladesh; it instead is backing far-right forces and pushing the country toward a crisis.

The party called upon the public to support the oppressed baul-fakir community.

In its statement, NCP said there might be differences in opinions and



PHOTO: STAR
A baul supporter rescued by police after being attacked yesterday.

ideologies, but such violence is in no way acceptable. "In the cultural and spiritual tradition of Bangladesh, the bauls, fakirs and Sufis have significant contribution, and it is our responsibility to preserve and protect this tradition."

It demanded a probe into the attacks and that those responsible be brought to book.

Earlier, Udichi Shilpigoshthi, in a statement issued last night, strongly protested the arrest of renowned baul Abul Sarkar and the attack on his supporters.

In the statement, Udichi's acting president Mahmud Selim and its general secretary Amit Ranjan Dey said that such persecution of bauls, who are bearers of Bengal's long-standing non-communal spirit, is completely unacceptable.

Admin must be under our control

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when Shahjahan made the remarks.

The video of the speech went viral on social media yesterday.

Shahjahan said, "If the ameer of Jamaat were here, I would say that elections can't be won only with people, the administration must be brought under our control ... I'm talking about each constituency ... Those in the administration must all be under us. They must stand up and sit down at our command. They will make arrests at our command and file cases at our command ..."

"In each of your constituencies, primary school teachers must speak for the daripalla [scale] symbol [Jamaat's election symbol]. All teachers of higher secondary schools must speak for the daripalla ..."

Addressing a local leader of Fatikchhari, he said, "Police must follow you. The OC [officer in charge] must know your schedule in the morning and provide you with protocol."

Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami in a statement issued yesterday said the party is taking organisational measures regarding the "controversial" comments made by Shahjahan Chowdhury.

In the statement, sent by the central publicity wing, Jamaat's Assistant Secretary General and Chattogram region director Mawlawi Muhamed Shahjahan said, "We have seen [the video of] the remarks. These are entirely his [Shahjahan Chowdhury's] own comments. He can best explain them. Jamaat does not endorse his remarks. We have immediately drawn his attention to the matter. We are also taking our own internal measures regarding this incident."

"We believe the administration will carry out its duties with full professionalism. There is no scope for our intervention here. In the past, those in the administration who failed to act professionally have caused harm to the country."

'You too can be made an accused'

FROM PAGE 16

involved in the killings of "around 1,000 people" and dumped many bodies in the Buriganga river after cutting open their abdomens.

"He is a daring man," Tajul told the court.

Nazneen raised a series of accusations against the investigators.

She alleged that the questioning of her client was unlawfully video-recorded and that she was given access only during lunch breaks, after which she was once again denied access during the interrogation.

She also alleged that Nabila Idris, a member of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances (CIED), interrogated Ziaul in violation of the ITC.

Tajul rejected the claims as "blatant lies and fallacious," prompting the tribunal chairman to advise the prosecutor to remain calm.

Tajul insisted that Nabila was legally permitted to be present as a member of CIED's fact-finding committee and that video recording was necessary "so that no one can falsely claim maltreatment."

When Nazneen moved a petition seeking a directive to ensure that she is informed and allowed during any future interrogation, Tajul argued it should be dismissed outright, saying the application lacked any citation of relevant legal provisions.

He also claimed that Nazneen is a family member of Ziaul and she was creating a lot of problems. Tajul added that the prosecution would appeal to bar her from representing him.

Earlier, Nazneen requested the tribunal's directive to ask the jail authorities to allow her to obtain Ziaul's signature to appoint a foreign lawyer in the ongoing cases. Tajul objected, arguing that any such move required Bar Council approval.

As Nazneen said that the jail authorities had refused to give her access to get the signature, Tajul said, "You always shout. You behave badly."

Nazneen shot back, "You are talking inappropriately".

Justice Mortuza again stepped in and said, "Do not get angry".

About Nazneen's petition to bring in a foreign lawyer to fight the case, the tribunal said she is allowed to do so as long as she follows the required legal process.

Nazneen also sought a court order requiring authorities to provide call records and SMS logs from two phone numbers used by Ziaul.

PIU Office of the Manikganj Pourashava District: Manikganj.

Memo No.: MPS/Eng.2025-1719

Date: 23.11.2025

e-Tender Notice-02/2025-2026(OTM)

e-Tenders are invited in e-GP system Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, Procuring Entity (PE), PIU Office of Manikganj Pourashava, District: Manikganj for the procurement of:

SL. No.	Package No	Name of Works	e-Tender ID No.	Date of Tender Scheduled Published	Last date of selling	Last date of receiving
01.	LGCRP/Manikganj/2 025-26/W-10	(a) Upgrading of Uni-Block Paver Road starting from Shohid Titumir academy to east side Khal near Jalkhola bridge via Makka Store (ch. 00-560m), ward no-06. (b) Construction of RCC Drain starting from Shohid Titumir academy to east side Khal near Jalkhola bridge via Makka Store (Ch. 00-560m), Ward No. 06.	1181862	27-Nov-2025 till 10:00 AM	10-Dec-2025 till 5:00 PM	11-Dec-2025 till 02:00 PM

This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted to submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for down loading the e-Tender documents from the national e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registers banks branch up to **11/12/2025 till 1.00 PM**. Further information and guidelines available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


(Md. Shahadat Hossain)
Executive Engineer & (PE, TOC/POC, TEC/PEC)
Manikganj Pourashava, District: Manikganj.

GD-2528

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ মহানগর সিনিয়র স্পেশাল জেজ কোর্ট, ঢাকা।

উপর্যুক্ত- জনাব মোঃ সাকিব ফয়েজ
মহানগর সিনিয়র স্পেশাল জেজ, ঢাকা।

পারমিশন পিটিশন নং-১১২১/২০২৫

রাষ্ট্র-
দরখাস্তকারী
বনাম
প্রতিপক্ষরংধনু একাপের চেয়ারম্যান রফিকুল ইসলাম গং-
আদেশ নং-০১, তারিখ-০৫/১১/২০২৫ স্বীকৃত।

মামলার তদন্তকারী কর্মসূচী জনাব মহেন্দোয়াই মারমা, বিপি- ৮৩১২১৪৭৭৮০, অতিরিক্ত বিশেষ পুলিশ সুপার, ফাইন্যান্সিয়াল ড্রাইভ, অর্ণাইজড ড্রাইভ, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, সিআইডি, ঢাকা এক দরখাস্তমূলে বর্ণিত কারণে গুলশান (ডিএমপি) থানার মামলা নং-১৪, তারিখ: ০৭/০৮/২৫ থি: ধারা ২০১২ সালের মানিলভারিং প্রতিরোধ আইনের ৮(২)(৪)। দাখিল করে নিবেদন করেন যে, দরখাস্তে বর্ণিত মামলাটির তদন্তভাবে তার উপর অর্পণ করা যায়। বর্ণিত মামলাটি তদন্তকালে জানা যায়, রফিকুল ইসলাম এবং তার পরিবারের সদস্যরা ২০০,০০০ (দুই লক্ষ) ডলার পাচারের মাধ্যমে এন্টিগো এবং বারুড়ুরা নাগরিকত্ব এবং করেছে। রফিকুল ইসলামের এন্টিগো এবং বারুড়ুরা পাসপোর্ট নম্বর AB084885। তার স্বার্থ সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান পুলিশ অফিসার বহুমুখী সমিতি এর নিকট বিক্রয়কৃত জমির মধ্যে ৬,৩০,০০০/- একের জমি ৫,৭৩,৬০,০০০/- (পাঁচ কোটি তিহাতের লক্ষ ঘাটা হাজার) টাকায় বসুকরা প্রক্রিয়া প্রয়েস্ট ইস্ট ওয়েস্ট প্রোপার্টি লি: এর নিকট পুনরায় বিক্রয় করে। জাল-জালিয়াতির মাধ্যমে বিভিন্ন ব্যক্তি হতে ৮৭০ কোটি খণ্ড গ্রহণ করে পরিশোধ না করে প্রতারনামূলকভাবে আতঙ্গাং করে। খণ্ড গ্রহণ করে পরিশোধ না করে প্রতারনামূলকভাবে আতঙ্গাং করে। তদন্তকালে রফিকুল ইসলাম এবং তার স্বার্থ সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যক্তি প্রতিষ্ঠানের নামে নিম্নোবর্তী সম্পত্তির মালিকানা সংক্রান্ত তথ্য প্রাপ্ত্য যায়। বিশুল্প সোর্স ও বিভিন্ন তথ্য মোতাবেক আশুকা করা যাচ্ছে যে, রফিকুল ইসলাম এবং তার স্বার্থ সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যক্তি প্রতিষ্ঠানের নামে থাকা ছাবর সম্পত্তি অন্যত্র বিক্রয় কিংবা হস্তান্তর করার চেষ্টা করেছে। এডিশনাল ইলেক্ট্রনিক জেনারেলের কার্যালয়, সিআইডি, ঢাকা এর স্মারক নং- সিআই/ফাইন্যান্সিয়াল ড্রাইভ/অভ্যন্তরীণ/যাচাই-বাচাই/৮৫-২০২৪/২৫৪৭; তারিখ ০৮/০৭/২০২৫ স্বীকৃত জেনারেল উর্ধ্বতন কর্তৃপক্ষ সন্দেহভাজন ব্যক্তি প্রতিরোধ আইন ২০১২ এর ২(শ)(৫)(৬)(১৪) ধারা মতে প্রতারনা, জালিয়াতি এবং অর্থ পাচার সম্পত্তি অপরাধ। যা একই আইনের ২(ক) ধারা অনুযায়ী অর্থ বা সম্পত্তি পাচার ও ২(ফ)(আ) ধারা অনুযায়ী মানিলভারিং এর পর্যায়ভূক্ত। মামলাটি সুষ্ঠু তদন্তে স্বার্থে অভিযোগ ব্যক্তি ও প্রতিষ্ঠানের নামে থাকা নিম্নোবর্তী সম্পত্তি যাতে হস্তান্তর, কর্পোরেশন প্রতিবেদন করেন না পারে সে জন্য মানিলভারিং প্রতিবেদন আইন, ২০১২ (সংশোধনী ২০১৫) এর ১৪ ধারার বিধান সাপেক্ষে বর্তিত সম্পত্তি ক্রোক (Attach) করা হলো এবং মানিলভারিং প্রতিবেদন আইন, ২০১২ (সংশোধনী ২০১৫) এর ২১ ধারার বিধান অনুযায়ী নিম্নোবর্তী তফসিল ভূক্ত সম্পত্তি সমূহ রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ এর জন্য অতিরিক্ত মানিলভারিং পরিদর্শক, সিআইডি, মালিবাগ, ঢাকাকে তদন্তব্যক করে হাজার হাজার সম্পত্তি ব্যবস্থাপনা বা তদন্তকারীর জন্য তত্ত্বাবধায়ক (Receiver) নিয়োগ করার প্রার্থনা করেন। রাষ্ট্র পক্ষের বিজ্ঞ অতিরিক্ত পিপি দরখাস্তটি Seen করেছেন।

বিজ্ঞ অতিরিক্ত পিপি'র বক্তব্য শোনা হলো। দাখিলী কাগজপত্রসহ দরখাস্ত পর্যালোচনা করা হলো। মামলাটি সুষ্ঠু তদন্তে স্বার্থে দরখাস্তখনা মঙ্গলব্যোগ্য বিবেচিত হওয়ায় উহা মঙ্গল করা হলো। মানিলভারিং প্রতিরোধ আইন ২০১২ (সংশোধনী ২০১৫) এর ১৪ ধারার বিধান মতে নিম্নোবর্তী সম্পত্তি ক্রোক (Attach) করা হলো এবং মানিলভারিং প্রতিরোধ আইন, ২০১২ (সংশোধনী ২০১৫) এর ২১ ধারার বিধান অনুযায়ী নিম্নোবর্তী তফসিল ভূক্ত সম্পত্তি সমূহ রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ এর জন্য অতিরিক্ত মানিলভারিং পরিদর্শক, সিআইডি, মালিবাগ, ঢাকাকে তদন্তব্যক করে হাজার হাজার সম্পত্তি ব্যবস্থাপনা বা তদন্তকারীর জন্য তত্ত্বাবধায়ক (Receiver) নিয়োগ করার আহ্বান আন্তর্ভুক্ত।

মানিলভারিং প্রতিরোধ আইন ২০১২ (সংশোধনী ২০১৫) এর ১৪(৩) বিধি মোতাবেক ক্রোক (Attach) কৃত সম্পত্তির আদেশ সরকারী গেজেজে প্রকাশের জন্য ১টি বহুল প্রচারিত জাতীয় পত্রিকায় ০১ (এক) টি বাংলা ও ০১ (এক) টি ইংরেজী। বিজ্ঞ প্রতিক্রিয়া করার প্রচারণ করার প্রয়োজন হল এবং তত্ত্বাবধায়ক (Receiver) নিয়োগ করার প্রয়োজন।

বিজ্ঞ অতিরিক্ত পিপি'র বক্তব্য শোনা হলো। দাখিলী কাগজপত্রসহ দরখাস্ত পর্যালোচনা করা হলো।

০১। রফিকুল ইসলামের নামে থাকা বসুকরা আবাসিক এলাকার বসুকরা এভিনিউ রোড, "এ" ব্লকের ১২/ই ও ১২/ডি প্লটে ০.১৬৫০ একের জমি যার দলিল নং ১৮৫০, তারিখ: ২০/০২/২০১৭ ইং, দলিল মূল্য: ১৩,১৫,০০,০০০/- (তের কোটি পনের লক্ষ) ঢাকা।

০২। রফিকুল ইসলামের নামে থাকা বসুকরা আবাসিক এলাকার রোড নং ১১, "আই" ব্লকের ৮৮৮/বি প্লটে ০.৩৮০৮ নং একের জমি যার দলিল নং ৩৪৩৪, তারিখ: ১৩/০৩/২০১৭ খ্রিঃ, দলিল মূল্য: ৩,৬৪,৬৬,০০০/- (তিনি কোটি চৌষট্টি লক্ষ ছেষয়েটি হাজার)।

০৩। রফিকুল ইসলামের জ্বা মোসাঘ জেজেবে বেগমের নামে থাকা বসুকরা আবাসিক এলাকার রোড নং ১১, "আই" ব্লকের ৮৮৮/বি প্লটে ০.৩৬০৫ একের জমি যার দলিল নং ৩৪৩৪, তারিখ: ২৯/১১/২০২১ খ্রিঃ, দলিল মূল্য: ১,৩১,০০,০০০/- (এক কোটি একশিশ লক্ষ)।

০৪। রফিকুল ইসলামের জ্বা মোসাঘ জেজেবে বেগমের নামে থাকা বসুকরা আবাসিক এলাকার রোড নং ১১, "আই" ব্লকের ৮৮৮/বি প্লটে ০.৩৬০৫ একের জমি যার দলিল নং ৩৪৩৪, তারিখ: ০৫/১২/২০২১ খ্রিঃ, দলিল মূল্য: ১,৩১,০০,০০০/- (এক কোটি একশিশ লক্ষ)।

০৫। ৩০০ ফুট রাস্তা সংলগ্ন "জোয়ার সাহারা" মৌজায় রফিকুল ইসলামের ছেলে মেহেদী হাসান দিপু ও কাউসার আহমদ অপু এর নামে থাকা ০.৬৩০৫ একের জমি যার দলিল নং ১৯৫৯, ১৯৬০ তারিখ: ২৬/০২/২০১৭ খ্রিঃ, দলিল মূল্য: ৫,৪০,০০,০০০/- (পাঁচ কোটি চাঁচিশ লক্ষ টাকা)। (৩০০ ফুট রাস্তা সংলগ্ন নেতৃত্বে হেডকোর্টার্স এর রাস্তায় নাসা গ্রুপের মালিকানাধীন জমির পাশে)।

০৬। রফিকুল ইসলামের ভাই মিজানুর রহমান নামে থাকা বসুকরা আবাসিক এলাকার রোড নং ২১, হাউজ নং ৭৯৯ "জি" ব্লকের ৭৯৯ নং প্লটে ০.৪৯৫ একের জমি যার দলিল মূল্য: ১,৮০,১৮,০০০/- (এক কোটি আশি লক্ষ আঠার হাজার)। [আনোয়ারা ভিলা]

এই আদেশ সরকারি গেজেজে প্রকাশসহ বহুল প্রচারিত দেনিক আমদার দেশ এবং The daily Star. পত্রিকায় প্রচারণ দেওয়া গেল।

Sd/-

(মোঃ সাকিব ফয়েজ)

মহানগর সিনিয়র স্পেশাল জেজ, ঢাকা

তারিখ: ১২/১/২৫

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Two custodial deaths in a single day!

Govt must ensure safety of detainees, punish errant police officers

It is deeply disturbing that two men died in the custody of the Detective Branch (DB) of police on Friday in two separate incidents. In both cases, the families of the deceased have alleged that they were tortured to death. It is quite telling that what was quite common during the tenure of an authoritarian regime is still occurring, suggesting that the old, repressive practices of custodial torture have very much remained in place. Just imagine, there have been 45 custodial deaths in the country between August 2024 and October 2025, as per data from Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK).

In one of the cases cited above, 40-year-old Moktar Hossain was arrested in connection with the killing of a Jubo Dal leader in Pallabi, Dhaka. A report by this daily says that DB officers raided a location to arrest him on Thursday. Police claimed that Moktar tried to flee and was caught and beaten by local residents. They further claimed Moktar fell ill at around 1:30am on Friday and was then taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for treatment before being discharged and returned to custody. At around 10am, officers said they found him unresponsive when they called him to eat and took him back to DMCH, where he was declared dead. Was he really well enough after treatment to be taken back to the DB office? What happened between the time he was returned to custody and the time he was found unresponsive?

The same day, another suspect in a murder case, Md Shahadat Hossain—an auto rickshaw driver who was arrested the day before—"fell ill" and died at the Sirajganj General Hospital. Shahadat's brother has alleged he was beaten to death while in custody, and that the police had demanded Tk 5 lakh for his release.

We may recall that in late January this year, the chief adviser strongly condemned any form of custodial torture and extrajudicial killing, ordering an urgent investigation into the death of Jubo Dal leader Tohidul Islam who died after being arrested by the joint forces. Yet despite the chief adviser's condemnation, custodial torture and deaths have continued. The Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, 2013 remains a law on paper only. So far, perpetrators have been punished in only one case of custodial death, that too back in 2020.

Reportedly, the government has finalised a draft ordinance to form an independent police commission. This aims to ensure accountability within the force and to make it fair, transparent, and free from politicisation. The commission would investigate citizens' complaints against police members and take necessary action. But will it also monitor police actions when a suspect is detained or interrogated? This must be part of any meaningful police reform. Until the commission is formed, it remains the responsibility of those in charge to ensure the safety of anyone held in custody, regardless of what crime they are accused of. We expect fair probes into these deaths, with the responsible officers brought to book.

A looming disaster in Chattogram

Quake resilience of buildings must be ensured

The latest revelations about Chattogram's earthquake vulnerability should alarm city authorities and policymakers alike. While the city's location makes it vulnerable to severe earthquakes, unplanned urbanisation, widespread building code violations, and years of weak monitoring and regulatory negligence have added to the risks. Experts warn that at least 70 percent of the city's multi-storey buildings could collapse if a major quake of magnitude 7 or higher strikes. Last Friday's 5.7-magnitude tremor, during which a previously tilted six-storey building in Mansurabad leaned further towards a neighbouring structure, clearly showed how precarious the situation has become.

Rapid and unplanned growth has turned Chattogram city into a concrete jungle where safety is often ignored. According to the Chattogram Development Authority (CDA), the city has around 4.11 lakh buildings of varying heights, and many taller structures were built in violation of building codes. In coastal areas like Chattogram, building materials deteriorate faster, while narrow roads would make rescue operations extremely difficult during an earthquake. Oversight is also weak, and many buildings are constructed without proper expert supervision. Additionally, unchecked groundwater extraction has weakened the soil beneath the high-rises. If these issues persist, a strong earthquake could cause large-scale damage and casualties.

However, the lack of preparedness among city authorities is deeply worrying. Reportedly, many buildings, which were damaged and tilted during previous earthquakes, still stand today. CDA says that it can only identify unsafe buildings and that demolition work falls under the Chattogram City Corporation (CCC). If so, why has the CCC not demolished these risky buildings yet? This reflects poor coordination among city authorities. CDA's lack of structural and design cell and severe manpower shortages worsen the problem.

To reduce earthquake risks in Chattogram, authorities must take immediate and coordinated action. CDA needs to increase its manpower to properly monitor construction practices and stop irregularities. Vulnerable buildings should be identified and strengthened using modern retrofitting methods, while very old and unsafe structures should be demolished without delay. Residents must follow building codes strictly when constructing new buildings. Additionally, groundwater extraction should be reduced to protect the soil's stability. Government agencies must also enforce building-code compliance and ensure that new structures include proper emergency entry and exit routes. While building fully earthquake-proof structures may be costly, making them earthquake-tolerant can significantly reduce casualties in future disasters.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Tazreen fire kills workers



On this day in 2022, a blaze killed at least 117 workers and injured more than 150 workers at Tazreen Fashion, located in Nishchintipur of Ashulia.

EDITORIAL

Human rights abuses persist under interim government



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KALLOL MUSTAFA

There was widespread hope that, after the mass uprising, Bangladesh would finally see an end to extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, unlawful detention, and other serious human rights violations. The interim government set up a commission to investigate cases of enforced disappearance—a long awaited step. Sadly, despite this gesture, extrajudicial killings, custodial deaths, mob violence and other forms of abuse have continued during its tenure. This is deeply disappointing.

According to human rights group Odhikar, 40 people have been victims of extrajudicial killings in the 14 months since the interim government assumed responsibility. Among them, 19 were shot dead, 14 died due to torture, and seven were beaten to death. Allegations have surfaced implicating the police, joint forces, and the army. What is particularly noteworthy is that, although the interim government has initiated investigations into enforced disappearances, no comparable initiative has been taken to investigate or prosecute extrajudicial killings and so-called "crossfires."

The persistence of such killings under the interim government demonstrates that little has changed within the country's law-enforcement agencies beyond the reshuffling of individuals. Without structural reform of the police, intelligence bodies, and other security forces, even basic human rights cannot be ensured. The UN Human Rights Office had recommended dissolving the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), restricting the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) to border protection duties, and limiting DGFI strictly to military intelligence. But the interim government changed only the uniform, not the institutions—and the result is visible in the continuing rights violations.

Although the interim government has repeatedly stated that it opposes mob violence, its actions have not reflected a serious commitment. According to the human rights organisation Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), 220 people were killed in mob violence between August 2024 and September 2025. Many of these incidents were driven by personal, group, or business interests. If the government had ensured swift prosecution and exemplary punishment of the perpetrators, it would have sent a strong message that mob justice would not be tolerated.

Instead, arrest rates remain extremely low.

Prothom Alo's investigation into 46 mob violence incidents that killed 67 people over 13 months shows how weak the enforcement response has been. Of the 46 incidents, cases were filed in 36, while no cases were filed in 10. In the incidents where cases were filed, there were over 9,000 accused, including unidentified individuals. Among these, 114 people were arrested in 27 cases, resulting in an arrest rate of just 1.27 per cent. Charge sheets have been

detaimees have died in custody.

Under the guise of KNF suppression, the military has imposed sweeping restrictions on the daily lives of the Bawm people. They require written permission from army camps to transport crops or travel outside the district. For example, according to an investigation by the Netra News, a Bawm resident from Paitong Para in Ruma upazila had to submit a formal, deferential written request to move 40 maunds of turmeric to market. Another resident needed military approval to travel to Dhaka for dental treatment.

By any measure, such blanket restrictions on civilians amount to serious violations of human rights and civil liberties. Collective punishment of an entire ethnic community is characteristic of occupying powers, not of a sovereign state's treatment of its own people. That such practices continue reflects the grim state of human rights in Bangladesh.

Mancha 71. Reporters Without Borders (RSF), in a statement issued on October 28, 2025, also condemned the arrests, including that of journalist Monjurul Alam (Panna), calling it evidence of the interim government's increasingly authoritarian tendencies.

Journalist Monjurul Alam was recently released on bail after spending more than two months in jail. Meanwhile, DB police, without a warrant, forcibly picked up a journalist and a businessman from their home late at night. Although the journalist was released after 10 hours, the incident once again revealed that law enforcement behaviour has not changed. In Sylhet, police detained 22 members of Socialist Party of Bangladesh (SPB) from the party's city office and another 16 activists of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) from various locations for protesting the eviction of battery-run rickshaws. The way Sylhet Metropolitan Police picked



FILE VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

submitted in only six cases.

Meanwhile, the military's crackdown on the Bawm ethnic community in Bandarban—initiated during the previous Awami League government under the pretext of suppressing the Kuki-Chin National Front (KNF)—has continued unabated under the interim government. Instead of targeting an armed group, the entire Bawm population appears to have been treated as collectively suspect, subjected to punitive restrictions.

According to Amnesty International, at least 126 Bawm civilians—including 30 women and children—were arrested without specific charges during April-May 2024 under the previous government. Over a year later, during the interim administration, some have obtained bail while others remain detained. Many are physically ill and psychologically distressed. Three Bawm

human rights violations during the interim regime have drawn international attention as well. Human Rights Watch (HRW) in a statement issued on October 8, 2025, accused that thousands had been arrested under the interim government, many on dubious murder allegations, while scores were being held under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009. Between August 2024 and October 2025, there have been 45 custodial deaths, as per ASK data.

Even two men died in police custody as recently as this Friday, with the families alleging torture in both cases. Many others also alleged mistreatment in custody, including lack of access to medical care. HRW specifically condemned the arrest of 16 individuals, including journalists and academics, who were detained under the anti-terrorism law on August 28 during a discussion organised by

up SPB and CPB activists relying merely on suspicion and invoking excuses such as "third-party instigation" and "creating instability" strongly echoes the repression tactics used by previous authoritarian governments to suppress dissent. In fact, throughout the interim government's tenure, police have often acted aggressively in suppressing protests by workers, teachers and other professional groups.

Taken together, the persistence of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, and human rights abuses shows that the expectations raised after the mass uprising have not been fulfilled. With elections approaching and only a few months left for the interim government, it remains to be seen whether any meaningful improvement will occur or whether this troubling continuity will become further entrenched.

Can the draft regulation make the microfinance sector stronger?



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NAFEV SAJED JOY

For many years, leading microfinance institutions (MFIs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been managed through their respective boards of directors. These boards, usually comprising five to ten members, have long operated with relative autonomy. However, the government is now preparing to introduce a new regulation requiring every medium and large MFIs to include two independent directors on their boards, which is a significant shift in the governance structure of the microfinance sector.

Although the inclusion of independent directors has long been common in banks and other financial institutions, this will be the first such initiative in this industry. The Microcredit Regulatory Authority (MRA), a government body under the Financial Institutions Division of the Ministry of Finance, has reportedly almost finalised the draft of this regulation. The proposed provision aims to enhance transparency, strengthen MRA's supervisory authority, and establish greater discipline in the sector.

According to the draft, only institutions with outstanding loan portfolios exceeding Tk 50 crore will be required to appoint independent

directors. It is estimated that about 100 institutions in Bangladesh will fall under this category. Each will propose four candidates, from which the MRA will approve two. To prevent conflicts of interest, close relatives of existing board members will not be eligible. Independent directors must be between 35 and 70 years old, possess at least 10 years of senior-level experience in a government or autonomous body, and preferably have a financial background. Furthermore, no individual may serve as an independent director in more than one MFI at a time.

While the MRA asserts that the initiative will promote good governance and help curb nepotism, critics warn that it could open the door to political influence and excessive control. Many fear a repeat of the bureaucratic culture and political appointments that have plagued state-owned banks, leading to weak governance and corruption. Associations within the microfinance sector argue that such regulation could undermine the independent, community-driven model that has made Bangladesh's microfinance system a global example of financial inclusion.

The MRA, however, has clarified that the process will remain institution-

driven: MFIs will nominate candidates, and the authority will ensure compliance and transparency. Alongside this move, the MRA has also proposed new requirements for appointing chief executive officers (CEOs) or executive directors. Institutions must obtain MRA approval within one month of appointing a new CEO, who must be between 40 and 65 years old, have at least 15 years of relevant experience, including five in a managerial role, and hold a postgraduate degree. The CEO's tenure will be five years, renewable upon reappointment.

While the government's goal is to enhance accountability, much will depend on effective implementation. The real challenge will be maintaining a balance where oversight is strengthened without compromising the sector's innovative and autonomous nature.

Across the world, microfinance institutions and similar organisations operate under governance frameworks that ensure both accountability and independence. Typically, boards include executive, non-executive, and independent members with no conflicts of interest. They oversee specialised committees—such as audit, risk, nomination, and remuneration committees—that monitor specific areas of operation. Clear rules define director appointments, tenure, age limits, and reappointments. Day-to-day operations are managed by a CEO or managing director (MD), who reports directly to the board. The clear separation between governance and oversight is a hallmark of strong institutions.

Most MFIs are also regulated by a central bank or financial regulator, which ensures licensing, financial reporting, and compliance. Comparative studies on MFIs in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Malaysia show that sustainability depends on strong internal audit mechanisms, competent boards, adherence to the rule of law, and independent oversight. These factors are now widely recognised as essential components of sound governance and long-term institutional stability.

In countries with more advanced financial systems, governance structures are even more detailed. The definition of independence is clearer, directors' tenure limits are set, and each committee must include at least one independent member. To promote transparency, institutions must disclose directors' qualifications, meeting attendance, and remuneration. In many organisations, the roles of CEO and board chair are deliberately separated to prevent concentration of power. Boards are also subject to regular performance evaluations, often conducted by external reviewers. Strong regulatory supervision and capital adequacy requirements further reinforce financial stability and public confidence.

Ultimately, Bangladesh's proposed reforms align with international best practices, but their success will depend on fair, consistent implementation. Genuine good governance will be achieved only when these reforms enhance transparency, accountability, and credibility, while preserving the independence and community-based spirit that have long made Bangladesh's microfinance sector a global model for inclusive finance.

What awaits Awami League after the Hasina verdict?

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ARIFUR RAHMAN

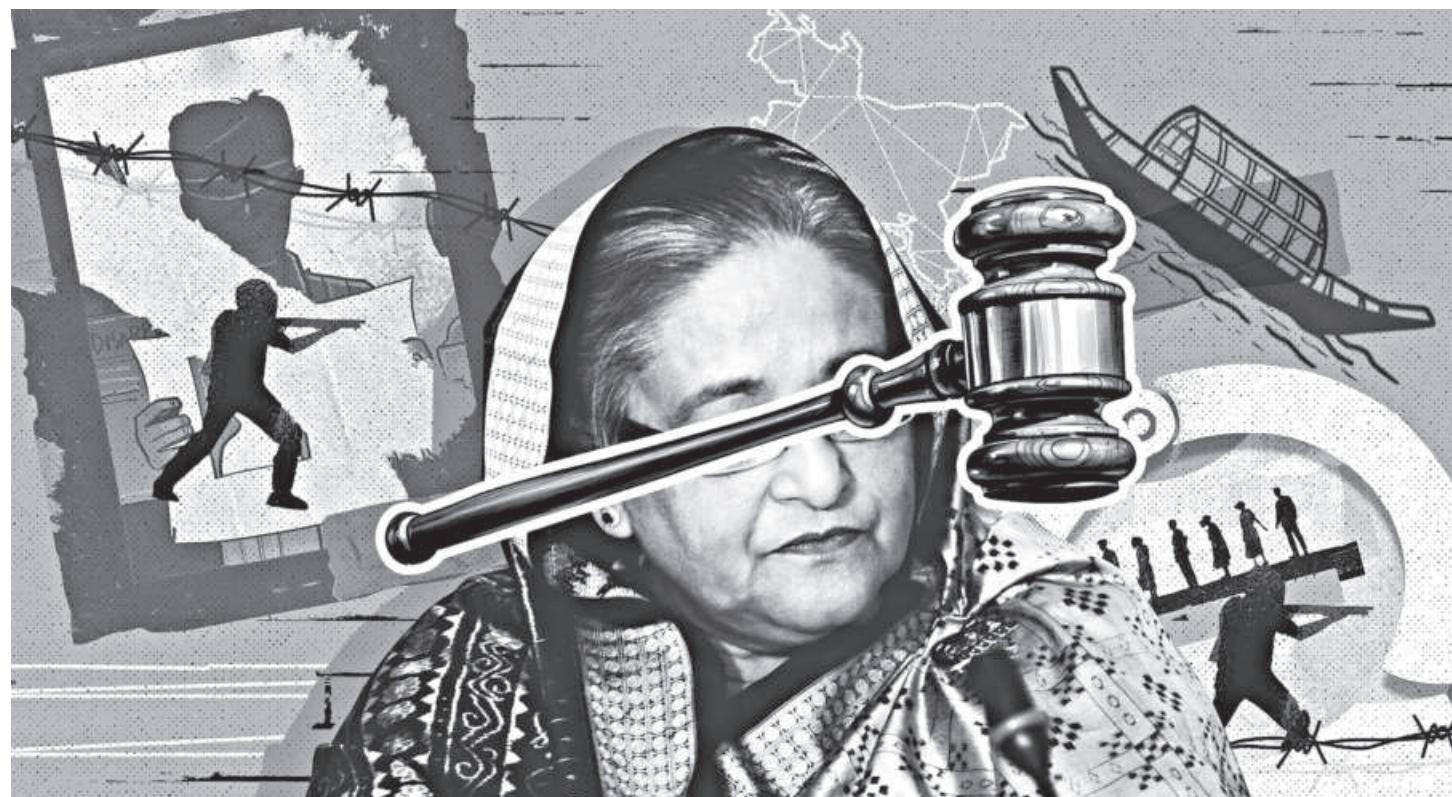
The verdict against Sheikh Hasina does not just condemn a former prime minister. It sentences an entire model of politics. The deeper question now is whether Awami League survives as a party, or only as a memory of fear and loyalty.

Awami League today is a textbook example of a personalist party. Scholars describe such parties as vehicles built around a single leader who controls nominations, finances, and coercive linkages between state and party far more than any committee does. In Bangladesh, party constitutions often speak of councils and presidiums, but in practice, the central working or executive committee has long revolved around one figure whose word can override procedure. When that figure is unseated, exiled, and now sentenced to death in absentia, three factors usually matter for the party's fate: its brand, its machine, and the violence in its past.

The Awami League brand is split in two: one layer is the liberation memory and the promise of secular nationalism, which still hold sway among many loyalists; another is the experience of authoritarian rule from 2009 to 2024, which ended in regime collapse following a mass uprising. This constitutes what political scientists call a brand crisis. Voters who once associated the party with independence and development now also associate it with enforced disappearances, digital surveillance, images of students shot in broad daylight, etc.

The machine, however, remains real. For more than a decade, Awami League reshaped local power structures by tying local government, law enforcement, business contracts, and even relief distribution to partisan loyalty. Even after the interim government banned party activities and suspended its registration under the Anti-Terrorism Act, those ties did not magically vanish. What we see instead is a scattered, weakened, but still-resilient network of former lawmakers, chairmen, contractors, and student enforcers—some in prison or on the run, others quietly negotiating their survival with the new authorities.

At the top level, exile has created a parallel command structure. Recent reporting shows that Hasina and senior leaders coordinate



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

shutdowns and protests from Kolkata, London, and other cities, using encrypted channels and sophisticated digital outreach that still engages supporters. This is not a dead party. It is a party stripped of legal recognition and territorial control but still armed with diaspora money, foreign connections, and an angry base. That combination can produce renewal, or catastrophe.

So, what are the realistic futures for Awami League without Hasina as a legal political actor inside Bangladesh?

The first scenario is fragmentation under new labels. Comparative research on authoritarian successor parties shows that even when a ruling party is banned, its cadres often reappear in new centrist or regional vehicles, especially where they still command local patronage and social capital.

The second scenario is negotiated rehabilitation without Hasina. After bans and trials, discredited parties are sometimes re-legalised on strict conditions: lustration of condemned leaders, truth-telling about past crimes, and broader constitutional changes making concentration of power more difficult. The ongoing restrictions on Awami League and its student wing carry built-in conditionality tied to the outcomes of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), which has now issued the harshest possible verdict against its central figure. If the tribunal or any other competent court moves towards a collective judgment on the party, one compromise available to future elected governments will be to distinguish between the organisation and its former leadership. Down that path, a post-Hasina Awami League would have to

coalition, one that comprises middle-ranking organisers and local notables who were never central to the security apparatus.

The third scenario is radicalisation in exile. The combination of a death sentence, an effective party ban, and frozen assets can produce a strong sense of victimhood. Diaspora networks can drift from lobbying and digital propaganda into funding or facilitating underground activities. Here lies a danger for Bangladesh—a slow erosion of the new institutions through constant attempts at sabotage, diplomatic pressure from sympathetic foreign patrons, and episodic violence by splinter groups that claim the Awami legacy but reject its secular connection. History offers many such examples, from armed offshoots of banned movements in Latin America to factions that turned to street

level militias after losing their constitutional space.

Which of these future scenarios unfolds depends less on Hasina herself and more on two other actors. The first is the interim and future elected governments, especially how they handle transitional justice. A process that looks like victor's justice will push many ordinary Awami supporters towards denial and resentment, making exile narratives of persecution more plausible. But a process that separates individual criminal responsibility from collective guilt, and offers lower-ranking activists a clear pathway back into civic life, will weaken the appeal of militancy.

The second actor is the generation that toppled Hasina. Young people who buried bullets in 2024 and then organised through new parties and civic platforms will determine whether Awami League remains a toxic brand for life or can be recycled as one competitive option in a pluralistic system. Research on political generations indicates that experiences in late adolescence can leave deep partisan imprints. For many of these young citizens, the word "Awami" now evokes memories of checkpoints, trolls, and mothers waiting outside morgues. To rebuild legitimacy, any successor formation will need to acknowledge this trauma publicly, not bury it beneath slogans about development and liberation.

A prudent approach, therefore, will be to avoid two temptations. One is to treat Hasina's death sentence as the final closing of a chapter and drive Awami League entirely out of politics; that path almost guarantees some form of underground politics and invites sympathetic foreign powers to use the exiled leadership as a bargaining chip. The other is to rehabilitate the party too quickly in the name of reconciliation without serious institutional reform, which would amount to inviting the same machine back under a fresh coat of paint.

Awami League without Sheikh Hasina should be neither sacred nor forbidden. It should be forced to become ordinary. That means full accountability for crimes committed under its rule, strict campaign-finance transparency, internal elections that actually matter, and a constitutional environment that prevents any party from monopolising power again. The networks that long sustained the party will not disappear, but they can be tamed by new rules and higher expectations from citizens.

If that happens, the future Awami League may resemble what it has not been for a long time: a fallible political party competing for votes, not a dynasty backed by a security apparatus. Sheikh Hasina's death sentence will still mark a key moment. But it may also become the point at which Bangladesh finally separates liberation memory from impunity and replaces fear with institutions.

Why Bangladesh can no longer ignore its earthquake risk

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SHAHRIA ALAM

Dhaka and Bangladesh's other densely populated cities stand exposed to alarming seismic hazards—an uncomfortable truth underscored by the magnitude 5.7 earthquake that rattled the nation on November 21, 2025. The quake, which killed at least 10 people and injured several hundred, exposed how fragile urban life is in cities where millions live in tightly packed buildings, many never designed for seismic forces. For me, who was born and raised in Dhaka with a childhood fear that a devastating earthquake could strike at any moment, the news felt deeply personal. That fear guided my career into earthquake engineering, but knowledge alone cannot safeguard our families and our cities. Bangladesh must urgently translate science into action.

Bangladesh lies atop an active tectonic boundary, where deforming plates and hidden faults create frequent moderate earthquakes that shake major cities several times each decade. Beneath Dhaka lies a thick layer of water-saturated deltaic soil, which amplifies shaking and increases the potential

for liquefaction (especially in reclaimed low-lying areas), causing buildings to tilt, sink, or collapse. However, the hazard is intensified not only by geology but also by urban reality. In many parts of Dhaka, buildings stand shoulder-to-shoulder, separated by only a few centimetres or none at all. This density creates a unique and dangerous seismic phenomenon: building pounding.

When two buildings stand extremely close together, they may sway differently during an earthquake. Without adequate separation gaps, they can slam or "pound" into each other. This can lead to catastrophic failures, including collapse of upper floors, shear failures in columns, falling facade elements or walls, and progressive collapse of an entire block of buildings. Dhaka, Chattogram, and Sylhet contain thousands of such high-risk adjacency conditions, especially in older neighbourhoods. The recent quake caused visible pounding cracks and dislodged masonry in several areas, clear warning signs of what a larger earthquake might bring.

Furthermore, many high-rise buildings

in Bangladesh feature unreinforced masonry infill walls (walls made of brick or concrete blocks without steel reinforcement) or decorative facade elements. These components, perfectly stable during normal conditions, can behave unpredictably during an earthquake: out-of-plane wall failures can eject large masonry panels onto streets, falling debris from parapets, balconies, and exterior tiles can kill or injure pedestrians, and heavy air-conditioning units and water tanks on building edges can topple during shaking. Most casualties in moderate earthquakes around the world come not from pancaked buildings but from these secondary, avoidable hazards. Dhaka's crowded sidewalks and narrow lanes make falling debris an especially lethal risk.

One straightforward action Bangladesh can take immediately before any major retrofit is to identify the most vulnerable buildings, especially those with unreinforced masonry, glass facades, or insufficient separation gaps. "Danger zones" should be mapped on the ground using paint or physical barriers, indicating where pedestrians should not stand or walk during or after shaking. Additionally, warning signage should be installed in front of identified buildings, and building owners should be required to remove or secure loose external elements. Several earthquake-prone countries, including Japan and Chile, implemented variations of these low-cost interventions to dramatically reduce casualties from falling debris.

The recent Dhaka earthquake revealed

how even moderate shaking can create chaos: thousands rushing down congested staircases, injuries from debris dislodged during tremors, traffic jams halting emergency access, and widespread panic among residents. If a moderate quake can cause this level of disturbance, imagine the level of devastation a major event could generate.

What is needed is a whole-of-society approach with the national government, city corporations and local governments, the private sectors, including real estate developers, media, NGOs, academics, experts, and communities. The national government must update and enforce seismic codes, retrofit schools and hospitals, modernise zoning regulations, establish advanced early-warning systems, and create and maintain city-level emergency operations centres.

Meanwhile, city authorities must conduct rapid seismic assessments and building tagging, identify pounding-prone building pairs and mandate separation or retrofitting, map sidewalk danger zones in front of vulnerable structures, and organise frequent emergency drills and enforce evacuation protocols. However, the private sector, too, must come forward and do the needful. Real estate developers must retrofit aging buildings and comply with seismic design codes, remove unanchored heavy elements from facades and rooftops, and invest in earthquake insurance schemes.

The role of media, NGOs, and communities in earthquake preparedness and resilience

building is equally important. Media and communities must train volunteers for emergency response, raise public awareness about safe evacuation and debris hazards, and ensure preparedness efforts include vulnerable and marginalised populations. In the meantime, academics must advance seismic risk mapping, conducting vulnerability studies, and retrofit solutions. They can advise government and non-government actors about technical foundations for safer reconstruction, and work with authorities to prioritise high-risk districts.

Bangladesh must pursue an actionable resilience strategy, including conducting vulnerability audits and mandated separation or structural retrofits, rapid tagging of buildings using colour codes (red/yellow/green), mandatory soil investigations for all new developments, retrofitting public structures and high-rise clusters, city-wide emergency management centres with trained staff and clear protocols, large-scale public education campaigns on earthquake safety, and cross-sector partnerships to monitor progress and enforce accountability.

Bangladesh is no stranger to natural disasters, but the threat posed by a future large earthquake, one striking at the heart of its megacities, is unlike any other challenge the country has faced. The science is clear. The risks are known. And the consequences of inaction could be catastrophic. If this latest earthquake teaches us anything, it is that the time for warnings has passed. The time for resilience has arrived.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Wild guess
- 5 Company division
- 10 Home run, in slang
- 12 Concerning
- 13 Chosen few
- 14 Relish
- 15 Feel poorly
- 16 Splash in drops
- 18 Be significant
- 20 Mine find
- 21 "Orinoco Flow" singer
- 23 Good times
- 24 Mint product
- 26 Baseball's Rose
- 28 Cargo amount
- 29 Weakens
- 31 Each and every

DOWN

- 32 Future cake
- 36 Serving aid
- 39 Hearty brew
- 40 Blender speed
- 41 Dodge
- 43 Moved cautiously
- 44 Easy runs
- 45 Judges
- 46 "Chicago" actor
- 1 Teakettle output
- 2 Shire of "Rocky"
- 3 Crooked
- 4 Track act
- 5 Epic tale
- 6 Touch on
- 7 Missed opportunities

8 Muse of music

9 Mail units

11 Bristles at

17 Be a snoop

19 Toe count

22 Duds

24 Conspire

25 Blow up

27 Id

28 Designated

30 Tad's dad

33 Grayish brown

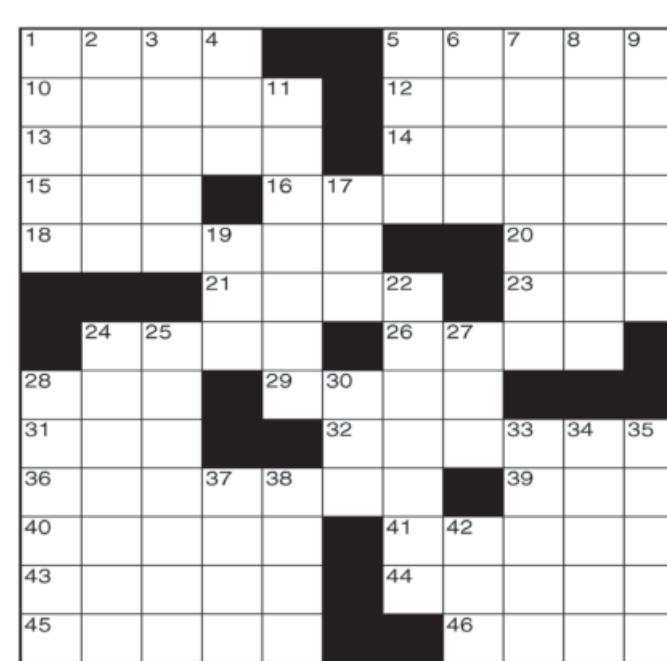
34 Tribal leader

35 Baseball's Pee Wee

37 Abound

38 Danson and Turner

42 Fireplace item



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH'S ANSWERS

G	A	R	G	L	E	S	P	A
I	B	E	R	I	A	T	R	I
S	E	X	I	S	T	R	O	D
M	A	S	H	U	P			
M	A	C	E			A	M	P
E	R	R				H	A	Y
T	O	O				S	E	E
E	M	P	L	O	Y	S	U	E
R	A	P	I	D		S	P	E
E	N	S	U	R	E			
M	A	D	E			T	A	V
B	L	U	R			A	M	E
A	L	P	S			H	A	N



BIRTH CENTENARY

Remembering MUNIER BHAI

SERAJUL ISLAM CHOUDHURY

Munier Chowdhury was, in many ways, a highly accomplished man. He was a teacher, a playwright, and an excellent public speaker. He could write beautifully as well. I knew him in two capacities—first as my teacher, and later as a colleague.

As a teacher, what was extraordinary about Munier Chowdhury was that he wasn't just a teacher to us—we used to call him *bhai*. We couldn't call any other teacher *bhai*, only Munier Chowdhury. The reason for this came from his own personality—he was extremely charismatic, sympathetic, and responsive. He was affectionate towards us, would call us close, and treat us with great warmth.

We did not have him as our teacher for long, because he eventually transferred from the English Department to the Bangla Department. Before that, in his early life, he had been involved with the Communist Party and had once been imprisoned for a short time in the 1950s. Later, during the 1952 Language Movement, he was arrested again.



Munier Chowdhury with his wife Lily Chowdhury, 1957.

COURTESY: ASIF MUNIER

would be delivered.

There, Munier Chowdhury gave a speech on Iqbal's socialist ideas. The way he beautifully presented the socialist concepts embedded in Iqbal's works, quoting from the texts—since he had done his Honours in Urdu at Aligarh, he knew Urdu—was remarkable. Whether he took the quotations directly from the Urdu texts or from English translations, he delivered the entire lecture in English.

When the event ended and he was leaving—he used to travel around on a bicycle—many people followed behind him, chatting with him. I too was walking behind. At one point, he said something that still rings in my ears. He told us that Dr W. H. Sadani, a professor of Urdu, had jokingly remarked to him, "I think you could turn Iqbal into a communist." To which Munier Chowdhury replied, "Yes, I certainly could!"

You see, Iqbal held strong socialist ideas while also remaining a believer in religion, as Munier Chowdhury observed. He wrote about social transformation, equality of rights, and themes that echoed various principles of Leninism. It was this intersection in Iqbal's thought that Munier Chowdhury chose to explore in his speech that day.

In that same year, 1950, the first art exhibition by the Art Group was held in Dhaka—at the time, it was not yet an institute but just the School of Art. They organised this exhibition at Liton Hall—part of Shahidullah Hall at Dhaka University.

I went to see it because we were curious about cultural events. I was in Class 9 or 10 at the time. Later, I heard Munier Chowdhury deliver a radio talk about the exhibition. The way he explained the paintings was so vivid and beautiful—I had seen those paintings myself—that it inspired me. Even at that young age, though I hardly understood everything, I wrote an article about the exhibition.

He was very enthusiastic about drama. He himself wrote plays—such as *Roktakto Prantor*—and he also translated works. For example, there's a short play by Bernard Shaw, *You Never Can Tell*; he translated it beautifully under the title *Keu Kichhu Bolte Pare Na*. He even acted in plays. That's why he had a very close relationship with the students.

One thing he always told me was that he found it easier to write if there was a challenge. In drama, there's always a conflict, and just like that, in his own writings, there was always a dramatic quality. He wrote by taking up challenges.

From that perspective, something happened: in 1956, we graduated, and by 1957, I became a lecturer. Towards the end

of 1957, our English Department organised a seminar titled "The Capacity of the Bengali Language for Economic and Political Questions" or something similar. Someone had claimed that the Bengali language was incapable of this. He took it as a challenge and gave an extraordinary speech—in English—on the subject. That dramatic sense of challenge was always in him.

Meanwhile, since he had once been accused of being a communist, and because the Americans at that time had a new policy of giving scholarships to highly talented people—especially those with slightly anti-American leanings—he was taken to the USA on scholarship.

Although Munier Chowdhury was from Bengali and English literature, what he studied in America was something new—linguistics. The subject had first been introduced here by Professor Abdul Hai, who had gone to the London School of Oriental Studies to study phonetics. Munier Chowdhury, however, studied not phonetics but linguistics.

Even though he gained knowledge in linguistics, he didn't actually teach it—he taught literature. And in teaching literature, what he did was comparative study. This comparative approach was reflected in his writings and in our study seminars.

Later, during Ayub Khan's regime, there were several bureaucratic people close to him who were also writers—such as Secretary Kudratullah, a major Urdu literary figure. Under his interest and advice, Ayub Khan formed the All Pakistan Writers' Guild, with East Pakistan and West Pakistan regions and a central body connecting writers from both sides.

We, as young writers at the time, thought: well, this is a government initiative funded by government money, and since we work at the university—which is also funded by the government—why shouldn't we try to take part in this? So, we contested the election, with Munier Chowdhury as our head. He became the Secretary, and we became members.

We launched a new magazine, which we ran for about one and a half years before I left for England. Even after I left, it continued for a while, though not as before.

We named the magazine *Porikroma*. I was its editor for the English section, and Rafiqul Islam was the editor for the Bengali section. Both of us were elected.

This magazine mainly published book reviews. In it, we serialised translations of plays by Munier Chowdhury. One of them was *Mukhora Romoni Boshikoron*, the Bengali translation of *The Taming of the Shrew* by Shakespeare. We published it over several months, and it was later shown on

television, becoming a great success.

On the occasion of a Writers' Guild meeting, we once went to Lahore for a conference. So, in Lahore, we stayed in the same hotel room, a spacious college building. One morning, I woke up and saw him writing. I asked, "Munier Bhai, what are you writing so early in the morning?" He said, "Well, I'll have to speak extempore there, so I'm preparing by writing it down." That was Munier Chowdhury—someone who seemed to speak extemporaneously but actually prepared carefully, arranging everything neatly before delivering it.

People thought he was just speaking off the cuff, eloquently and spontaneously, but in truth, his lectures were thoughtful because there was preparation behind them. And he gave that preparation his full attention. I realised then, as a young person, that this was the secret behind his so-called "spontaneous" speeches. Spontaneity doesn't just happen—you need practice behind it. That lesson has stayed with me to this day. His attention was spread across many areas—not just as a writer, translator,

time in politics, continuing in that role was no longer feasible for him.

An example from our English Department at Dhaka University was Professor Amiya Bhushan Chakraborty, who was a member of the Communist Party but left before the Language Movement upon sensing the situation. He then went to Kolkata as a refugee, became the principal of a college there, and later joined the Naxalite movement. But for Munier Chowdhury, playing that political role was not possible. He was deeply rooted in his family bonds, especially with his sister Nadera Begum, who was also involved with the Communist Party during her student days and spent considerable time in prison. She later became a teacher in our department.

I think it was possible for Munier Chowdhury to continue his intellectual work, but due to changing political roles, he had to move in a new direction. He was not like Shahidullah Kaiser or Ramesh Dasgupta, who were ready to go back to jail again. Going to jail again would have been futile for him. Instead, he managed to accomplish



Munier Chowdhury with his siblings.

COURTESY: ASIF MUNIER

or teacher, but also in cultural activities. He would give speeches, and he would encourage others too.

Munier Chowdhury's extraordinary contributions—not only through his own work but also by inspiring others and engaging in dialogue—made him unique. Those of us around him benefited immensely. He was simultaneously a teacher, playwright, translator, actor, and broadcaster.

Many have written about Mir Mosharrraf Hossain, but Munier Chowdhury's writing stands out as extraordinary because of the way he perceived and analysed Mosharrraf Hossain—something lacking in others.

Some say that, in his later years, he lived with much gratification and allure, viewing this as a deviation—but I see it not as a deviation, but rather as his defining trait, a mark of his development. I believe he defined his own role. During his student life, he was indeed associated with the Communist Party and was involved with the Dhaka branch of the Progressive Writers' Association. He also spent time in jail for his participation in the Language Movement. But later he realised that he could no longer play that political role. Because of this, he shifted his focus towards academic and cultural roles.

For that reason, he went to America, driven by curiosity to understand the world better, which broadened his perspective. I do not consider this a deviation but rather a realisation that after spending so much

many important tasks during that time.

In 1971, we were still in the same neighbourhood. But after March 25, we were all scattered. Munier Chowdhury went to his father's house in Dhamondi—now known as Bhuter Goli. His family home was there, so he moved in. We all went off to different places. I didn't stay on the university campus anymore because one of our relatives, who worked in intelligence with the police, told me right after the crackdown that they had been sent a list of ten teachers' addresses.

And there I was—my name right in the middle of it. He told me, "Your name is on the list." So, I understood immediately. On December 14, Al-Badr came to Munier Bhai's house and found him there. Anwar Pasha, on the other hand, had moved into a supposedly safer house after leaving Nilkhel, but on December 14, Al-Badr came to that house and took him. Rashidul Hasan of the English Department was there having breakfast with Anwar Pasha. Both were captured.

In many ways, Munier Chowdhury was like the "full man" of the Renaissance—multifaceted and deeply engaged. He was warm-hearted, kind, and inspiring. The loss of someone like him cannot be measured—personally, collectively, or culturally.

Serajul Islam Choudhury, emeritus professor of Dhaka University, is one of Bangladesh's most prominent public intellectuals.

MUNIER CHOUDHURY
(Nov 27, 1925 – Dec 14, 1971)

During that period in prison, Munier Chowdhury did two remarkable things. First, he wrote the play *Kobor* inside the jail. It was performed by political prisoners under hurricane lamps in commemoration of the Language Movement martyrs. Second, he sat for his Bangla examinations while in prison and achieved very good results.

When he was released from prison in 1954, we were preparing for our Honours exams in 1955. He joined our English Department for a short time as an English teacher and taught us briefly before moving permanently to the Bangla Department.

Even in that short time, we, his students, were deeply impressed by him. He was remarkable not only in his ability to analyse a text but also in his presentation skills. He had an extraordinary rhetorical quality, was an excellent orator, and carried a wonderful sense of humour—one that ran quietly through all his work. It was never overbearing, but subtle, almost silent, yet always present beneath the surface.

In his writing style, in his speeches, and in his behaviour, there was always a certain sense of enjoyment—as though he truly enjoyed life and had no complaints about it.

If I were to explain how I first came to know him, it would be like this: in 1950, when I was in Class 10, there was an anniversary programme at Curzon Hall marking the death anniversary of the poet Iqbal. I went there out of curiosity—we lived nearby and often wandered around that area—wanting to see what kind of speeches



With Ireland needing 333 runs on the final day with just four wickets in hand, a Bangladesh victory was inevitable. The Tigers duly completed the formality, winning the second and final Test by 217 runs to seal a whitewash. [Bottom] However, Ireland -- led by Curtis Campher's unbeaten maiden Test fifty -- put up a spirited fight and batted for almost two sessions, a performance that earned Campher praise from Bangladesh veteran Mushfiqur Rahim, who reached the milestone of 100 Tests in this match.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

BRIEF SCORES

Bangladesh 1st innings:
476 in 141.1 overs
(Mushfiqur 106, Litton 128;
McBrine 6-109)

Ireland 1st innings: 265 in
88.3 overs (Tucker 75; Neill
49; Taijul 4-76)

Bangladesh 2nd innings:
297-4 declared in 69 overs
(Mominul 87, Shadman 78;
Mushfiqur 53*; Hoey 2-84)

Ireland 2nd innings: 291 all
out 113.3 overs (Campher
71*, Tector 50; Taijul 4-104,
Murad 4-44)

Result: Bangladesh won by
217 runs

Player of the match:
Mushfiqur Rahim

Player of the series: Taijul
Islam

Abahani, MSC clash as rebranded BFL resumes today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football League has officially been rebranded as the Petronas Bangladesh Football League, after United Group -- one of the country's largest industrial conglomerates -- secured the title sponsorship rights, succeeding Bashundhara Group.

"We signed the deal over two months ago," Fahad Karim, Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) vice-president and marketing committee chairman, told The Daily Star.

"But United Group took some time deciding which of their products would front the league, which is why the announcement was delayed," he added.

After a month-long break, the league resumes today with four fixtures, involving a high-voltage clash between archrivals Mohammedan Sporting Club and Abahani at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla.

Both teams have endured a poor start to the season, following a draw and a defeat against inferior oppositions. As a result, they sit near the bottom of the 10-team table.

The extended break has also left both sides short on preparation. Mohammedan, in particular, have been hamstrung by off-field uncertainty and financial strain. Their situation is so tight that the squad travelled to Cumilla by public transport yesterday rather than hiring a team bus.

Abahani, though also facing financial limitations, will have a slight advantage, with two foreign recruits available together for the first time this season. However, Mohammedan have recent record on their side, remaining unbeaten in the past five league meetings between the sides, with two wins and three draws.

"The match matters for three reasons," said Abahani coach Maruful Haque. "We haven't won yet, it's a derby between two traditional powerhouses, and we need to get ourselves back in the race."

Mohammedan coach Alfaz Ahmed acknowledged the challenges but remained hopeful. "Motivation may be low, but the boys will play for their own pride. We'll go there looking for a win, even though nothing has gone our way and the situation is very tough."

Since the league's inception in 2007, Abahani and Mohammedan have faced each other 34 times, with Abahani leading the head-to-head: 14 wins, 13 draws, and seven defeats.

In today's other fixtures, Arambagh KS host Bashundhara Kings in Manikganj, Fortis FC face Police FC at Dhaka's Kings Arena, and Brothers Union meet Fakirpool Youngmen's Club in Munshiganj.



Shamim, Taskin out as squad named for Ireland T20Is

SPORTS REPORTER

Middle-order batter Shamim Hossain and pacer Taskin Ahmed have been left out as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced the squad for the three-match T20I series against Ireland.

All three matches will be held at the Bir Shrestha Shaheed Flight Lieutenant Motiur Rahman Stadium in Chattogram, scheduled for November 27, 29, and December 2.

Shamim and Taskin have been replaced by seam-bowling all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin and uncapped 26-year-old wicketkeeper-batter Mahidul Islam Ankon.

Shamim has endured a difficult year in T20Is. Despite occasional flashes of promise, his overall returns have been largely underwhelming. In 24 matches this year, the left-hander scored just 261 runs at an average of 15.35 and a strike rate of 121.39.

Taskin, meanwhile, has had his No Objection Certificate (NOC) extended, allowing him to continue featuring in the ongoing Abu Dhabi T20 throughout November. The tournament will conclude on November 30.

SQUAD:

Litton Das (c), Saif Hassan (vc), Tanzid Hasan, Parvez Emon, Towhid Hridoy, Jaker Ali, Nurul Hasan Sohan, Mahidul Islam Ankon, Mahedi Hasan, Rishad Hossain, Nasim Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Tazim Sakib, Shoriful Islam, Mohammad Saifuddin

IRISH DEFIANCE tests Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER

The outcome of the second and final Test between Bangladesh and Ireland seemed almost certain after Day 4, with Ireland six down for 176 while chasing a daunting 509-run target.

However, Ireland surprised everyone on the fifth day at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur on Sunday by showcasing remarkable resistance with the bat while the hosts were seemingly just going through the motions, waiting for the visitors to collapse.

Led by Curtis Campher, Ireland batted nearly 60 overs on the final day. Campher remained unbeaten on 71 off 259 balls, receiving significant support from the tail-enders.

He had begun the resistance late on Day 4 and had Andy McBride by his side at stumps. McBride gave him company for 13.2 overs in the following morning before getting trapped in front by Taijul Islam.

Campher and Jordan Neill then batted together for 14.1 overs before Mehidy Hasan Miraz snuck a ball through Neill's defences.

After losing two wickets in the morning session, Campher found support from the No. 9 batter, debutant Gavin Hoey.

The ninth wicket stand hung on for 30.5 overs, and took the game deep into the second session before a double strike from Hasan Murad left Campher without a partner.

In total, Ireland batted 113.3 overs before being bowled out for 291 in their second innings as the hosts notched up a 217-run



No visiting team has batted more overs in the fourth innings at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium (SBNCS) than Ireland, who faced 113.3 overs. Ireland's 291 is also the highest fourth-innings total by a visiting side at the venue, surpassing Australia's 244 in 2017.

Ireland all-rounder Curtis Campher faced the most balls by any batter in a fourth innings at SBNCS. His 259-ball vigil surpassed Shakib Al Hasan's 212-ball 96 against Sri Lanka in 2008.

victory to win the series 2-0.

Ireland's fight becomes even more impressive when looking at the numbers. They now hold the record for both the highest fourth-innings total and the most overs batted by a visiting team in the fourth innings at Mirpur.

In terms of runs scored in the fourth

innings overall, they are second only to Bangladesh's 413 against Sri Lanka in 2008. Campher also faced the most balls in a fourth innings at Mirpur, surpassing Shakib Al Hasan's 212-ball effort against Sri Lanka.

Unlike the previous touring side that had to contend with the traditional slow and turning Dhaka pitches, the Irish had the advantage of batting on a sporting wicket, which had not turned into a minefield for batters even on the fifth day.

On a surface where things automatically didn't happen for the spinners on Day 5, the Tigers had to toil hard for wickets against the lower order of perhaps the least fancied Test side in the world in South Asian conditions.

However, skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto claimed to be satisfied with his bowlers' efforts.

"On a wicket like this on Day 5, the way they [Ireland] challenged us, they definitely deserve that credit. But at the same time, the way our bowlers bowled with patience is also credit-worthy."

Meanwhile, Ireland captain Andy Balbirnie praised his team for their resistance, particularly lauded Campher for his effort. "Probably just before Murad took the two wickets, there was a small bit of excitement in the changing room at the drinks break. But credit to the Bangladesh spinners -- they don't miss their line and length too often, which tests our batters' defense. The two wickets and two balls ended it pretty quickly. Curtis can be very proud of his work today -- it was an enthralling day's play."

Infinix backs Bangladesh women's Mission Australia

SPORTS REPORTER

Chinese mobile phone manufacturer Infinix has partnered with the Bangladesh women's football team as part of efforts to support the fast-improving side ahead of the upcoming AFC Women's Asian Cup in Australia.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has named the team's campaign "Mission Australia" after the women in red and green qualified for the finals for the first time in the country's history.

As the team prepares for the Asian Cup, the BFF has been working to ensure full support, including arranging as many international friendly matches as possible before the top-tier competition gets underway in March next year.

"Infinix has become a partner of our Mission Australia. They will provide us with financial support until next April," BFF vice-president and marketing committee head Fahad



Karim told reporters at the BFF House yesterday, adding that the agreement has already been signed.

Jiang Zixu, Infinix's retail manager for Bangladesh, said: "Women's football in Bangladesh is growing fast and we are pleased to be associated with the Bangladesh women's football team."

As part of their preparation, the BFF is set to host a tri-nation tournament featuring Bangladesh, Malaysia and Azerbaijan. Infinix has also been named the title sponsor of the event, which will take place from November 26 to December 2 at the National Stadium.

Infinix is the title sponsor of the upcoming tri-nation series. We are also planning more friendly matches at home and abroad," BFF president Tabith Awan informed.

"The team will travel to Australia around two weeks before the Asian Cup begins, and Infinix will assist us

during that period," he added.

Although the BFF has not disclosed the preparation budget, it is understood that Infinix will cover 50 percent of the estimated Tk 4 crore required.

After the tri-nation series, many national players will join Nasrin Football Academy for the SAFF Women's Club Cup in Nepal, while the remaining players are expected to compete in the women's football league from December 15.

"We are trying to ensure players have competitive matches in addition to training because continuous training alone may fatigue them," the BFF president said, further informing the federation is also working to distribute the long-promised cash awards to the SAFF Women's Championship-winning squad by December.

"The team will travel to Australia around two weeks before the Asian Cup begins, and Infinix will assist us

Rupali bids adieu as Bangladesh finish third

Asif Mahmud Sajeeb Bhuiyan, the Adviser for Youth and Sports, places a farewell crown on the head of Rupali Akter ahead of the second semifinal of the 2nd Women's Kabaddi World Cup at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The Bangladesh skipper pulled the curtains on her 16-year-career through this match, which Bangladesh lost by 25-18 points, settling for a bronze medal and third position. Bangladesh had finished fifth in the 1st Women's Kabaddi World Cup in Patna 13 years ago where Rupali was the only player from the current Bangladesh team. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



"The way the federation and my teammates gave me a farewell at the beginning of the match made me a little emotional. I have been involved with kabaddi for a long time. There isn't any significant bad feeling or experience in my career. I won't be playing competitive kabaddi anymore, but I will stay involved with kabaddi in some way. This is my place of love."

Rupali Akter, Bangladesh captain



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'We want to show law is equal for all'

ICT-1 reacts to plea for virtual appearance of accused army officers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal 1 yesterday reacted sharply to a defence plea that several army officers accused in two enforced disappearance cases be permitted to appear virtually.

It told the counsel that they should, instead, ask the government to withdraw the cases if the accused felt discomfort in appearing in person.

"We want to demonstrate that the law is equal for all. A former chief justice, an Appellate Division judge, senior ministers, a former secretary, and a former IGP are in custody, and all of them are appearing before the court regularly," said Tribunal Chairman Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder.

His remarks came after ABM Hamidul Mishbah, representing six of the 13 army officers taken to the tribunal yesterday, pleaded for exemption from physical appearance.

When asked to explain the grounds for the request, the lawyer said the reasons were stated in his application and he could elaborate if the tribunal wished.

Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam then suggested that a hearing on the plea could be fixed later.

Earlier, 13 detained officers were taken to the tribunal

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'Admin must be under our control'

Says Jamaat leader Shahjahan; party says comments his own

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The administration "must be brought under Jamaat's control", said Jamaat-e-Islami central working committee member Shahjahan Chowdhury in Chittagong on Saturday.

Expressing concern that "sacks of money and weapons may enter Bangladesh from a neighbouring country centring the upcoming election", he said, "An election can't be won only with the [votes of] people... We must bring all members of the administration in every constituency under our [Jamaat's] influence."

Shahjahan, also a former MP and senior leader of the party's Chittagong city unit, made these remarks while addressing a conference at the GEC Convention Hall in the port city on Saturday evening.

The event was chaired by the party's Chittagong city Ameer Muhammad Nazrul Islam. Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman was scheduled to be present as chief guest but was not present on stage

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Three hurt in attack during protest against baul's arrest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Three people were injured yesterday in an attack on those protesting the arrest of baul singer Abul Sarker in Manikganj.

They were identified as Alim, Ariful and Zahirul.

Abul Sarker, president of Bangladesh Baul Samity, was arrested on November 20 in a case filed on charges of hurting religious sentiments.

According to witnesses, people under the banner of Touhid Janata carried out the attack in the stadium area of Manikganj town around 10:30am.

Abdullah Al Mamun, additional superintendent of police in Manikganj, confirmed the incident, saying, "Artistes and people from a cultural organisation had gathered to form a human chain in the area adjacent to Shaheed Miraj Tapan Stadium."

Another procession

under the banner of Touhid Janata, from the bus stand to the Deputy

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Citizens' vigilance key to resilient democracy

Say political analysts at Bay of Bengal Conversation; push for free media, women's political voice, and reduced inequality

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Political analysts urged citizens to remain vigilant all the time, not only in holding their own governments to account, but also in questioning the global systems that help shape crises in developing nations.

They underscored the need for unfettered media, greater political participation of women, and a determined effort to narrow all forms of inequality as foundations of a resilient democracy.

"The first and foremost thing that we need to do as a citizen -- wherever we are -- is basically vigilance because the price of democracy is eternal vigilance," said Prof Ali Riaz, special assistant to the chief adviser.

He was speaking at a panel discussion titled "Fragility as the New Normal: States in Permanent Emergency", at the Bay of Bengal Conversation, a three-day international event organised by the Centre for Governance Studies at a city hotel yesterday.

States often remain vulnerable to external shocks, he said. Although the global centre of gravity has shifted from the Atlantic to the Pacific with the rise of China and

Bay of Bengal Conversation
RIVALS • RUPTURES • REALIGNMENTS

“ The first and foremost thing that we need to do as a citizen -- wherever we are -- is basically vigilance because the price of democracy is eternal vigilance.

PROF ALI RIAZ

Special assistant to chief adviser

Citing the recent popular uprisings in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, he said all three countries have been deeply integrated into neoliberal economic systems that, in turn, generated enormous disparities that fuelled the unrest.

"Here, the state is a participant, but not necessarily in the driver's seat," he said.

Riaz added that climate change caused by the Global North has compounded vulnerabilities in developing countries. At the same time, technology is increasingly deployed as a surveillance tool in smaller states. When these global pressures converge with domestic inequalities, crises emerge.

Citizens, therefore, must continually scrutinise state actions and examine whether government decisions are rational, Riaz said. The gulf between elites and ordinary people also demands urgent attention.

At the discussion, Democracy International Chief of Party Catherine Cecil said strong civic and political engagement at the local level is crucial for democratic resilience.

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NCP won't make any seat deals to go to power

Says Nahid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam yesterday said the party will not compromise or make any deal with any political party for seats or to go to power.

NCP may consider an alliance only with parties that are close to its ideology, and it is trying to nominate candidates for all 300 constituencies, he said at a press conference organised by the NCP's central election steering committee in Dhaka.

"Many newspapers are attempting to sideline NCP by circulating various rumours and baseless reports, despite the party's clear announcement that it intends to field candidates in all 300 constituencies," he said.

"Even if we fail to win a seat, our stance will remain unchanged," he said,

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Street vendors occupying a footpath and part of the adjacent road on Shaheed Abrar Fahad Avenue in the capital, forcing vehicles and pedestrians into a single narrow lane and causing heavy traffic congestion in the area. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Polling time, booths likely to increase

Date to unveil polls schedule in two to three days, says EC Masud

AHMED DEEPTO

Upon receiving the government's directive to hold a referendum alongside the upcoming 13th national election, the Election Commission has begun exploring measures to ensure both votes run smoothly.

Senior EC officials said holding the referendum and the election on the same day for the first time in Bangladesh should not pose major difficulties, though it may require setting up additional polling booths and extending voting hours.

They said the two votes will use separate ballot papers and the same officials overseeing the polls will be used in the referendum.

Contacted for comments on the preparations, Election Commissioner Abdur Rahaman Masud told this newspaper yesterday that the date to



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'You too can be made an accused'

Tajul warns defence during hearing at ICT

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Crimes Tribunal Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam yesterday warned defence counsel Nazneen Nahar, who is representing Maj Gen (relieved) Ziaul Ahsan, that she herself could face charges.

It followed an argument between the two, requiring the tribunal chairman to intervene at least thrice to maintain order and calm the situation.

"Keep silent. Don't talk. You can also be an accused. We are receiving allegations against you from different places," Tajul snapped at Nazneen during hearing in a case against Ziaul at Tribunal 1.

He made the remarks after Nazneen, also sister of Ziaul, complained to the two-member tribunal that she had been barred from attending her client's interrogation at a safe house, despite legal provisions allowing a lawyer to be present. "I was not informed, and I was not allowed in."

Tribunal Chairman Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder intervened, reminding the chief prosecutor that Nazneen was appearing before the court as a lawyer.

Tajul alleged that Ziaul, accused of enforced disappearances, had been

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SINHA MURDER Ex-OC Pradeep was mastermind

HC observes in full verdict, says SI Liaqat executed the plan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court, in the full text of its verdict, has observed that Pradeep Kumar Das, the then officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, was the mastermind behind the killing of former army officer Major (retd) Sinha Md Rashed Khan, while then sub-inspector Liaqat Ali executed the plan.

According to the full text, Liaqat fired four shots at Sinha with the intention to kill him. Later, Pradeep arrived at the scene and struck Sinha on the chest, causing two ribs to fracture, and pressed his boot onto the victim's neck to ensure his death.

"The trial court has correctly imposed the maximum punishment of death upon Pradeep and Liaqat," the HC bench of Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman and Justice Md Sagir Hossain said in the 378-page full verdict, released yesterday.

The bench made the observation after analysing and examining witness testimonies, prosecution materials, confessional statements, and circumstantial evidence.

Following the release of the full text, the convicts can



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