

Highly risky Dhaka buildings still in use

PG Hospital, JnU, JU buildings on Rajuk's list of vulnerable structures

HELEMUL ALAM and DIPAN NANDY

Munni was tending to her six-year-old daughter at the paediatric cardiology ward of Bangladesh Medical University (PG Hospital) on Friday when the 17-storey building suddenly began to shake violently.

"We were totally caught off guard. I took my child in my lap and stood in the middle of the ward. I thought we were going to die," she told The Daily Star yesterday, recalling the harrowing experience.

Her words echo the panic that swept through patients and doctors inside the Block-D building during the 5.7-magnitude tremor that jolted Dhaka and surrounding districts.

The building had been flagged as structurally vulnerable in early 2023, yet it continues to operate like dozens of other risky structures across the capital.

More than two and a half years have passed since 42 buildings in Dhaka, Gazipur, and Narayanganj were declared "highly risky" and ordered to be demolished within three months. But only two have been torn down so far.

Friday's tremor laid bare not only the vulnerability of these structures but also the failure of authorities to act despite repeated warnings.

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) moved only after the quake. The regulatory authority found about 300 structures under its



Marked as "risky" for many years, a building of Sir Salimullah Medical College Mitford Hospital on the capital's Mitford Road continues to operate. Following the recent earthquakes, at least 300 large and small buildings in the capital have been identified as vulnerable. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Form task force for earthquake readiness

Yunus directs authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday directed the authorities concerned to form a task force comprising government and private officials as well as experts to undertake urgent measures for earthquake preparedness.

Presiding over an emergency meeting of experts and officials at his office in Tejgaon, he said expert advice is also needed on what kinds of drills will be required as part of preparedness.

"We do not want to remain idle, nor do we want to take any unscientific steps. Please submit your

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PORT, LDC GRADUATION

Unelected govt can't take long-term decisions

Says Tarique

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said an unelected government cannot take decisions that have long-term implications.



"Look at Chattogram Port, the gateway to Bangladesh's economy. What happens there shapes the lives of millions. Recent long-term decisions about the port are not routine," he said in a Facebook post last night.

He added that the deal was a "strategic commitment over a national asset, pushed forward by an interim government without a democratic mandate to bind future generations."

The BNP leader said the situation at the port mirrors the approach to LDC graduation, where "strategic options are shut off, public debate is dismissed as inconvenient, and valid concerns

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16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

For 16 days starting November 25, the International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women is observed worldwide. Under this year's theme, UNiTE to End Digital Violence against All Women and Girls, The Daily Star will publish a story every alternate day across its pages, tracing how digital and offline abuse shape women's lives in Bangladesh.

When danger strikes, where can women turn?

As violence persists, survivors face a maze of fragmented services and low visibility

NILIMA JAHAN

Since Sharmin Akter (not her real name), 40, from Gazipur's Kapasia, was married at just 12, she has endured relentless violence and abuse, describing the daily ordeal like "three meals

a day".

"What didn't he beat me for? If the rice was too soft, he slapped me; if it was too hard, he punched me.... If I visited my mother's house, he beat me again, often in public. He broke my hand twice; my whole body still carries the

"Even then, my husband continued to abuse me psychologically," she said, adding that he issued threats, spread rumours about her, and had followed her to assault her again.

According to the Violence Against Women (VAW) Survey



SILENCE IN NUMBERS

64% never told anyone about the violence

39% said disclosure felt unnecessary

14% feared losing family honour; 13% feared public disgrace

Only 7% sought legal action in the past year

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH VIDEO



marks....

"I didn't know where to go, who could help me, or what I could do. My children were very young. I had no education, no support, and nowhere to turn."

She found the courage to leave only after marrying off her daughter.

2024, conducted by BBS and UNFPA, three in every four women in Bangladesh -- 76 percent -- face such violence, yet 51.5 percent still do not know where to report it. Awareness is slightly higher in urban areas (50.7 percent) than rural (47.5 percent).

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Antibiotics not working on 4 in 10 ICU patients

IEDCR data shows alarming rise in AMR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four in every 10 patients admitted to intensive care units (ICUs) are not responding to available antibiotics due to their overuse and misuse, according to government data released yesterday, raising fresh

2024 and June 2025, was unveiled at IEDCR's Mohakhali office yesterday to mark the ongoing World AMR Awareness Week.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites no longer respond to

WHAT NEW FINDINGS REVEAL

Presenting the data, Prof Zakir Hossain Habib, chief scientific officer of the IEDCR, said the surveillance used case-based data from 13 hospitals and lab-based data from eight hospitals and diagnostic centres.

Researchers analysed 123 drug-bug combinations and compared them with last year's results. The data show that susceptibility rates fell for 79 combinations, improved for 38, and remained unchanged for six, indicating that more antibiotics are becoming ineffective.

"More and more antibiotics are showing resistance to different antibiotics," he said.

In ICUs, 71 antibiotics were tested against five pathogens. Only five organism-drug combinations showed susceptibility above 80 percent, while one fell between 60 and 80 percent. All others were below 60 percent.

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Antibiotic-resistant bacteria found in 41% ICU samples

Use of second-tier antibiotics jumps to 91%

89% of ICU samples show multidrug resistance

Misuse, over-prescription, self-medication driving AMR

concerns about the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance.

The latest findings from the National Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Surveillance by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) show an alarming rise in antibiotics losing effectiveness.

Use of "watch group" antibiotics has surged from 77 percent last year to 91 percent this year. These are second-tier antibiotics that should be used only when first-line antibiotics are ineffective. They carry a higher risk of driving antimicrobial resistance and therefore require stricter monitoring and controlled use.

The AMR surveillance, conducted on 96,477 patients between July

antimicrobial medicines, making infections difficult or impossible to treat and increasing the risk of severe illness, disability, and death.

Health experts cited over-prescription, patients' ignorance and negligence in not completing antibiotic courses, excessive use of antibiotics in livestock and fisheries, poor infection control in hospitals, inadequate hygiene and sanitation, and the lack of new antibiotics as key drivers of AMR.

They warned that rising resistance will lead to more critical illnesses, prolonged hospital stays, treatment failures, higher mortality, greater healthcare costs, and reduced productivity.



Speakers at a roundtable titled “Violence Against Women Survey 2024: Translating evidence into action” held at The Daily Star centre yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

When danger strikes, where can women turn?

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POLICE MOST KNOWN AUTHORITY
The local police station remains the most recognised authority, cited by 91 percent of women who know where to report.

Much fewer identified other authorities: 32 percent mentioned Union or Upazila Parishads, 13 percent village mediators, and 10 percent courts.

One-Stop Crisis Centres (OCCs) remain largely unknown, with only 2 percent of women aware of them despite operating for decades.

Knowledge of helplines is similarly low. Only 12 percent of women know about MoWCA's 109 helpline, compared with 45 percent aware of 999. Urban women remain far more informed than rural.

Regional gaps persist: Mymensingh reports the highest awareness of 109 (17 percent), while Sylhet records the lowest (10 percent for 109 and 31 percent for 999). Dhaka remains below average for 109 awareness (9 percent) despite higher recognition of 999 (49 percent).

Among survivors, awareness shrinks further: only 9 percent know about 109 and 39 percent about 999. Never-married women are the most informed, while divorced, separated, or widowed women know the least about available services.

Dr Fauzia Moslem, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, told The Daily Star, “Despite the establishment of helplines, police helpdesks and One-Stop Crisis Centres, we have failed to create real pathways for women to access them. We're spending the budget and allocating resources, but if awareness stays this low, it is deeply alarming, and the funds are wasted. Raising awareness must become a top priority.”

She said services often operate without long-term planning. “Projects run somehow, but without proper recurring budgets and gender-responsive planning, they cannot improve. We need coordinated planning and real accountability; sporadic activities will not bring change.”

Highlighting the reliance on unregulated local mediators, she stressed the need for trained paralegals, sensitised UP chairmen, and a clearer dispute-resolution framework. “Without this, given our caseload and court delays, justice will continue to fail women.”

She warned that informal mediation often leads to unsafe settlements, including past cases where survivors were forced to marry their rapists.

WHERE TO TURN

To guide women needing immediate support, The Daily Star consulted police, emergency helplines, MoWCA, and NGOs working on gender-based violence.

Inspector Anwar Sattar of the National Emergency Helpline 999 said the National Emergency Service Guidelines 2020 classify any violence, harassment, or stalking against women and children as an emergency.

“Women, children, or someone reporting on their behalf can call 999,” he said.

From January-October 2025, 999 provided emergency support to 26,317 callers under the “Violence Against Women and Children” category. These included 14,928 domestic torture cases, 5,810 assaults by others, 988 rapes, 557 attempted rapes, 793 stalking incidents, 647 homicides, 801

sexual harassment cases, 465 parental torture cases, and 2,798 calls about child marriage.

Anwar noted that services remain fragmented and stressed the need for a single, widely known emergency number.

Assistant Inspector General of Police (Media and Public Relations) AHM Shahadat Hossain said Police Headquarters launched a 24-hour hotline on March 10, 2025, ensuring

WHERE TO REPORT ABUSE
NATIONAL EMERGENCY HELPLINE 999
Immediate police, fire, ambulance for violence, harassment, threats, abduction, stalking
VAW & CHILD HELPLINE 109
Rescue, legal aid, psychosocial help, child marriage prevention, cyber violence support
CHILD HELPLINE 1098
Immediate protection and referrals for child abuse, exploitation, trafficking, neglect
NATIONAL LEGAL AID HELPLINE 16430
Free legal advice and lawyers for women and children facing any form of abuse
POLICE HQ WOMEN'S HOTLINE (24/7) 01320002001 / 01320002002 / 01320002222
Violence, harassment, sexual assault. Police assistance
POLICE CYBER SUPPORT FOR WOMEN 01320000888
Cyber harassment, threats, blackmail, image misuse. Legal and safety support.
QUICK RESPONSE TEAM 01713659573 / 01713659574
Rescue, medical care, counselling, legal aid, cyber violence redress, safe shelter
WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION 01711477348
Counselling, legal aid, crisis support tailored for women and children with disabilities.

round-the-clock support for women facing violence or sexual abuse.

For digital threats, the Police Cyber Support for Women offers legal aid and protection, he said.

Meanwhile, MoWCA offers a wide range of services. Dr Prakash Kanti Chowdhury, joint secretary, said the newly launched Quick Response Team provides immediate rescue, medical treatment, psychosocial counselling, legal aid, cyber violence redress, shelter, safe spaces, and security.

The 24-hour toll-free 109 helpline provides rescue, legal and psychosocial support, health referrals, child marriage prevention, and guidance on cyber violence.

Fourteen OCCs offer integrated services including health care, legal support, police coordination, case management, counselling, shelter access, DNA testing, rehabilitation, and reintegration.

National and Regional Trauma Counselling Centres provide psychosocial and community-based counselling, while 67 OCCs at district and upazila levels also provide services.

Dr Prakash added that OCCs will expand to 37 medical college hospitals and 95 district and upazila cells, while the 109 helpline is being strengthened with better staffing and dedicated counsellors to ensure zero call drops.

The ministry, he said, is prioritising prevention through school-, college-, and institution-based interventions, and partnering with the religious affairs ministry to reach madrasas. “Community engagement through social media, content creation, and pocket legal guides will support outreach.”

He also noted that District Legal Aid Offices in all 64 districts offer support to women and children facing physical, psychological, sexual, or domestic abuse.

FRONTLINE ORGANISATIONS

With many survivors unsure of where to seek help, frontline legal aid organisations remain essential, offering support women may avoid seeking from police or courts due to stigma or legal complications.

“These organisations guide survivors through legal procedures, represent them in court, and ensure their voices are heard safely,” said Advocate Nighat Seema of Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers' Association.

“They also offer counselling, shelter, and reintegration support, particularly for rural and vulnerable women who may not know where to turn.”

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, through 24 district offices and clinics, provides legal support from lower courts to the Supreme Court, raises awareness, offers legal advice, mediates cases, and pursues public interest litigation, said BLAST Director Mahbuba Akter.

Platforms like Cyber Support for Women and Children, run by BLAST with Cybercrime Awareness Foundation and Naripokkho, enable reporting of online abuse and provide legal, counselling, and referral services.

The Rape Law Reform Coalition – 17 organisations including ASK, icddr,b, ActionAid, WDDF, Naripokkho, and BLAST – advocates for rape law reform and provides legal and psychosocial support for survivors.

“When women do not know where to turn, abuse becomes normalised, and breaking that silence requires strong awareness from the state, police, and media,” Advocate Seema warned.

Normalisation of abuse

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mob attacks, moral policing and religious restrictions eroding women's rights.

Shireen, also head of the Women's Affairs Reform Commission, said that without challenging ideas of male ownership and entrenched toxic masculinity, large interventions would again deliver only partial results.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad General Secretary Maleka Banu described the situation as a “serious human rights violation and humanitarian crisis”.

She said violence had spread beyond homes and intimate partners into public spaces. “Hard-won rights were being weakened in the name of cultural and religious values and even under movements that claim to be inclusive. We must defend the rights we have already gained.”

ActionAid Bangladesh Country Director Farah Kabir said violence had become so normalised that a woman's walk, speech or dress could draw attacks. “People don't believe in institutions. There is deep mistrust.”

Survivors in marginalised communities, she said, were often diverted from courts to arbitration led by local powerbrokers, where political actors “settle” cases, including rape, for money.

She called for greater investment in education, health, mental health and digital protections, saying rhetoric alone could not change women's realities.

The Daily Star Joint Editor Aasha Mehreen Amin said, “Every year we get these statistics and they keep getting worse. It's a grim scenario.”

Urging political, religious and state leaders to take responsibility, she said that unless decision-makers commit to this change, nothing is going to happen.

Jahangirnagar University Associate Professor Rezwana Karim Snigdha said the survey provided strong empirical support but warned that “normative violence” – teaching boys that manhood is tied to controlling women – remained deeply rooted.

Violence had become “hybrid”, she said, combining physical, digital, religious, caste and class-based harms.

BRAC Associate Director Shashwatee Biplob said rape cases filmed and shared online showed how perpetrators now treat violence as “a source of pride”.

She said BRAC's nationwide experience showed that helplines and crisis centres often failed to provide meaningful support. “We must ask why years of development interventions have not reduced violence. We need gender politics, not partisan politics.”

Dhaka University Professor Samina Luthfa said tackling violence required a national approach and could not be left to higher education institutions alone. “Survivors often struggle to navigate systems such as One-Stop Crisis Centres. The judicial process remains a major barrier because law enforcement and the judiciary often hold different interpretations of violence.”

She said university anti sexual-harassment cells were overstretched, underfunded and lacked trained staff. Severe cyberbullying of women in public life, she warned, was pushing younger activists out of political spaces.

Media professional Kazi Jesin said a

Antibiotics not working

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meaning antibiotic efficacy dropped under that threshold.

The data also reveal that Pan-Drug Resistant (PDR) organisms – resistant to all tested antibiotics – were found in 7 percent of all specimens and in 41 percent of ICU samples.

Acinetobacter, a kind of bacteria, showed the highest rate of suspected PDR at 27 percent.

Prof Habib called this “a real threat, especially in ICUs”.

He said 46 percent of overall samples contained multidrug resistant (MDR) pathogens, while MDR prevalence in ICUs was 89 percent.

The most common pathogen identified was E. coli (35 percent), followed by K. pneumoniae (19.2 percent).

Among WHO's critical priority pathogens, ceftriaxone resistance in

K. pneumoniae rose from 40.1 percent in 2022 to 52.2 percent in 2025. Resistance to meropenem – a widely used watch-group drug – increased from 46.7 percent to 71 percent over the same period.

WHO divides antibiotics into three categories – Access, Watch, and Reserve – to guide proper use. Access-group drugs should be used as first- or second-line treatments. Yet the use of watch-group antibiotics rose sharply to 91 percent this year.

“This increasing reliance on watch-group antibiotics is deeply alarming,” Prof Habib said.

IEDCR recommended that culture and sensitivity tests be performed before prescribing antibiotics to ensure the right drug is used. It also stressed strict infection prevention and control practices and stronger antibiotic

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In 2023, Rajuk served notices to the authorities of those buildings to vacate the structures within seven days and their demolition within three months.

However, only two structures, including a building of Dhaka Collegiate School in Patuatuli, have been demolished so far.

The school had another building, which was also declared risky, but the authorities are still using that for classes. They also did not hang banners declaring the buildings unsafe despite Rajuk's instructions.

During a visit to the school yesterday, this correspondent found classes were teeming with students.

When asked, acting Headteacher Kabita Rani Sarker said, “We have more than 2,000 students. Every year, we admit new batches. If we hang such a banner, parents will stop sending their children.”

Outside the school, Anita Das, mother of fourth-grader Biplob Das, said, “We had no idea our children were at such a risk during an earthquake. We will definitely speak to the school authorities.”

In the same way, the Block-D building of the PG Hospital has been operating despite the Rajuk warning over two years ago. Most of the hospital staff are not even aware that Block-D was declared highly risky.

A physician at the paediatric cardiology ward, on condition of anonymity, said they had no clear information about the building's risk level. “The authorities must ensure safety for both doctors and patients. This is a major referral hospital and needs serious attention and better-planned infrastructure.”

Despite multiple attempts, the hospital's Chief Engineer AKM Habibur Rahman could not be reached for

comment.

Meanwhile, four buildings of Jagannath University are also on the list of 42 risky buildings. Despite Rajuk's instruction, the buildings were still being used.

Demolition efforts have stalled, allegedly due to bureaucratic delays.

Helal Uddin Patwary, chief engineer of Jagannath University, said, “We had brought in a BUET expert committee for guidance, and they asked for Rajuk's report. Despite multiple letters, Rajuk never sent it.”

“When we tried to start the tests ourselves, BUET estimated the cost at Tk 45 lakh. We requested funding from the University Grants Commission, but that, too, never materialised.”

Tasmia Sarker, a student of journalism, said, “Many of us attend classes not knowing the risks.”

While Likhon Islam, a student of Bangla, said if the risky buildings aren't renovated urgently, a disaster is inevitable.

In Laxmibazar, two buildings of Kabi Nazrul Government College were also declared risky, but no action has been taken in the past two and a half years.

College Principal Prof Habibur Rahman said, “We renovate our buildings when necessary. But no decision has been taken regarding those two buildings. Given the current situation, we will write to the authorities.”

Even a leading public educational institution like Jahangirnagar University continues to operate three buildings deemed structurally unsafe.

University Professor Adil Mohammad Khan said none of the three risky buildings has been retrofitted, let alone demolished.

“After the recent earthquake, the university decided to conduct detailed engineering assessments of

new trend of violence had emerged in politics. “After August 5, many hoped gender inequalities would shrink, yet politics has shown us the opposite. Women who speak about rights are being labelled with degrading slurs, even by those in authority....”

She said digital mobs target women the moment they appear online and called for updated laws and recognition of online abuse.

Deputy Inspector General of Police (Special Security and Protection Battalion) Shoeb Reaz Alam said only a small fraction of survivors file cases.

“Most confide only in relatives because many believe it is impossible to file a case against husbands or in-laws while living in the same home.”

UNFPA Bangladesh Representative Catherine Breen Kamkong noted how normalised violence had become and criticised the current ad hoc approach, saying scattered projects and small prevention efforts were insufficient. “We need coordinated and comprehensive action,” she said, urging political parties to elevate the issue.

“Without addressing discrimination and violence wider social or electoral transformation would remain impossible.”

Emeritus Scientist at icddr,b Ruchira Tabassum; Corinne Thevoz of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; Tahera Jabeen of the British High Commission; Stéphanie St-Laurent of the High Commission of Canada; and Esha Aurora, business editor of New Age, also spoke.

The roundtable was moderated by Tanjim Ferdous, in charge of NGOs and foreign missions at The Daily Star.

stewardship to reduce pressure on commonly used drugs.

At the event, Prof Sheikh Sayidul Haque, additional director general (planning and development) of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said self-medication and antibiotics prescribed by unregistered practitioners continue to fuel misuse. He acknowledged that even registered doctors do not always follow proper prescribing procedures.

Abu Hussain Md Moinul Ahsan, director (hospital) of DGHS, said infection control in hospitals remains challenging due to overwhelming patient loads but noted efforts are underway to improve the situation.

IEDCR Director Prof Tahmina Shirin said the aim of releasing the findings was to raise awareness.

Highly risky Dhaka buildings still in use

all buildings. External technicians will be engaged for this process. But this assessment should have been done long ago,” said Adil, also the president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners.

Since demolition is a major decision, the authorities should have carried out a second assessment before acting on Rajuk's order, he said. “If two assessments confirm the same risks, then buildings must be vacated and demolished. But most institutions didn't even take this step.”

The Education Engineering Department (EED) of the education ministry is responsible for the safety and upkeep of all government educational buildings across the country. Of the 42 risky buildings, a number of them are under EED supervision, as seen in a Rajuk report.

Contacted, EED Chief Engineer Tareque Anwar Zahedee said, “As far as I remember, Rajuk prepared such a list two years ago. But the buildings were not ours; many belonged to private schools, and their authorities were responsible for demolishing or retrofitting them.”

“If we receive government instructions, we will act according to regulations,” he said, adding that a committee formed yesterday would review all buildings under EED supervision and submit a report as soon as possible.

Speaking on overall preparedness, Rajuk Chairman Md Reazul Islam said most of the risky buildings are government-owned and that a citywide reassessment is now essential.

“What is important now is collaborative work, bringing together Rajuk, city corporations, disaster management agencies, the army, and the fire service so that all risky buildings can be identified and proper steps taken.”

Form task force

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recommendations to us quickly in written form; the government is prepared to take all necessary measures,” he urged experts.

He said work is underway to form the required expert committee and one or more task forces, and that action will be taken as soon as recommendations are received.

He said it is also necessary to assess the stage the country is currently at in terms of earthquake readiness.

The chief adviser said Bangladeshi scientists and earthquake specialists residing abroad should be consulted and institutions working on earthquake issues must

strengthen collaboration with foreign organisations.

He said the government has developed an app called “Shubhechha” for expatriate Bangladeshis and asked experts to help connect with scientists abroad through it.

“Please also advise us on what additional features could be introduced in the app,” he said.

Dhaka University Prof Zillur Rahman said it is necessary to review the sources and origins of earthquakes to identify how many sources exist in Bangladesh and its surrounding areas and determine possible shaking levels.

He said while the likelihood of a major earthquake in Bangladesh is

relatively low, adequate preparedness is essential.

Another DU professor, Humayun Akhter, said plans of action must be developed at four levels – indoor, outdoor, individual and institutional – and communicated widely.

He said involving young people in natural hazard planning and technological initiatives can mentally prepare society.

Chittagong University Prof Jahangir Alam said special attention must be given to hospitals, educational institutions, electricity and gas connections, and that introducing earthquake-related programmes in schools, colleges and universities will foster awareness rather than panic.

BNP pledges free media if elected

Says Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said his party would prioritise the establishment of a free and independent media sector if voted to power in the next national election.

Speaking at a views-exchange programme, organised by the Broadcast Journalist Centre at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre, Fakhrul said the BNP's 31-point reform outline clearly commits to building an independent mass media and forming a commission for that purpose.

"Our commitment is very clear... we want to see and build an independent and free mass media. That is why we committed to

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Commonwealth Secretary-General Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey at a meeting with Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at the state guest house Jamuna yesterday.

PHOTO: CA'S PRESS WING

300 Dhaka buildings 'vulnerable': Rajuk

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajuk Chairman Riazul Islam yesterday announced that approximately 300 small and large buildings in Dhaka have been identified as vulnerable following the recent earthquakes.

Speaking at a seminar titled "Preparedness and Actions to Reduce Earthquake Risks", organised by Rajuk at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB), Riazul said, "Following Friday's earthquake, we have been able to mark around 300 small and large vulnerable buildings. Both Rajuk and building owners share responsibility for constructions that violate rules and approved designs. However, the main responsibility lies with the building owners."

"We approve building construction strictly following the rules. No work at Rajuk happens in exchange for money," he added.

He clarified that "Rajuk itself does not design building plans," adding, "House owners have their buildings designed by engineers or architects and submit the plans to Rajuk with the commitment of following Rajuk regulations. If they fail to follow those rules later, the penalties or punishments

should apply to the house owners. Rajuk cannot be held responsible for that."

Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan emphasised the need for urgent action.

"To minimise possible damage from major earthquakes, strong and integrated initiatives must be taken immediately. Not just Rajuk – every related agency must work together. If necessary, the government's decision-making authority needs to be strengthened to take strict action regarding vulnerable buildings," she said.

Housing and Public Works Adviser Adilur Rahman Khan said, "Without coordinated steps from government agencies alongside public preparedness, earthquake risk cannot be reduced. There can be no negligence when it comes to public safety."

Buet earthquake and disaster management experts Dr Mehedi Ahmed Ansary and Dr Tanvir Manzur presented papers highlighting Dhaka's weak soil, unregulated construction, failure to comply with building codes, and structural vulnerabilities, warning that these factors could cause massive damage if a major earthquake were to strike the capital.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Publish the list of vulnerable buildings

Immediate structural assessment

Enforce building codes strictly

Introduce mandatory retrofitting

Political parties in Bangladesh run like businesses

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no truly democratic political party in Bangladesh, as politics has become a business driven by nomination trade, said Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik, yesterday.

"Selling party nominations is one of the biggest reasons political parties are being harmed. This is now the main source of money for parties, and because of this, politics has turned into a business," he said at a discussion in Dhaka.

The roundtable, titled "Political Financing Culture in Bangladesh and Business Protection: Realities and Pathways to Solutions," was organised by the Dacca Institute of Research and Analytics.

Badiul Alam said many so-called political parties were essentially business syndicates that collect money, influence elections in various ways, and then operate as they wish.

He said religious political parties did not function as political entities either. "Major changes within political parties were necessary to address the problem, he said, adding that both the electoral arena and political space needed to be cleaned up and freed from wrongdoing.

In another discussion, Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB, said they had proposed that every elected representative publish a full account of income and expenses within one month of taking office, with any mismatch triggering accountability.

He said money, muscle, and religion together form the core of political capital in Bangladesh, and without addressing them collectively, political culture will not change.

Although many believe the problems can still be fixed, he said most opportunities had already been lost.

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Money, muscle, and religion together form the core of political capital in Bangladesh, and without addressing them collectively, political culture will not change.

DR IFTEKHARUZZAMAN
Executive director, TIB

Politicians, officials used DSA to settle 'personal disputes'

Says study by Clooney Foundation, CGS

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The Digital Security Act (DSA) was widely used by politicians and government officials to settle personal disputes with journalists and to harass and intimidate them, according to a new study on the law.

The study also said journalists were treated like high-profile criminals, often arrested in the pre-trial stage at odd hours by large groups of police without being properly informed of the reasons for their arrest. Their families and lawyers were also kept in the dark.

Analysing 222 cases filed against 396 journalists, the research found that the DSA's vague and overly broad provisions criminalised acts such as defamation, alleged misinformation, and "offensive" speech and were used to punish reporting and criticism.

Most cases never reached trial, making the legal process itself the punishment. Of the cases that went to trial, most ended in acquittals, indicating that the allegations were largely baseless, it said.

"Only one journalist in the dataset was convicted," the study noted.

Conducted by the Clooney Foundation for Justice and the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS), the report said the DSA had a chilling effect on press freedom in Bangladesh.

Although the law has changed, many journalists are still dealing with its consequences, it added.

At least 73 cases were filed by politicians, with almost 70 percent of them affiliated with the then-ruling Awami League. Another

Despite the repeal of the DSA by the Cyber Security Act (CSA) in 2023 and later by the Cyber Security Ordinance (CSO), the study warned that risks remain because pending DSA cases were not withdrawn.

34 cases were filed by government employees.

In 63 cases, the complainants were not the direct victims or subjects of the speech in question. "Our data shows that proceedings under the DSA could be triggered by anyone, even if they were not directly harmed or mentioned by the speech," the study said.

The researchers conducted an in-depth analysis of 30 cases and interviewed the affected journalists. Of them, 27 were arrested in the pre-trial stage as non-bailable provisions were added to cases that involved bailable provisions.

Nearly half were arrested late at night or early in the morning, often by 30-40 officers in plainclothes. Only three were immediately informed of the reasons for their arrest or the charges against them.

Despite the repeal of the DSA by the Cyber Security Act (CSA) in 2023 and later by the Cyber Security Ordinance (CSO), the study warned that risks remain because pending DSA cases were not withdrawn.

It noted that the CSO includes a broad and vague provision that carries forward some of the flaws of Section 31 of the DSA. "It is not clear whether the new safeguards will be sufficient to prevent arbitrary arrests and prolonged proceedings even under a narrower law."

The study added that in October 2025, the CSO dismissed only certain types of pending DSA cases. "The interim government has not issued an exhaustive list of all cases dropped or withdrawn following the amendment, nor

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Star journalist among 6 awarded Disability Equality Media Fellowship

STAR REPORT

Six journalists were awarded the Disability Equality in the Media Fellowship in recognition of their reporting on disability inclusion and rights in Bangladesh yesterday.

The fellowship, supported by the Unesco Dhaka Office, was announced at a dialogue titled "Towards Disability-Inclusive Media: Dialogue on Editorial Policies and Practices", organised by Somosti in collaboration with Unesco at the National Institute of Mass Communication (NIMC) in the capital's Darus Salam.

The recipients are Nilima Jahan, staff reporter, The Daily Star; Md Manzurul Islam, senior sub-editor, Prothom Alo; Kawser Soheli, special correspondent, Maasranga Television; Nawaz Farhin Antara, former



senior reporter, Dhaka Tribune; Asadur Rahman, deputy station manager, Radio Padma 99.2 FM; and Rita Bhowmick, senior reporter, womeneye24.com.

In addition, Shahnaz Sharmin of Ekattor TV received a special crest and certificate for her role as a mentor to the fellows.

Dr Susan Vize, head of office and Unesco Representative to Bangladesh, and Muhammad Hiruzzaman NDC, director general of NIMC, handed over the crests and certificates.

Speakers at the event stressed the crucial role of the media in shaping respectful and accurate narratives about persons with disabilities.

They urged media organisations to adopt a transformative, rights-based and diversity-focused approach, noting that long-term shifts in public attitudes and policymaking require journalists to challenge stereotypes and promote inclusion.

JULY UPRISING

A missing son, a buried body, and a call no parent should receive

TOUSIF KAIUM

For Shafiqul Islam and Mukta Begum, the wait began on the morning of August 5, 2024, for their only son – and it never ended, until yesterday.

That day, 24-year-old Sabbir Hossain left home around 10:00am from near the Kanchpur Bridge to join the Dhaka March. He told his family he would return in an hour and a half.

Running out the door, he shouted that he would be back soon.

"But he never came back. We have searched everywhere, but found nothing," said Sumaiya, Sabbir's younger sister, recalling the day her brother disappeared during the July uprising.

The family, originally from Nilphamari but living in Narayanganj, searched hospitals, police stations, and

Yesterday noon, nearly one and a half years after Sabbir disappeared, Mukta received the call from Shahbagh Police Station she had long awaited – and feared. Their DNA matched one of the six bodies that had already been buried at Jurain graveyard in August this year.

morgues. They followed every rumour, made countless phone calls, and waited through months of uncertainty.

Shafiqul, a garment worker, said they found no trace despite visiting all major

hospital morgues in Dhaka and Narayanganj.

"We went to every morgue, but no one could give us any information. We contacted the police station, but nothing came of it. In some places, the morgue authorities even misbehaved with us," he said.

Sumaiya shared the same exhaustion. "We looked everywhere for months. At some point, we became certain he was no more."

After searching for months, the family learned that a body resembling Sabbir's had been kept in the Dhaka Medical College morgue along with five others – all victims of the uprising.

Shafiqul and Mukta went there, saw the bodies, and gave DNA samples to the CID's forensic lab, hoping at least to know where their son was and

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



A section of the footpath on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue has remained dug up for weeks for drainage improvement work by the Dhaka North City Corporation, forcing pedestrians to walk on the road to get through. The area has not been properly cordoned off, posing a risk of accidents. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Defence claims ex-IGP Shahidul faced ‘unrelated query’

Prosecution terms it ‘untrue’ at Int’l Crimes Tribunal-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former inspector general of police AKM Shahidul Hoque's counsel yesterday told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 that the chief of the investigation agency had allegedly asked his client “why he was not promoted” during interrogation, an inquiry the lawyer termed entirely unrelated to the case.

“The interrogator must confine himself to issues relevant to the case. Instead, he asked the former IGP why he had not been promoted,” defence lawyer Sifat Mahmud told the tribunal, seeking a hearing on the matter when Shahidul will be produced again before the court on January 22.

Speaking to reporters during a recess, Prosecutor Mizanul Islam dismissed the defence's claim as “completely untrue”.

Shahidul, now in jail, faces two cases filed over committing crimes against humanity — one in connection with the alleged killings of nine youths in a staged “militant drama” in Kalyanpur's Jahajbari, and another related to the 2013 Shapla Chattar massacre.

Mamun, an approver in the case and a co-accused alongside Sheikh Hasina, has been sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

Jaia Bin Amjad, another defence counsel for the former IGP, said he applied on November 18 for the full judgement but had yet to receive it.

Asked whether the full text of the November 17 judgement against deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and two of her top aides had been signed, Prosecutor Mizanul declined to comment.

He only said that the 30-day timeline for filing appeals with the Appellate Division begins from the date of delivery of the judgement.

On the job status of army officers currently in custody, Prosecutor Mizanul said, “We believe necessary measures have been taken as per law. Their current status is not important for trial proceedings.”



PHOTO: STAR

40 years on, Bandarban still has no waste facility

Open dumping carries toxic waste into Sangu, threatening health, biodiversity and tourism

MONG SING HAI MARMA, Bandarban

Four decades after its inception in 1984, Bandarban municipality still has no permanent waste management facility.

The municipality has long been dumping household, market and plastic waste, along with hazardous medical waste, on an open hilltop from where rainwater washes the trash straight into the Sangu river.

Every day, 30-40 tonnes of garbage from homes, markets, restaurants and hospitals are transported by municipal trucks to the hilltop site. A recent visit showed the garbage heap stands only about 150 metres from the town.

The Bandarban-Rowangchhari road, one of the district's busiest routes used daily by thousands including schoolchildren, passes right beside it.

At least four major drainage channels of the town also carry sewage and other waste directly into the Sangu, turning the once-pristine river dark and foul smelling.

The river's surface is filled with sewage, plastic, food scraps, polythene and medical waste, including discarded syringes. Solid waste has already formed a thick layer on the riverbed.

The Sangu is a lifeline for more than 10,000 people living along its banks in Langgi Para, Kyamlung Para, Kohalong Para, Bhangamora Marma Para, Baruapara and Goaliakhola Muslim Para.

“My family has been drinking

this river's water for generations. Now the water has become dark and smells terrible due to pollution, but we still have to collect it — there is no alternative,” said Meiyngnu Marma of Bhangamora Marma Para. Chathoi Aung Marma of Kyamlung Para expressed similar concern.

In the Zero Point and Traffic Mor areas, several hotels were found pumping river water. “We use supply water, but when it runs out, we pump water directly from the Sangu. All the hotels near the bridge do this,” said Md Wahid, manager of Hotel Sumaiya.



According to the Department of Environment, Bandarban lacks an effective waste management policy or infrastructure, and most drainage outlets release directly into the river. Even light rainfall now causes water levels to rise, leading to waterlogging and sudden flash floods in the town.

“The Sangu is dying. Its bed is filled with waste.

The biodiversity around it is disappearing. Even sparse rain now heightens risk of floods

and landslides,” said environmental activist Lelung Khumi.

Doctors report a rise in diarrhoea, skin infections, dysentery and gastric illnesses linked to polluted water.

“Cooking or bathing with such contaminated water allows harmful pathogens to enter the body. The long term consequences could be severe,” said Dr Dilip Chowdhury, residential medical officer at Bandarban Sadar Hospital.

Md Rezaul Karim, assistant director of the DoE, said dumping waste into the river violates the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act 1995 and the Waste Management Rules 2021.

Contacted, SM Manjurul Haque, additional deputy commissioner in Bandarban, acknowledged the issue and said a modern waste management station is being planned under a project of the Department of Public Health Engineering.

Anupam Dey, executive engineer of the DPHE in Bandarban, said a Tk 350-crore mega project (2023-2028) for Bandarban and Lama municipalities includes a water treatment plant and permanent waste management facility.

“It will be initiated once the district administration hands over the acquired land,” he added.

2 traders stabbed, mugged in Uttara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two traders were stabbed and robbed of around Tk 1.48 lakh by a group of muggers in Dhaka's Uttara early yesterday, police and family members said.

The injured were identified as Masud Rana, 37, and Al-Amin, 42. The attack took place around 3:00am on Jasimuddin Road of Uttara.

The two were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 5:45am. After receiving primary treatment, they were released and taken home.

Uttara West Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Raju said they came to know about such an incident. “We will take action once a complaint is lodged,” he added.

Arfin Laiju, wife of Al-Amin, said they live in Dhaka's Sabujbagh Basabo area, while Masud is from Bakshibazar. Both are involved in scrap business.

Laiju said the two had gone to Uttara for work and were returning home late at night. They stopped near a shop on Jasimuddin Road to buy cigarettes when 8-10 muggers attacked them, stabbing them on the head, back and forehead before fleeing with Tk 1.48 lakh they had with them.

AAUB wins top int’l aircraft design award



CITY DESK

Aviation and Aerospace University, Bangladesh (AAUB) became champion in the International Light Aircraft Design Competition organised by the Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS), UK, on November 10, said a press release.

The university beat 35 universities, institutions and competing teams, marking the first time a Bangladeshi university has won first place in an international aircraft design competition.

Under the management of RAeS, the annual competition required teams to design an amphibious aircraft capable of carrying six to eight passengers and operating from both land and water, along with a complete basic design.

আহুনিয়া মিশন মেডিকেল কলেজ

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

আহুনিয়া মিশন মেডিকেল কলেজ (এএমএমসি) এর নিম্নবর্ণিত পদসমূহে নিয়োগের নিমিত্তে বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

পদের নাম	যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা	বেতন
অধ্যক্ষ	বিএমএডিসি ও রাইটেট মেডিকেল কলেজ/ ডেন্টাল কলেজ আইন ২০২২ অনুযায়ী শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। ডেন্টাল কলেজ আইন ২০২২ অনুযায়ী শিক্ষাগতযোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।	কলেজ কর্তৃপক্ষের বিদ্যমান নীতিমালার ভিত্তিতে আশেপাশে সাপেক্ষে।

উপরোক্ত পদসমূহের বিপরীতে অগ্রহী প্রার্থীদের সনাক্তকরণ সুই কর্তৃক পাঠ্যপত্রটি সাইজের কট্টন ছবি, জীবনকথার, সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সনদপত্র, অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্র ও স্বাক্ষরিত সনদপত্রের প্রতিলিপিকে আগামী ১০/১২/২০২৫ ইং তারিখের মধ্যে প্রেরণের অনুরোধ করা হলো। আহুনিয়া মিশন মেডিকেল কলেজ কর্তৃক নিম্নবর্ণিত ঠিকানায় ডাকযোগে বা সরাসরি অথবা ই-মেইলে আবেদনপত্র পাঠানোর জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। কর্তৃপক্ষ কলেজের স্বার্থে বিজ্ঞপ্তির যে কোন শর্ত শিথিল বা বাতিল করতে পারবে।

প্রতিষ্ঠা: বেড়িবাংলার, সেক্টর-১০, উত্তরা, ঢাকা-১২৩০
(ইজতেমা মাঠের পশ্চিম পাশে, কামাংগাড়া সংলগ্ন)

E-mail: ahsania.ammc2021@gmail.com আহুনিয়া মিশন মেডিকেল কলেজ

Request for Quotation for Red Hat OpenShift Plus (License & Local Support)

BRAC Bank PLC. delivers a full array of banking services to individuals and businesses through a network of 302 Branches & Sub-branches, 330 ATMs, 446 SME Unit Offices and 1,120 Agent Banking Outlets across the country. The bank is currently seeking potential vendors for **Red Hat OpenShift Plus (License & Local Support)**

Item Categories	Submission Date & Time
Red Hat OpenShift Platform Plus License (Commercial)	02/12/2025; 12 PM - 01 PM
Local support for OpenShift Platform Plus (Technical)	02/12/2025; 05 PM

A Request for Quotation (RFQ) is hereby issued for this purpose. The RFQ, along with details of the bidding process, can be found on the bank's website: <https://www.bracbank.com/en/page/e-tender>

Interested eligible bidders are requested to submit their technical offers as per Instruction to Bidder (ITB) outlined in the bidding process.

BRAC BANK
আমরা আছি

Political parties

FROM PAGE 3

He said there had been strong expectations for clear reforms in politics, bureaucracy, and business, but while everyone demands reforms in all sectors, “they do not want reforms for themselves.”

Shama Obaed, organising secretary of BNP, said political parties registered with the Election Commission cannot ensure transparency in their income and expenditure unless the commission is strengthened.

Decentralising power, she said, could help bring parties under greater financial accountability.

The event was moderated by Dhaka University Professor Asif M Shahan.

Nasiruddin Akhter Rashid

(29th November 1983 - 25th November 2023)



In loving memory of our beloved son
Late Nasiruddin Akhter Rashid

As we mark his second death anniversary,
the Rashid family humbly requests your prayers.

We seek your prayers and heartfelt remembrance
for his Maghferat, serenity of the hereafter,
and eternal peace.

Your kind thoughts mean more than words can
express as we hold him close in memory and Dua.

With deepest gratitude,
The Rashid Family

NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Center of Excellence in Higher Education

TENDER NOTICE

Tender No. NSU/25-26-T05

North South University is inviting sealed offers from bona fide/reputed organisations/ distributors/ business partners/ agents for supplying desktop computer for North South University as described in the tender schedule.

Interested bidders may collect schedule of tender from **Southeast Bank Ltd. Bashundhara Branch, Dhaka-1229** within the banking hour on all working days till **December 7, 2025** by paying non-refundable amount of taka 1,000.00 (one thousand) in cash for each schedule.

The bidders must submit **earnest money @ 2.5%** of the quoted price in the form of Pay Order issued from any scheduled bank drawn in favor of “**North South University**” along with their offer. The sealed offer must be submitted on **December 8, 2025 by 2:15 p.m.** at the office of the undersigned. The offers will be opened at 2:30 p.m. on the same day. Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the bids. NSU authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason.

Director, Internal Affairs
NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Bashundhara, Dhaka-1229
Phone: +88-02-55668200, Ext. 1204, Fax: +88-02-55668202
Email: procurement@northsouth.edu. Web: www.northsouth.edu

Quake defences delayed by red tape

Govt must urgently open the quake safety assessment facility

When the ground shook violently on November 21, the city's seismic assessment system was, quite literally, locked. For 16 months, the Urban Safety and Resilience Institute (USRI) in Mohakhali has stood as a 10-storey monument to waste. Completed in June 2024 and funded by the World Bank, the Tk 250 crore facility was meant to be the capital's seismic sentinel. Yet, while the fault lines have been active, the bureaucracy has remained comatose.

The problem is not a lack of expertise, but the absence of paperwork. Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), the capital's development authority, claims it has been waiting for ministry approval to operationalise a "deed of trust." Only after last weekend's triple shock did Rajuk hurriedly send the necessary files to the housing and public works ministry, as this newspaper reports. It is a classic case of administrative reflex: a flurry of paper-pushing that begins only after the crisis has arrived.

In geology, stasis is usually reassuring. In governance, it is dangerous. Dhaka's residents were reminded of this on Friday, when a magnitude 5.7 earthquake struck Madhabdi, just outside the teeming capital. It was the strongest tremor in decades—cracking walls, claiming at least 10 lives, and sending lakhs into the streets. But the earth had more to say. Over the next 32 hours, two additional tremors followed, including a magnitude 3.7 jolt in Badda, a dense neighbourhood at the city's core.

Nerves are frayed. Yet, the nation's earthquake preparedness remains stuck in the shivering inaction that paralyses USRI, the very institution designed to safeguard the public. Inside the building sits a laboratory stocked with European gadgetry—terrestrial laser scanners, ground penetrating radar, tri-axial testing systems. These machines can peer into concrete beams and count rebar without scratching the paint. They are the difference between knowing a building will stand and simply hoping it will. The timing makes the negligence even starker. Dhaka's sprawling periphery rests on soft alluvial soil that amplifies seismic waves; it is a vertical city built on hope and, too often, dubious concrete. A pilot assessment under the project examined some 3,250 schools and hospitals, identifying 42 buildings needing immediate demolition and 200 requiring retrofiting. Extrapolate that across a metropolis of over two crore people—where rapid urbanisation has easily outpaced regulation—and the scale of vulnerability becomes painfully clear. Leaving these diagnostic tools unused at USRI while the ground moves beneath us is both negligent and dangerous.

High-tech equipment atrophies when idle. The sensors and scanners at USRI have already missed a year of maintenance. Still, the Rajuk chairman insists he is "very positive" that the institute will launch now that the paperwork is moving. One hopes so. But earthquakes do not wait for bureaucrats to approve deeds of trust. If we want to survive the "big one," we must understand that resilience requires more than constructing a building or purchasing expensive equipment; it demands that the equipment is switched on.

Ensure regular water supply to Ctg residents

CWasa must urgently replace its old pipelines

We are concerned by the severe water shortages faced by nearly 40,000 consumers in Chattogram as CWasa's decades-old pipelines continue to collapse. A report published in this daily reveals that thousands of residents in the city are forced to wait late into the night just to collect enough water for basic daily use. Many must stay awake for hours to fill their reservoirs during short, irregular supply windows. Others, despite having official connections, have not received a single drop of water for years.

Reportedly, the root of the crisis lies in the outdated uPVC and cement pipelines installed 35 to 40 years ago. These brittle lines can no longer withstand the pressure required for uninterrupted supply. CWasa has divided the city network into six sectors, and five of them still rely on 375 kilometres of old pipelines spanning Barik Building to Patenga, Khulshi to AK Khan, Amin Jute Mill to Oxygen, Bahaddarhat to Mohra, and Khaja Road to Chaktai. These five sectors serve nearly 40,000 customers, almost half of CWasa's 90,846 billable connections. The worst-hit Barik Building to Patenga sector alone affects around 15,000 people. For many affected residents and businesses, the only alternative is to buy water at high prices from private sellers, deepening their financial burden. That some households continue to pay minimum monthly bills despite never receiving any water at all is particularly concerning.

It is most unfortunate that CWasa has not been able to modernise its infrastructure in line with the growing demands of a rapidly expanding city. Over the past decade and a half, it reportedly implemented eight small and large water supply projects at a cost of Tk 8,800 crore. Yet, no pipeline connections have been installed in more than a hundred areas, leaving at least 12 lakh people facing an acute water crisis. What is surprising is that even after six decades of operation, CWasa still does not have a master plan, which is essential for its effective functioning.

We urge the CWasa authorities to urgently replace its crumbling pipelines and ensure smooth and regular water supply for all its consumers. While CWasa officials have acknowledged the degraded state of the infrastructure and stated that a project to replace all outdated lines by 2029 is underway, this timeline offers little comfort to consumers currently living without proper access to water. The agency, therefore, must accelerate the replacement process, prioritising the most severely affected sectors. Interim measures, such as alternative supply arrangements and billing waivers for consumers not receiving water, are equally essential.

Global South to write 21st century's growth story

MACRO MIRROR



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Policy Dialogue. Views expressed in this
article are the author's own.

FAHMIDA KHATUN

and accelerating innovation. Smarter planning of cities, transport, land, and water further boosts productivity and human well-being. Meanwhile, cleaner air and healthier people strengthen economies from within. For Stern, this technological revolution is the centre of a new development model that promises cleaner, more resilient, and more competitive growth for the decades ahead.

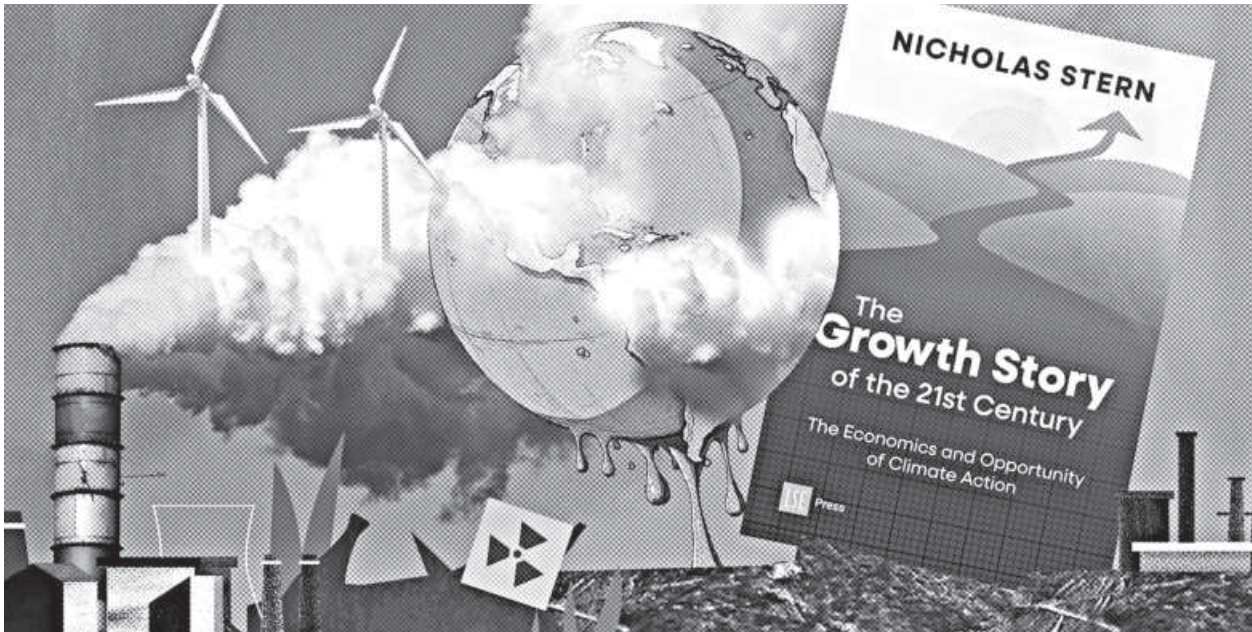
Interestingly, Stern argues that countries shaping this decisive moment

world's economic geography. Renewable energy, critical minerals, artificial intelligence, and new supply chains are shifting power and opportunities toward the Global South. Countries such as Kenya, Morocco, Ethiopia, Nepal, Paraguay, and Vietnam are already demonstrating how renewables can support development, while India, Brazil, South Africa, and others are emerging as major players in clean industries, critical minerals, and green innovation. Simultaneously, climate impacts, resource distributions, and capital flows are forcing a rethinking of global economic interdependence. The world will have to adjust to a more multipolar economy where emerging markets become central drivers of global production, investment, and innovation, if they are supported by affordable finance and fair international cooperation.

However, capital is most expensive for the countries that need it most.

must emphasise partnership and offer and facilitate funding that is structured to support and empower, rather than burden, developing nations."

He also highlights an important geopolitical shift: the industrialised West dominated climate negotiations for decades, often with limited success, but now, emerging economies are stepping forward. Four consecutive G20 presidencies, including Indonesia (2022), India (2023), Brazil (2024), and South Africa (2025), have placed sustainable development, green growth, and climate finance at the centre of the global economic agenda. However, the underlying problem of unequal influence in global decision-making, which leaves the majority of countries out of the decision-making process, remains unresolved. As Stern describes, "The problem may have changed shape and, to some extent, diminished with the increasing role of the G20, but it has not gone away."



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

of structural transformation will not be the traditional industrial powers but the emerging economies of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. He lays out how rapid technological change, cleaner energy systems, and new industrial opportunities can drive a profound shift in development strategies. For these regions, where most of the world's future infrastructure and urban expansion will occur, the transition to low-carbon systems is essential for both climate stability and the pathway to growth, jobs, and competitiveness. Since much of the infrastructure is yet to be built, developing economies have the rare opportunity to leapfrog past high-polluting models and adopt cleaner, more efficient technologies from the outset. If they seize this moment, they can build modern, resilient cities, diversify their economies, and unlock new sources of productivity.

Stern extends this argument to the global level, showing how climate action and clean technology are redrawing the

Risk perceptions are high. Financial markets are shallow. Interest rates are prohibitive. The result is a tragic and costly paradox. Many clean projects in developing countries are profitable in principle but unaffordable in practice.

This is why Stern emphasises reforming the international financial architecture. He argues that multilateral development banks must expand their balance sheets, while rich countries must not only meet but exceed their climate finance commitments. Concessional finance windows must be scaled up dramatically so that developing countries can make the necessary long-term investments. At the same time, blended finance should be used more effectively to reduce risks for private capital. Meanwhile, "country platforms" should coherently coordinate public and private investment. Stressing that global trade and investment rules must support the green transition, Stern writes, "A new approach to growth and development

Stern, however, recognises the disruptions that will come with the shift as economies develop, some jobs disappear, while many new ones are created. Workers in traditional industries will face uncertainty. Consumers, especially those on low incomes, might see rising costs during the transition. Therefore, he argues that protecting vulnerable households, investing in new skills, and ensuring fairness in policy creation are crucial not only for justice but also for maintaining public support. Transition policies should involve not only technocrats and investors but also workers, communities, and civil society.

The strongest message of Stern's book is one of possibilities. The 21st century's growth story is waiting to be written. It is the Global South's moment of opportunity and whether it is materialised and becomes a story of shared progress or irreversible loss now depends on the choices policymakers, investors, and global institutions make.

University dormitories must be part of the earthquake conversation



H M Sabbir Hossain
is student of international relations at
Chittagong University.

H M SABBIR HOSSAIN

The earthquake of November 21 once again exposed the serious weaknesses in Bangladesh's built environment. At least 10 people lost their lives, including in Dhaka, where many buildings tilted dangerously, developed cracks, and some of their parts collapsed. Panic and chaos were triggered in all major cities. Predictably, the immediate national debate focused on unplanned urbanisation, inadequate monitoring, and the vulnerability of structures. However, public discussion is incomplete if it leaves out one vital area: the condition of university residential halls.

While citizens, policymakers, and experts debate the dangers of faulty urban buildings, thousands of students sleep every night in structures that are just as unsafe—if not more. The dormitories of public universities represent a silent crisis in Bangladesh's earthquake preparedness. While some of the halls have stood for many decades, some date back to even the British era. These buildings were constructed at a time when seismic awareness, engineering technology,

and safety regulations were far less advanced. Over the decades, they have suffered from deterioration, ageing materials, inconsistent maintenance, and continuous overcrowding. Despite these risks, the halls remain packed with students because no safer alternative exists.

This situation is the product of prolonged administrative and governmental indifference. University infrastructures have long been viewed as permanent and unchangeable, rather than dynamic structures that require inspection, reinforcement, or reconstruction. Small cracks and other hazards, including electrical ones, are often dismissed instead of being viewed as early warnings of a catastrophe. Bureaucratic inefficiency delays even the most basic repairs. Budgets for renovation move slowly, and political influence affects construction decisions. Such complacency is dangerous, especially when these structures house thousands of young people in tightly packed spaces.

Students are, in fact, among the most vulnerable groups in the country

when it comes to earthquake risks. Spaces designed for two people now hold four or more. Exit routes are often unplanned, and evacuation training is almost nonexistent. Students have limited time and power to demand renovations or structural assessments, while the authorities show little urgency in addressing these dangers.

Bangladesh lies in a seismically active zone, and experts have repeatedly warned that a major quake could strike at any time. If structures in Dhaka can fail during a moderate quake, the condition of decades-old university residential halls should alarm everyone. Ignoring them because they are not located in busy commercial zones is a grave mistake. A collapse in a university hall can cause mass casualties in minutes, overwhelming emergency services and leaving the nation shaken by a tragedy that could have been prevented.

However, that requires decisive and immediate action. Bangladesh urgently needs a nationwide, independent structural audit of all public university dormitories by qualified engineers. The results must be made publicly available for accountability. Buildings found to be unsafe must undergo retrofiting using modern reinforcement techniques, including steel bracing, column strengthening, and the introduction of seismic-resistant features. Some older structures may be beyond repair; in those cases, new earthquake-resistant halls must be built as replacements.

At the same time, universities must

also implement proper evacuation systems. Clearly marked exit routes, regular earthquake drills, trained hall staff, and designated assembly points can significantly reduce casualties even in the case of structural damage. Safety education should be mandatory for students living in residential halls, ensuring that they know how to act during emergencies.

Most importantly, university campuses must be fully integrated into the national framework of disaster preparedness. Earthquake resilience cannot be viewed as an urban-only issue. Campuses are densely populated communities, and their buildings must follow the Bangladesh National Building Code and relevant safety guidelines. The Ministry of Education, the University Grants Commission, and university administrations must work together for an accountability system that includes annual inspections, penalties for negligence, and strict oversight of construction and repair work.

The November 21 earthquake points out that students, who represent the country's future, should not be living in structures that could turn into death traps during a major seismic event. A nation committed to resilience, safety, and progress must prioritise the protection of its young population.

Earthquake safety in university dormitories is not a matter of luxury—it is a matter of urgency. Bangladesh can no longer afford to look away.

The paradox of women in power and the myth of soft leadership



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TASMIAH T RAHMAN

For 15 and a half years, Bangladesh showcased Sheikh Hasina as the ultimate symbol of female empowerment; the woman who survived assassination, exile, and persistent threats to become the longest-serving leader in our history. But her shocking downfall and the extraordinary reality of her death sentence have forced us to confront a deeper truth about gender and power that we have long avoided. Women's leadership is not, and has never been, inherently soft, compassionate, or morally elevated. The comforting narrative that women will rule differently with tenderness or ethical clarity collapses when examined against the political histories of women who, like their male counterparts, have wielded the machinery of the state with force and sometimes with violence.

Hasina's rule was a stark reminder that women do not transcend systems simply by occupying them. Her government expanded digital surveillance, tightened police control over dissent, criminalised criticism through the Digital Security Act, 2018, and presided over a political culture where fear and patronage became governance tools. That this apparatus was commanded by a woman did not soften its impact. If anything, it highlighted something feminist scholars have long argued: institutions shape leaders far more than gender shapes institutional behaviour. In the recent volume *Gender and Nation in South Asia: Feminist Positions, Scholarship and Directions*, scholars remind us that South Asian nationalism often elevates women symbolically, as mothers, cultural guardians, and embodiments of the nation,

while leaving the structural hierarchies around them untouched. Bangladesh followed that script. The patriarchal and increasingly authoritarian state beneath Hasina grew stronger, not weaker, during her tenure, although she was celebrated as the “*Jononetri*” (leader of the nation).

This is not a uniquely Bangladeshi contradiction. Margaret Thatcher governed Britain with an iron fist that crushed unions and deepened working-class precarity, disproportionately harming the very women her symbolic victory was supposed to uplift. Angela Merkel, though far more restrained, presided over a Germany that stabilised but did not transform gendered inequities in pay, care, and safety. Women leaders do not automatically alter the structures they inherit; they often adapt to them. The mythology that women ascend to power and soften it from within is one of the most persistent fantasies of liberal politics and one of the least supported by evidence.

The limits of symbolic empowerment
Bangladesh has developed its own version of the fantasy that women in power will automatically lift all women. Instead of building a political movement, we built an NGO-ised vision of empowerment, locating change in microfinance, garment factory floors, and donor-led “awareness” campaigns. For years, empowerment was something women received, never something they organised to claim. Millions of women entered the economy as microfinance clients and wage workers, but they did so as individuals—

economically active but politically isolated. The result is that women became engines of export earnings, but not a constituency that could negotiate, demand, or transform.

This explains why, when horrific violence unfolds—such as the rape and murder of an adolescent girl by her elder sister's father-in-law earlier this year—Bangladeshi people protest without any major party machinery rallying behind them. No national platform

voices like Jamaat-e-Islami are resurfacing proposals that subtly steer women back into the domestic sphere. For example, Jamaat's leader, Shafiqur Rahman, has promised to reduce women's official working hours from eight to five if his party comes to power. He frames this as a way to “honour” mothers, but critics see it as a deeply patriarchal message wrapped in dignity. The implication is clear: women are morally superior when they stay

futures. Legal rights remain difficult to access. Single mothers remain deeply stigmatised. Divorced women are treated with suspicion. Mental health remains a luxury, not a right. Domestic helps, mostly women, live and labour without meaningful protections. This lack of transformation after years of female leadership feels deeply personal as a friend's domestic help, a single mother, took her own life recently. Her life, like so many others, folded quietly into the country's indifference after she had to give up the tiring battle for land rights and the custody of her child. Her invisibility stands in stark contrast to the spectacle of Hasina's downfall.

Beyond soft leadership

Hasina's era teaches a clear lesson. Women are not inherently gentle or morally superior. They are fully human, capable of the same range of leadership, ambition, brilliance, ruthlessness, and error as men. The problem lies not in women leading but in how we conceive power itself. The real danger is absolute power, unchecked by institutions, transparency, and civic accountability.

The lesson for Bangladesh is twofold. First, we must reject the narrative that women belong at home, fragile and protected, and that “honour” is only realised within domestic boundaries. Second, we must reject the fantasy that women entering the workplace or politics will magically purify broken systems. Leadership is not gendered; it is structural. What changes the experience of women in Bangladesh is not having a woman at the top, but creating systems in which women at all levels can claim voice, rights, safety, and dignity.

If we truly want a different future, we must build systems, not symbols. We must build collective power, not rely on singular women. We must build a politics where every woman, not just one at the top, has rights, a voice and autonomy. Only then can Bangladesh finally leave behind the myths of feminine virtue and masculine authority, and step into a politics grounded in equality, not fantasy.



VISUAL: MAHIYA TABASSUM

exists to treat gender-based violence as political violence. After decades of celebrating women's labour force participation, we still do not have a women's movement capable of shifting the moral centre of politics. Instead, millions of women navigate systems that neither protect nor represent them.

Women at the top, women left behind

The paradox Bangladesh cannot ignore is this: we can produce powerful women, but too often, powerless women continue to fall through the cracks. Even now, as the country wrestles with Hasina's legacy, conservative

home or limit their public roles.

Meanwhile, Hasina's political journey shatters any notion of fragility that we might expect of women leaders. Her decades in power showed that women can wield state power with discipline, force, and even ruthlessness if need be. If her example teaches us anything, it's that leadership is not naturally soft and that strength should not be gendered. While the state was able to produce a woman prime minister who commanded the military, controlled parliament, and dominated national narratives for over a decade, it still failed to create avenues through which ordinary women could shape their own

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

We must tackle digital violence to fight gender inequality



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AMITH KUMAR MALAKER

Every year, the global community observes countless designated days, organises events, undertakes projects, and spends millions with the aim of eradicating gender-based violence against women and girls. Yet, despite decades of effort, the needle has barely moved. Globally, around 73.6 crore women—nearly one in three—have faced gender-based violence in their lifetime. Among adolescent girls, one in four has been abused by her partner. According to a report by UN Women and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), one woman or girl was killed every 10 minutes by her intimate partner or family member in 2023, often inside her own home. This enduring brutality is more than a crisis; it is one of the greatest moral failures of our time.

Once again, the global community is observing the annual campaign “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence,” under this year's theme “UNITE to End Digital Violence against All Women and Girls.” More than thirty years have passed since this campaign began, yet violence persists—only now it has evolved into new, more insidious forms. As our lives move increasingly online, a new front has opened in the fight against gender-based violence: technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV).

Technology has undoubtedly empowered societies—expanding education, communication, and opportunity. But the same tools that connect us are being weaponised to control, intimidate, and silence women and girls. TFGBV refers to any act of harm, harassment, or abuse committed, assisted, or amplified through digital technologies. It includes sextortion, deepfake pornography, cyberflashing, doxing (the release of private information online), trolling, cyberbullying, online hate speech, hacking, and surveillance.

The consequences are devastating. Victims often suffer from anxiety, depression, job loss, withdrawal from education, and even commit suicide. Digital violence does not just happen “online”; its scars are deeply real. Studies show that 16 to

58 percent of women globally have experienced some form of online harassment. Young women and girls, who depend most on digital platforms for learning, work, and social connection, are particularly at risk.

In Bangladesh, the situation is no less alarming. Although more women are using digital tools, the gender digital divide remains stark. A Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) survey shows that 52.9 percent of men use the internet, compared with only 44.4 percent of women—an 8.5 percentage point gap. Meanwhile, 72.7 percent of men own a device compared to 57.2 percent of women. The latest GSMA Mobile Gender Gap Report paints an even bleaker picture: Bangladesh has the highest gender gap in mobile internet adoption in Asia—a staggering 40 percent.

This inequality means women face a double bind: fewer opportunities to benefit from technology, and greater exposure to harm when they do. Despite lower internet use, digital violence against women is rampant. A recent NETZ Bangladesh study revealed that over 78 percent of Bangladeshi women have experienced some form of tech-based abuse in their lifetime. Many reported restricting their social media use, avoiding sharing personal information, or even changing phone numbers to protect themselves from harassment. The consequences were not just emotional—some women left their jobs or had to relocate because of online abuse. Most victims never reported their experiences, fearing humiliation, inaction, or further victimisation by law enforcement.

Disturbingly, online misogyny is spilling into public life. During the recent Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) election, female candidates were relentlessly targeted on social media with sexist slurs, slut-shaming, and even threats of gang rape. Their campaign pages were flooded with obscene comments and doctored images. Despite widespread outrage, authorities remained largely silent. That silence sent a terrifying message to women

across the country: that their voices, even in democratic spaces, can be bullied into submission. If this culture of impunity persists, online harassment could become a major barrier to women's participation in politics, including in the upcoming national election.

The roots of this problem run deep. There remains a limited understanding of digital violence, even among policymakers and law enforcers. Many still dismiss it as a “virtual issue,” ignoring its real-life consequences. Bangladesh's legal and institutional frameworks are outdated and ill-equipped to respond to the fast-evolving digital landscape. Law enforcement agencies lack both technical expertise and gender sensitivity, while the justice system remains slow, stigmatising, and often hostile to survivors.

Meanwhile, tech companies have largely escaped accountability. Their platforms are designed for engagement, not empathy. Algorithms amplify outrage, hate speech, and misinformation, while content moderation remains inconsistent and opaque. The rise of artificial intelligence has made the situation worse: deepfakes and non-consensual AI-generated pornography are spreading faster than they can be removed, leaving victims powerless and unprotected.

The government's response has been mostly reactive. Despite repeated reports and media coverage, there is still no comprehensive national strategy to tackle digital GBV. Following last year's student-led mass uprising, cases of both online and offline abuse surged dramatically. Yet, instead of addressing the crisis head-on, the interim administration seems to have inherited the culture of denial and silence. Without coordinated action, digital spaces will remain unsafe, and inequality will deepen.

So we must ask ourselves: are we truly doing enough to make the digital world safe for women and girls? The answer is painfully clear: no.

We need urgent and comprehensive action. The government must update legal frameworks to explicitly define and criminalise technology-facilitated violence. Law enforcement agencies need specialised training and dedicated cyber units to handle such cases with sensitivity and expertise. Digital literacy programmes should be scaled up in schools, universities, and rural communities, empowering women and girls to navigate online spaces safely. Tech companies

must be held accountable for user safety through stricter regulations, transparency, and stronger content moderation.

But the government alone cannot fix this. Civil society, educators, rights activists, development partners, and relevant stakeholders must collaborate to raise awareness, support survivors, and hold institutions accountable.

Ending digital violence is not just about online safety—it is about protecting fundamental human rights. It is about ensuring that women and girls can learn, work, express themselves, and lead—without fear.

We can no longer afford to treat this as a secondary or “virtual” issue. Digital spaces are the new public squares. They shape how we live, think,

and participate in society. If women and girls are unsafe there, then our nation's progress remains incomplete.

The time for symbolic speeches is over. What we need now is real action—stronger laws, responsible technology, shared accountability, and louder voices—to build a digital world where every woman and girl can speak freely, dream boldly, and live without fear.



ইংরেজি বিভাগ

রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, রাজশাহী

সদ্যাকালীন মাস্টার্স প্রোগ্রামে ১২তম ব্যাচে ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

২০২৫-২০২৬ শিক্ষাবর্ষের প্রোগ্রামসমূহঃ

১) ১ বছর মেয়াদি MA in English

২) ১ বছর মেয়াদি MA in ELT

ভর্তি পরীক্ষার তারিখঃ ১৯ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৫; আবেদনপত্র জমা দেয়ার শেষ তারিখঃ ১৭ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২৫; ভর্তি পরীক্ষার ফলপ্রকাশঃ ২০ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৫; ভর্তিঃ ০৪ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬ থেকে ১২ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬ পর্যন্ত; ক্লাস শুরুঃ ১৬ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬

ভর্তি পরীক্ষার সময়ঃ সকাল ১১.০০টা থেকে ১২.০০টা, স্থানঃ শহীদুল্লাহ কলা ভবন, রা.বি.

ভর্তি পরীক্ষার পূর্ণমানঃ ৫০ (Composition: ২৫, Comprehension: ২৫), পাশ নম্বরঃ ২০

প্রয়োজনে যোগাযোগ করুনঃ মোবাইলঃ ০১৭১২৯৮২৫৪৭, ০১৭১৫০৯৩৯৯৫, ০১৭১৭৪৯৬২৮

অনলাইন ঠিকানাসমূহঃ

বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইটঃ <https://www.ru.ac.bd/courses/> (ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি এবং আবেদন ফরম এর জন্য) অথবা

সদ্যাকালীন এম.এ. প্রোগ্রামের ফেইসবুক পেইজঃ www.facebook.com/evengru/

অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র পাঠানোর ই-মেইল আইডিঃ englishru2016@gmail.com

তারিখঃ ২০২৫

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
EDUCATION ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
Tangail

E-mail: ee_tan@eedmoe.gov.bd

Memo No:- EE/EED/Tangail/Repair/5974-SHED-2025-2026/2086

Date: 24.11.2025

e-TENDER NOTICE NO. xen/eed/Tangail/Repair/5974-SHED/18/2025-2026

Limited Tendering Method (LTM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following Works Tender.

Sl No	Tender ID	Name Of Work	Last Selling Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
01	1179909	EE-EED-TANGAIL-5974-SHED-2024-2025-07: Repair and Renovation works of Elasin Nasimunnesa Girls High School ,Delduar,Tangail.	10.12.2025 17:00	11.12.2025 12:00
02	1179910	EE-EED-TANGAIL-5974-SHED-2024-2025-08: Repair and Renovation works of Jitendrabala Girls High School ,Kalihati,Tangail.	10.12.2025 17:00	11.12.2025 12:00
03	1179912	EE-EED-TANGAIL-5974-SHED-2024-2025-09: Repair and Renovation works of Sunotia High School ,Ghatail,Tangail.	10.12.2025 17:00	11.12.2025 12:00
04	1179913	EE-EED-TANGAIL-5974-SHED-2024-2025-10: Construction of Boundary wall and repair and renovation works at Dr.Ayesha Razia Khandaker School and College,Mirzapur,Tangail.	10.12.2025 17:00	11.12.2025 12:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline /Hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fee's for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National System portal have to be deposited, online through any registered Bank's branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP helpdesk(helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Md. Istiaque Jibbal Hemal)
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department,
Tangail.
Phone: 02997714027

GD-2538

George Martin confirms multiple ‘Game of Thrones’ sequels in development

George R R Martin has confirmed that the *Game of Thrones* universe is expanding, revealing at the 2025 Iceland Noir Festival that five to six new spin-offs – including at least one sequel – are now in development.

These projects come in addition to the ongoing prequels *House of the Dragon* and *A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms*. While he did not clarify whether the sequels will be films or series, he noted that he is collaborating with multiple writers. The update has revived speculation about a potential Arya Stark follow-up, long requested by fans.

Martin also reiterated that three animated Westeros shows are in the works, underscoring HBO’s continued commitment to growing the franchise.



The girl in the video wasn’t me, news portals should be more responsible: OYSHEE

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

An unfortunate incident took place at the Gazipur Shimultoli Small & Cottage Industries Fair, where a clash between visitors left the venue in shambles. At the centre of controversy was a video, supposedly featuring singer Oyshee Fatema Tuz Zahara, seen toppling a wall to ‘escape’. The video has been circulated widely, even on nationally renowned news portals and pages.

Speaking to The Daily Star, the singer confirmed that the girl in the video was not her. “I am astounded by how news portals could run the video without even verifying,” said the singer. “Our performance at the venue went very smoothly, and everyone enjoyed it. I do not know how the clashes at the venue started. To be honest, it was one of the best performances of my life.”

The singer expressed disappointment and discomfort at how the media is portraying the incident. “Some people are trying to politicise the incident, and it is very awkward that I am somehow in the midst of it. I kindly request my friends in the media to verify information before publication to avoid spreading confusion among the public,” she said.



WHAT’S THE HAPS?

EXHIBITION: ‘BREAK THE CIRCLE’

IUTPS brings together arresting global visions in its 12th edition, presenting 50 photographs and 7 photo stories distilled from 7,832 submissions. Curated by Jewel Paul, the exhibition reveals a refined tapestry of perspectives where emerging voices meet seasoned mastery, creating an evocative testament to the power and poetry of visual storytelling.

Date: Thursday-Sunday | November 27-30, 2025

Time: 12pm- 8pm

Venue: Studio Theatre Hall, BSA



Dharmendra passes away

STAR REPORT

Veteran Bollywood actor Dharmendra passed away yesterday morning at his residence in Juhu, according to reports by Indian news agency IANS.

He was 89.

The family has not yet released an official statement, but media reports say he had long been battling age-related health issues, including respiratory complications.

The legendary actor was cremated at Pawan Hans Crematorium in Mumbai, with family members and close friends in attendance.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a post on his official X account, wrote, “The passing of Dharmendra Ji marks the end of an era in Indian cinema.”

Born Dharam Singh Deol in a village in Ludhiana in 1935, and raised in Nasrali, Punjab, in a middle-class Jatt Sikh family, Dharmendra made his film debut in 1960 with the romantic drama “Dil Bhi Tera Hum Bhi Tere”.

He established himself in the 1960s with films such as “Bandini”, “Aaye Milan Ki Bela” and “Khamoshi”, before earning acclaim for his performance in Chetan Anand’s war drama “Haqeeqat” in 1965. His breakthrough as a box-office star came with “Phool Aur Patthar” the very next year.

Over the next two decades, Dharmendra starred in some of Bollywood’s biggest hits, including “Mera Gaon Mera Desh”, “Seeta Aur Geeta”, “Chupke Chupke”, “Sholay” and “Yaadon Ki Baraat”.

Across a career spanning over 300 films, he proved his versatility in romance, action, comedy and thrillers, earning the title of the original “He Man of Bollywood” for performing many of his own stunts.

SEE FULL STORY ON THE DAILY STAR ONLINE

NEWS

Khaleda
FROM PAGE 12

so far, she has been started on antibiotics,” Prof Siddiqui added.

In a message sent to The Daily Star around 9:30pm, another doctor from the medical board said, “Madam [Khaleda] has pneumonia. Treatment is ongoing. If there is no improvement, she may be taken to the CCU soon. Along with pneumonia, some other complications have arisen.

“Because of her age, she cannot receive all treatment at the same time even if we want to The doctors will keep her under close observation for the next 24 hours.”

Since returning home from London on May 6 after advanced medical care, Khaleda has been undergoing regular check-ups at Evercare Hospital.

Her family members, including Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman, are in close contact with her doctors.

Israeli drone attacks
FROM PAGE 12

training exercise in the occupied Golan Heights, claiming to prepare itself for “a variety of scenarios” along the Syrian border.

In a statement, the army said it had started “conducting a Chief of Staff test as part of a headquarters exercise”, with the drill running from yesterday morning and for the next two days.

In a separate development, Iran yesterday slammed Israel over its killing of Hezbollah’s military chief, a day after the commander was targeted with a strike in the Lebanese capital of Beirut, reports AFP.

“The Iranian foreign ministry strongly condemns the cowardly assassination of the great commander of the Lebanese Islamic Resistance, the martyr Haytham Ali Tabatabai,” the foreign ministry said in a statement.

Senior Hezbollah official Mahmoud Qmati said Israel’s strike crossed a “red line” and that the group’s leadership was considering whether it would respond.

Israel said it assassinated Hezbollah commander because the group was rearming and regrouping. The US was informed of the attack.

57% of coastal homes
FROM PAGE 12

technologies, credit, or climate-resilient public infrastructure.

The consequences are particularly severe for the poor and for agriculture-dependent families, who are losing land, crops, and income as salinity, flooding, and extreme heat intensify.

For the past 10 years, almost 75 percent of coastal residents in Bangladesh have reported experiencing flooding, which the report notes is lower than satellite-based estimates of around 90 percent.

The reported worst flood was about 40 centimetres deep, and it took about a week for the water to recede.

According to satellite data, in coastal Bangladesh, the average household was flooded 19 times during 2000-2018, or roughly once a year.

While Bangladesh’s investments in cyclone shelters and embankments have historically saved thousands of lives, the report warns that fiscal constraints are limiting the government’s ability to scale up infrastructure at the pace demanded by climate impacts.

The report argues that private-sector-led adaptation will be crucial, estimating that up to one-third of climate-related losses could be avoided if corporate firms can shift resources and investments more quickly in response to climate pressures. Improving access to credit, insurance, transport networks, and digital connectivity is essential to enable that transition.

“Bangladesh’s resilience is being continually tested by evolving environmental challenges... more needs to be done,” said Jean Pesme, World Bank division director for Bangladesh and Bhutan.

While speaking at the report unveiling event, he emphasised the need to expand early warning systems, social protection, climate-smart agriculture, and adaptation finance, including innovative risk-finance tools.

At a panel discussion, Prof Sharmin Neelormi of Jahangirnagar University said, “Climate-resilient infrastructures are now a critical issue, and our leadership must think seriously about how to address it.”

“In the Eighth Five-Year Plan, we placed strong emphasis on infrastructure, but with the Ninth Plan still on hold, many of these priorities remain unresolved,” she added.

Bangladesh needs nearly \$12 billion a year for adaptation and mitigation, but the government can provide only about \$3.5 billion, said Farhina Ahmed, secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

“The country also requires innovative financing and stronger private-sector participation.”

“Adaptation is often unattractive for private investors, so we must rethink how to mobilise financing. Each investment must generate multiple benefits,” she added.

New alliance set to launch
FROM PAGE 12

trial of Sheikh Hasina.”

NCP’s Chief Coordinator (South) Hasnat Abdullah said, “The Jatiya Party functions as a political extension of the Awami League and India.”

He urged the EC to disqualify Jatiya Party from the election, saying that its participation would distort the electoral environment. “If the polls are affected, the government and the Election Commission will be responsible for it.”

Party officials said they screened over 1,000 aspirants in the past two days and have officially closed the process, and that aspirants who missed their turn or were not informed can now reach out through the party’s hotline.

SPs for all dists
FROM PAGE 12

For the selection process through lottery, the PHQ, earlier in July this year, conducted an evaluation and prepared a list it deemed fit with priority for the 25th, 27th, and 28th batches of the police cadre.

Another PHQ source said that after the SP postings, the next step will be assigning officers in-charge (OCs) to police stations through a similar lottery process.

Lists of honest, neutral, and competent inspectors have already been collected from unit chiefs, and a “fit list” has been compiled.

At the same time, the process of clearing long-pending promotions of senior officers has also begun.

Earlier on Saturday, a special meeting was held at the home ministry to discuss policies related to police appointments and transfers during the election period.

During the meeting, a discussion arose regarding keeping the incumbent SPs working in their respective districts, while another group requested a total reshuffle. Amid the situation, the government decided to select SPs through a lottery system.

A senior PHQ official, requesting anonymity, said the lottery method was introduced to avoid any controversy surrounding election-centric policing.

“This will help ensure the deployment of neutral officers in the field,” he said.

Catalan nationalist titan goes on trial for corruption
AFP, San Fernando De Henares

Spain’s top criminal court yesterday opened a trial on corruption charges against ailing Catalan nationalist figurehead Jordi Pujol, a titan of Spanish politics following dictator General Francisco Franco’s death.

The trial of Pujol, 95, and his seven children for alleged criminal association and money laundering centres on the origin of the fortune of the man who led Catalonia’s regional government from 1980 to 2003.

Govt inaction risks fuelling
FROM PAGE 12

In a joint statement, 258 citizens said that since the July uprising, a specific group has emerged as the “sole agent” of Islam, leading a purge to eliminate differing opinions and practices.

It demanded Sarkar’s immediate release.

The statement mentioned vandalism of over 200 shrines, exhumation and burning of a body, harassment of women over attire, and the disruption of cultural programmes.

Meanwhile, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has criticised the double standards of law enforcement agencies.

“While law enforcement arrested the baul singer very quickly after charges of hurting religious sentiment were made against him, the same law enforcement stood by silently when baul artistes were attacked in broad daylight,” read the statement issued yesterday.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said this reluctance could be interpreted as “unofficial approval” of the violence.

He also described the government’s recent cancellation of music and physical education teacher recruitment as evidence of “state appeasement,” fostering a culture of fear in which artistes are being forced into hiding.

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), in its statement, said the attack violated articles 37 and 39 of the constitution, which guarantee freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

“Protecting the baul and other cultural-spiritual traditions is the constitutional duty of the state,” ASK stated, demanding a swift, impartial investigation and legal action against the attackers.

Meanwhile, eminent columnist Farhad Mazhar condemned the arrest of Sarkar and subsequent attack on baul artistes, saying such actions have nothing to do with religion.

He also announced that the next mega assembly of bauls, fakirs, and sadhus would be held in Manikganj, and he would be present there.

“Those who are beating up innocent bauls in Manikganj, I will be there. If you want, you can beat me too. I will take the beating. We do not seek revenge, but you will be taught a lesson,” he said at a protest rally organised in front of Dhaka’s Jatiya Press Club.

“What you are doing in the name of Islam has nothing to do with religion. Those who oppress innocent people and resort to violence can never claim to be followers of the prophet (PBUH),” he said.

Farhad Mazhar urged all bauls, Sufis, and fakirs to unite. “I urge all of you to stand with us, because today a powerful religious-fundamentalist force is attacking our heritage. Stay with us and continue this struggle alongside us.”

He also said that Abul Sarkar had been active in the anti-fascist movement.

“From events at the Shaheed Minar to any protest gathering, there hasn’t been a single one where he wasn’t by my side. By arresting him, you have essentially arrested me. I will not accept this,” he added.

Warning those trying to destabilise Bangladesh for political gains, Farhad Mazhar said, “Such conspiracies never remain hidden forever.”

He also urged NCP, BNP, and Jamaat to oppose the injustices inflicted on the bauls, Sufis, and fakirs.

“If you do not protest against this oppression and side with the oppressor for votes, don’t expect the people to bring you to power. The July uprising was the struggle of the oppressed against the powerful,” he said, warning that neither god nor people will forgive them.

Yesterday, the Mymensingh district unit of Bangladesh Sufibad Oikya Parishad held a protest rally at the city’s Shaheed Firoz Jahangir Square, demanding the release of Sarkar.

CASE FILED OVER ATTACK

A case was filed with Manikganj Sadar Police Station yesterday over the attack on Baul artiste Abul Sarkar’s followers.

Officer-in-Charge of Manikganj Sadar Police Station, Md Kamal Hossain, said that Abdul Alim, injured in the attack, filed the case against unknown persons.

Police have launched a drive to identify and arrest those involved, he confirmed.



PHOTO: STAR

RANGPUR CHEST DISEASE HOSPITAL

TB patients left without indoor care

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Patient admissions at the only 20-bed Chest Disease Hospital in the Rangpur division have remained suspended since June after the stoppage of dietary supply for inpatients.

With no admissions for months, the hospital has become virtually non-functional, despite being the only specialised government facility for chest disease patients in the region.

Outdoor services continue at the Chest Disease Clinic located on the hospital premises. Doctors said many tuberculosis (TB) patients, particularly those in critical condition, urgently require indoor care, but the suspension of admissions has deprived them of the treatment they need.

Established in 1965 in the

Tajhat area of Rangpur city, the hospital operates from a single-storey building with six rooms. It has separate wards for male and female patients, with 16 beds for men and four for women. The other three rooms serve as office space and staff quarters.

According to hospital sources, the facility currently has two medical officers, five nurses, one pharmacist, one ward boy and one moshalsi. The hospital also has a modern X-ray machine, GeneXpert facility and a microscopy lab, but most diagnostic services are underutilised due to the halt in inpatient care.

On Sunday, Abdul Kuddus, 65, and his wife Rowshan Ara Begum, 60, from the Ambari area, arrived seeking admission. Both are suffering from TB and are in a critical state. They

were disheartened to learn that inpatient services were suspended. After undergoing necessary tests, they received medicines from the outdoor clinic.

Nurun Nabi, 60, of Chanmari area, said, "I heard patients receive better treatment when admitted. But when I arrived, they said admissions are closed. I had to return with only medicines."

Data from the Chest Disease Hospital and Clinic shows that 1,621 patients received treatment for chest diseases in Rangpur district over the past six months, of whom 828 tested positive for TB.

Senior staff nurse Shamsul Alam said, "There are no patients in the hospital, so we have no work. The patients who used to be admitted here were mostly from marginalised communities."

Medical Officer Dr Mahmudul Hasan said, "Medicine alone is not enough. Regular nutritious food is vital for TB recovery. But the poor cannot afford it. When admitted, they receive nutritious food from the hospital. But due to the suspension of dietary supply, we cannot admit patients."

He said outdoor services continue and free medicines are being provided under the National TB Control Programme (NTP). "Earlier, we always had 6-7 patients admitted. The demand still exists," he added.

Rangpur Civil Surgeon Dr Shahin Sultana said, "Dietary supply has been stopped because there are no admitted patients. TB patients now prefer home-based treatment. However, if inpatient demand rises again, dietary supply will be restored."

RANGABALI OF PATUAKHALI

Forestland grabbed for watermelon cultivation

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Protected forestland and riverbanks are being illegally occupied in the Char Signboard area of Kachipara village under Patuakhali's Rangabali upazila, allegedly to cultivate watermelon by building an embankment.

Locals said tree felling and earth-cutting are being carried out at night using three excavators.

According to the Coastal Forest Division, Char Signboard was declared a 415-acre reserve forest on April 4, 2010 through a gazette notification, which also states that any newly emerged land attached to the shoal would automatically fall under Forest Department jurisdiction.

Mangrove afforestation later began in the area, with jhau, koromja, keora, gewa and bain trees planted.

In the 2021-22 fiscal year, the Forest Department planted jhau trees on 20 hectares, koromja on 10 hectares and keora-bain trees on 30 hectares in this protected forestland.

On November 8, local resident Manik Mollah reportedly brought in two excavators and began cutting soil inside the protected forest to build an embankment around his proposed watermelon plantation, allegedly felling more than 300 trees.

Forest officials visited the site on November 19 and temporarily halted the work.

"This is protected forestland. When we went to the spot, we saw two excavators destroying trees and cutting through the forest to build an embankment. We stopped the work and informed the UNO. However, on that night, another excavator was brought in, and the three machines continued cutting soil throughout the night. Around 30 hectares of forestland and more than 200 trees have been damaged," said Md Jalal Ahmed Khan, acting officer of the Kaukhali Forest Beat.

Contacted, Manik Mollah claimed he was working with permission from Tahshildar Jahidul Islam.

The tahshildar said the UNO was aware of it and declined to comment further.

Rangabali Range Officer Abu Kalam Azad said they visited the site on November 19, ordered all activities to stop, and submitted the protected forest gazette and supporting documents to the UNO.

"The UNO then told us he would look into the matter, so we did not file a case. Yet, three excavators were used that night to continue cutting soil in the forest," he said.

"No one will be allowed to harm protected forestland. Legal action will be taken against those responsible," he added.

Contacted, Rangabali UNO Rajib Das Purkaystha said, "I was not aware of the matter earlier. The Forest Department has since provided the gazette and documents. Necessary action will be taken after consulting with higher authorities."



BNP pledges free media if elected

FROM PAGE 3

forming a commission," he said.

He criticised the interim government for forming a media reform commission but failing to discuss or

implement its findings. If the responsibility to govern is entrusted to the BNP, media reform would be treated as a priority, he said.

Fakhrul said journalists must practise independent

journalism and stay away from political influence, adding that internal divisions within media unions often push journalists into partisan roles.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Department of Public Health Engineering
Sirajganj District, Sirajganj
E-mail: ee.sirajganj@dphe.gov.bd

Memo No: 46.03.8800.061.16.005.23- 501 Date: 24-11-2025

Invitation for e-Tender Notice (04/2025-26)

1	Ministry/Division	Local Government Division
2	Implementing Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE)
3	Project/Program Name	Revenue Budget
4	e-Tender IDs & Package No:	1183651 & Rev-Siraj-2025-26-02
5	Description of works	Installation of 10 Nos 100 mm x 50 mm dia Deep Tubewell with 1.0 HP Submersible Pump at Different Upazila in Sirajganj District under Revenue Budget during the FY: 2025-2026.
6	Name, designation & Address of official Inviting Tender	Name: Md. Rokunujjaman Executive Engineer Sirajganj District, Sirajganj Tel. No.: 02-588831838, E-mail: ee.sirajganj@dphe.gov.bd
7	Information	This is e-GP LTM tender, where only e-tenders will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the website: www.eprocure.gov.bd.

(Md. Rokunujjaman)
Executive Engineer, DPHE
Sirajganj District, Sirajganj.

GD-2540

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Noakhali
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No-46.02.7500.000.07.007.25-4247 Dated: 23/11/2025.

Invitation for Tenders (IFT for Works)
e-Tender Notice No-43/2025-26

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works as stated as below:

Sl No	Tender ID No	Procurement Method	Name of Works	Last Selling Date & Time	Last Date & Time of Tender Security Submission	Closing & Opening Date & Time
1	1155091	LTM	IRIDPNFLNOA/SUB/RHB/24-25W-1615 Maintenance of UZR Khaserhat-Boragir bazar-Boger bazar-Babul Market Connecting Road (Ch. 00m-2000m) under Subarnachar Upazila, District: Noakhali, ID no: 475894033	10-12-2025 17:00	11-12-2025 13:00	11-12-2025 14:00
2	1155092	LTM	IRIDPNFLNOA/SUB/RHB/24-25W-1616 Maintenance of Jiauddin bazar-Asrayan market connecting road (Ch. 1000m-3000m) under Subarnachar Upazila, District: Noakhali, ID no: 475894040	10-12-2025 17:00	11-12-2025 13:00	11-12-2025 14:00
3	1155093	LTM	IRIDPNFLNOA/SUB/RHB/24-25W-1617 Maintenance of Chowrabazar-Embankment Road. (Charclark) (Ch. 00m-990m) under Subarnachar Upazila, District: Noakhali, ID no: 475894043	10-12-2025 17:00	11-12-2025 13:00	11-12-2025 14:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

(Signature)
Executive Engineer
LGED, Noakhali
Phone: 02334433826
E-mail: xen.noakhali@lged.gov.bd

GD-2545

A missing son

FROM PAGE 3

where he had been laid to rest.

Yesterday noon, nearly one and a half years after Sabbir disappeared, Mukta received the call from Shahbagh Police Station she had long awaited – and feared. Their DNA matched one of the six bodies that had already been buried at Jurain graveyard in August this year.

When contacted around 5:40pm yesterday, Mukta said they were at Shahbagh Police Station to complete the formalities.

She was unable to continue speaking and hung up.

Rashedul Alam, sub-inspector of Shahbagh Police Station, said the bodies had remained unclaimed for months and were buried with assistance from Anjuman Mofidul Islam following a court directive.

He confirmed that one of the bodies has now been identified as Sabbir Hossain, son of Shahliq and Mukta. "We have completed the formalities and shared the details with Anjuman Mofidul Islam," he told The Daily Star.

He added that while the family may not be able to retrieve the body, they can visit the grave.

Politicians, officials

FROM PAGE 3 clarified the implications for people who have already suffered unjust prosecutions under the law."

Thereportrecommended further reforms to protect journalists and press freedom in Bangladesh, so that no one is afraid to report the truth.

The findings were presented during a panel discussion on the last day of the Bay of Bengal Conversation – a three-day international event that ended yesterday – at a hotel in the capital.

At the discussion, Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman expressed hope that the upcoming parliament would refrain from introducing such restrictive laws in the future. "They should discuss with all stakeholders before enacting laws," he said.

He also urged journalists to propose solutions for

protecting citizens who may be victims of irresponsible or misleading reporting. "We should find a balance between protecting journalists and protecting citizens," he added.

Maneka Khanna, senior legal program manager at the Clooney Foundation, presented the findings.

Barrister Sara Hossain, honorary executive director of BLAST, and Prof Sajjad Siddiqui, chairman of Dhaka University's Peace and Conflict Studies department, also spoke at the event.

PRAYER TIMING
NOVEMBER 25

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-10	12-45	3-45	5-19	7-00
JAMAAT 5-45	1-15	4-00	5-22	7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre
Savar, Dhaka-1343
www.bpatc.gov.bd

No. 05.01.0000.130.07.866.24.1546

Date : 24/11/2025

e-Tender Notice 02/2025-26

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the following procurement.

Tender ID No.	Description	Online Tender Notice Publication Date and Time	Online Tender Closing Date and Time
1181978	4(Four) pcs Stainless Steel Rack purchase	20-Nov-2025 20:45	02-Dec-2025 12:45
1181371	Purchasing 09(Nine) Nos. 3KVA Online UPS for BPATC Computer Section	20-Nov-2025 18:30	02-Dec-2025 12:30
1160919	Purchasing Network Accessories for the Computer Lab on the Ground Floor of the 15 Storied Dormitory.	19-Nov-2025 22:00	30-Nov-2025 16:00
1183111	Repairing Different types of Furniture in BPATC Auditorium and Rajanigandha Classroom	23-Nov-2025 22:00	04-Dec-2025 15:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tenders, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

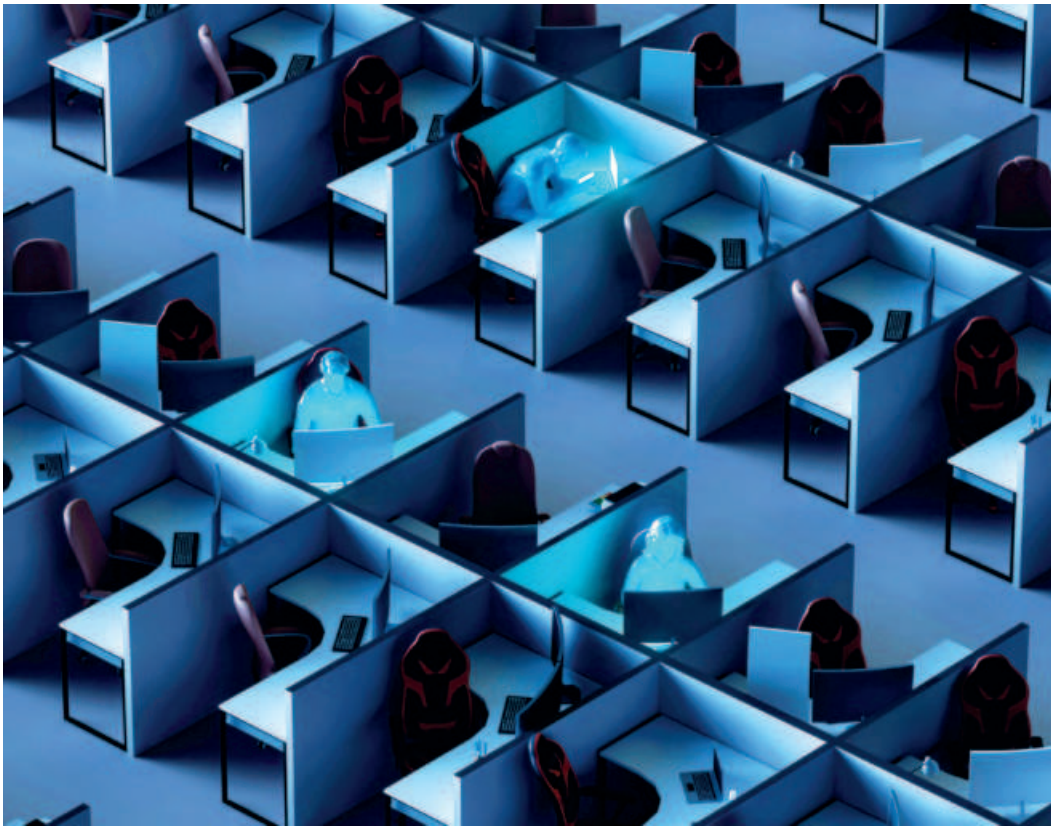
The fees for last selling/downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks Branches up to date & time. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). For more details please contact to the PE's Support Desk (01717-299645).

Sd/-
(Mst. Tahmina Akter)
Deputy Director (Finance)
Phone : 02224446617

GD-2543

Why the culture of glorifying over-work needs to stop

Being the last person to leave the office was a badge of honour in the old world. Today, it can be a shame.



ZARIF FAIAZ

The glorification of overworking and the expectation to stay late in the office have become long-ingrained in the corporate culture of many countries, including Bangladesh. But in this modern age, while many countries across the world are doing away with this culture, staying late is still often seen as a sign of dedication and hard work in Bangladesh. Is this relentless pursuit of productivity, however, hurting more than helping?

Historically, the practice of staying late at work was seen as a badge of honour, a tangible demonstration of one's dedication and commitment to their job and employer. This notion was rooted in the industrial age's emphasis

on physical presence and hours logged as proxies for productivity and loyalty.

However, extensive research and shifts in generational mindsets have debunked this equation of time spent at work with productivity and commitment. Research shows that excessive hours are demonstrably bad for business. A 2014 study by Stanford University found that employee productivity falls sharply after a 50-hour workweek, and falls off a cliff after 55 hours.

A 2020 meta-analysis published in the journal *Burnout Research* also found a strong correlation between long working hours and burnout, a state of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced efficacy. Burned-out employees are more likely to

be absent from work, disengaged, and ultimately leave their jobs altogether. This high turnover rate can be incredibly costly for businesses, with replacement and retraining expenses eating into profits.

The perpetuation of this culture in Bangladesh, where companies often reward employees who willingly overwork and stigmatise those who prioritise work-life balance, is particularly concerning. This not only fosters an unhealthy work environment but also discourages talented individuals who seek a more balanced and fulfilling professional life.

The expectation to conform to this outdated model of work is at odds with the aspirations of younger generations who advocate for a healthier approach to work, one that values efficiency, flexibility, and the importance of mental and physical well-being.

The good news is, there's a growing movement towards a more sustainable work model. Companies around the world are exploring the concept of four-day workweeks, with some even trailing them with remarkable success.

In the UK, a recent pilot program involving over 70 companies and 3,300 employees saw a dramatic shift in work culture. Employees worked 100% of their workload 80% of the time, with no pay cuts. The results were overwhelmingly positive. Productivity remained the same or even increased, employee well-being soared, and absenteeism rates dropped. Nearly all participating companies (92%) opted to continue with the four-day week after the trial period.

This isn't just an anomaly. Similar trials in Iceland and Japan have yielded similar results, suggesting that a shorter workweek can be beneficial for both employees and employers.

The concept of a healthy work-life balance is finally gaining traction. While a drastic shift to a four-day workweek may not be feasible for all Bangladeshi companies right away, there are steps that can be taken in the interim.

Firstly, companies need to encourage effective time management. Equipping employees with the skills to prioritise tasks and delegate effectively can significantly boost productivity within standard working hours. Secondly, valuing outcomes over presenteeism is crucial. Employees who consistently deliver high-quality work within their designated hours should be recognised, not those who rack up the most overtime. Finally, leading by example is paramount. Managers who themselves leave at a reasonable hour and actively encourage breaks and vacations send a powerful message.

The generational shift in mindset is not just a trend but a response to a deeper understanding of what motivates people and what contributes to a productive and innovative workplace. Millennials and Generation Z have been at the forefront of advocating for flexible work arrangements, mental health days, and the integration of technology to streamline work processes. These changes are not just about comfort or convenience; they are about creating a sustainable work environment that respects individual needs and fosters long-term productivity and innovation.

The world of work is changing. Bangladesh's companies must adapt and embrace a new era where valuing employee well-being and fostering a healthy work-life balance go hand in hand with success.

LeCun walks away from Meta, and from the LLM era he calls a dead end

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Yann LeCun, one of the founding figures of modern deep learning and Meta's Chief AI Scientist for nearly a decade, has quietly walked out of the company at a moment when AI is its most expensive and strategic bet. The announcement came with the kind of brevity that feels almost mismatched to the weight of the moment: Meta confirmed his departure; LeCun confirmed his new role at a small startup; and the industry exhaled in confusion. This is, after all, not just another researcher leaving Big Tech for a shinier lab. LeCun is one of the three pioneers who shaped the neural network revolution that underpins everything from image recognition to ChatGPT. A Turing Award winner. The architect of convolutional neural networks. A scientist whose early bets, dismissed repeatedly and sometimes mocked, went on to define entire eras of computing. And yet he is leaving a company spending billions on AI to work on technology that Meta, by his own account, does not consider a priority. He has not gone to a competitor. He has not retired. He has not stepped back into academia. He is moving toward a direction he believes the future is pulling us, even if the world's most powerful AI companies are not.

For months, he has been unapologetically blunt about his concerns. In a talk at MIT just weeks before leaving Meta, he said that "nobody in their right mind would use LLMs of the type that we have today" within three to five years. Coming from anyone else, this would have been provocative. Coming from someone who spent forty years predicting the future correctly? It felt like a warning. LeCun's argument is straightforward: today's large language models are statistical parrots. They predict the next word. They do not understand the physical world. They do not know that objects exist even when you are not looking. They cannot reason causally. They are incredibly useful but they are not intelligent in any meaningful sense. He has repeatedly compared their intelligence to that of a cat, insisting the cat is smarter.

His alternative vision is something he has long championed: world models. Systems that learn from the observable universe, through vision, action, and

feedback, much like children learn physics by dropping things until gravity makes sense. These models aim to build causal, grounded understanding rather than statistical prediction. It is not surprising that he wants to build that future. What is surprising is that Meta is not the place where he believes that the future will be built. This is despite the fact that Meta has publicly committed staggering amounts of money to its AI efforts. It has released Llama, one of the most influential open-source LLM families in the world. It has heavily reshaped its product line around generative AI. In that context, the departure of the person responsible for the scientific foundations of its AI strategy feels less like routine turnover and more like a philosophical parting of ways.

If your chief scientist calls your core technology a dead end, you either change course or brace for departures. Meta has done neither. LeCun has made his stance clear, repeatedly, sometimes loudly. And Meta has carried on, investing more aggressively than ever in exactly the approach he disavows. The conflict is ideological. One side believes the future lies in bigger, more capable large language models. The other believes scaling is a distraction from building systems that actually understand the world. However, what makes this moment uniquely unsettling for the industry is LeCun's track record. In the 1980s, he struggled to find a PhD adviser because machine learning was considered a fringe obsession with no scientific future. Thirty years later, that so-called dead end became the foundation of modern AI. He has been early and right enough times that dismissing him now feels risky.

His three-to-five-year timeline for the obsolescence of current LLM architectures is not a prediction most companies want to hear, especially companies whose valuations have been boosted by the promise of generative AI. But if he is even partially right, the implications are enormous. Entire startups built around LLM APIs may find themselves racing against a technological cliff. Investors who believe bigger is better may discover that scale hits limits sooner than expected. And AI labs pouring billions into ever-larger models may realize they have been

competing in the wrong marathon. But of course, LeCun could be wrong. Even the most brilliant scientists swing and miss. Paradigm shifts do not run on schedules. Markets reward performative certainty more than scientific humility. And LLMs, for all their flaws, have become profoundly useful, integrated into workflows, search engines, creative tools, and customer support systems. They are not going away tomorrow.

But even if LeCun is wrong about the exact timeline, he may be right about the direction. The industry has been oscillating between excitement and anxiety, moving faster than its own understanding. Most of today's models are impressive in performance and deeply limited in cognition. And the deeper these limitations are studied, the clearer it becomes that statistical prediction is a powerful trick, not a path to general intelligence. What makes LeCun's exit unsettling is not just the departure itself but what he chose over Meta. He walked away from infinite compute budgets, world-class labs, and global influence to work on something he believes is being ignored. And that brings us to the uncomfortable truth: this is a moment when the brightest minds in AI are diverging rather than converging. Some believe intelligence is a matter of more tokens, more parameters, more memory. Others believe intelligence requires a fundamentally different kind of machine; one that perceives, experiments, forms hypotheses, and understands causality.

What happens next will depend on which vision proves truer. If LLM-centric AI keeps advancing at its current pace, Meta's bet will look prescient and LeCun's warning will fade into a historical footnote. But if the limits of scale arrive abruptly, and they often do in technology, the companies chasing bigness will have to answer why they ignored one of the field's most credible skeptics. For now, the only certainty is uncertainty itself. The foundations of the current AI wave suddenly feel less stable, less inevitable, and more open to disruption than they did just a week ago. And in that sense, LeCun's exit may end up mattering even more than where he goes next, because it reminds us that in a field obsessed with prediction, the future still has an unnerving habit of surprising even its boldest architects.

From policy to production: bringing equality into RMG and agro-processing management

ZARIF FAIAZ

Capacity development in Bangladesh's ready-made garments (RMG) sector has long meant training workers on skills at the sewing line. Supervisors and operators attend courses, production targets are discussed, and efficiency is tracked. Yet one layer of the factory has often been left out of that picture: mid-level management, particularly staff in administration and human resources. The same pattern is often seen in the agro-processing (AP) sector, where line workers may receive basic technical training, but administrative and HR personnel remain disconnected from deeper conversations around rights, gender inclusion, and decent work.

When that tier is not exposed to the same conversations on rights, equality and workplace relationships, gaps open up between what factories say on paper and what happens on the production floor. Policies may reference gender, grievance procedures or non-discrimination, but they are not always understood, enforced or updated by the people who manage day-to-day decisions. Over time, those gaps show up in very practical ways: how complaints are handled, who gets promoted, who is listened to, and whose problems are quietly ignored.

Swisscontact's has tried to step directly into that space. Instead of designing yet another worker-focused course, the programme has brought mid-level management into the frame, convening 48 staff from 27 RMG factories and 16 staff from 8 AP factories for targeted training on gender equality, labour rights and decent work (LRDW) and environment responsibility (ER). Each factory nominated two participants, typically drawn from HR, administration or similar roles, for a three-day course delivered in three separate batches.

At the heart of the intervention is a relatively simple diagnosis. The core problem is not only a lack of rules; it is a lack of knowledge and awareness among factory management – especially mid-level managers – about how equality and environmental responsibility shape the workplace. That gap affects how leave is granted, how harassment is addressed, how performance is judged and how disputes are resolved. Over time, it affects livelihoods just as surely as a change in piece rates or overtime hours.

In both the RMG and AP sectors, women workers often face compounded disadvantages. Many have entered these workforces as a first route to income and a measure of independence, yet still find themselves sidelined when decisions are taken. If HR and admin teams are not equipped to recognise and address gender-based inequality, female workers may face subtle but persistent barriers: being passed over for training, discouraged from promotion, or left without remedy when they raise concerns. Others, including workers from minority or marginalised backgrounds, may experience similar patterns of exclusion.

Swisscontact's intention is to help factories build a more equal working environment from the middle out. That means encouraging managers to see themselves not only as enforcers of rules but as stewards of workplace culture. When mid-level staff understand how policy choices land on the production floor, they are better placed to create a more supportive atmosphere – one where female workers and others who are often excluded can participate, progress and be heard.

The approach also complements earlier work under Swisscontact's intervention to strengthen supervisory skills and widen women's access to line leadership roles. While those initiatives focus on who leads production teams, this new intervention looks at who shapes the rules and practices that frame working life. Taken together, they begin to align the leadership on the floor with the policies in the office, so that efforts to promote equality are reinforced rather than undercut.

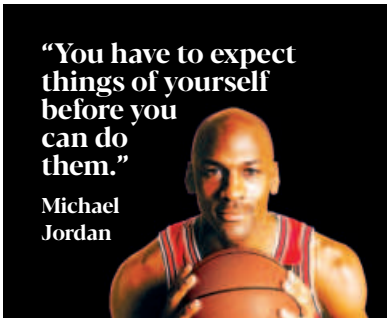
One of the recurring questions from factory leadership is what all of this means for productivity. For many owners and senior managers, output remains the primary concern, especially in a market marked by tight margins and demanding buyers. Swisscontact has chosen to address that concern head-on, arguing that gender-sensitive, equality-focused policies are not a distraction from performance but a precondition for it.

The case is practical. Clear, fair policies on promotion and discipline can reduce disputes and absenteeism. Grievance mechanisms that workers trust can surface problems early, before they escalate into unrest or costly turnover. Managers who understand gender dynamics are less likely to overlook talent, meaning that skilled women are more likely to move into roles where they can contribute fully. In short, treating workers fairly and protecting their rights is presented not only as the right thing to do, but as a driver of smoother operations and stronger output.

For mid-level managers, that framing matters. When equality and ER are linked to the metrics they are already expected to deliver – efficiency, quality, stability – the conversation shifts from "extra work" to "better work". The training encourages participants to see policy review and implementation as part of their core responsibilities, not an add-on left to compliance teams or external audits.

If the model takes root, several outcomes are within reach. Factories would have a cadre of mid-level managers who understand and can act on equality and employee relations issues. Policies would be more closely aligned with workers' realities and more consistently applied across departments and shifts. And, over time, the link between fair treatment and productivity would become visible enough to sustain change without constant external support.

The BYETS project is funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and implemented by Swisscontact.



George Martin confirms multiple ‘Game of Thrones’ sequels in development

George R R Martin has confirmed that the *Game of Thrones* universe is expanding, revealing at the 2025 Iceland Noir Festival that five to six new spin-offs – including at least one sequel – are now in development.

These projects come in addition to the ongoing prequels *House of the Dragon* and *A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms*. While he did not clarify whether the sequels will be films or series, he noted that he is collaborating with multiple writers. The update has revived speculation about a potential Arya Stark follow-up, long requested by fans.

Martin also reiterated that three animated Westeros shows are in the works, underscoring HBO’s continued commitment to growing the franchise.



The girl in the video wasn’t me, news portals should be more responsible: OYSHEE

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

An unfortunate incident took place at the Gazipur Shimultoli Small & Cottage Industries Fair, where a clash between visitors left the venue in shambles. At the centre of controversy was a video, supposedly featuring singer Oyshee Fatema Tuz Zahara, seen toppling a wall to ‘escape’. The video has been circulated widely, even on nationally renowned news portals and pages.

Speaking to The Daily Star, the singer confirmed that the girl in the video was not her. “I am astounded by how news portals could run the video without even verifying,” said the singer. “Our performance at the venue went very smoothly, and everyone enjoyed it. I do not know how the clashes at the venue started. To be honest, it was one of the best performances of my life.”

The singer expressed disappointment and discomfort at how the media is portraying the incident. “Some people are trying to politicise the incident, and it is very awkward that I am somehow in the midst of it. I kindly request my friends in the media to verify information before publication to avoid spreading confusion among the public,” she said.



WHAT’S THE HAPS?

EXHIBITION: ‘BREAK THE CIRCLE’

IUTPS brings together arresting global visions in its 12th edition, presenting 50 photographs and 7 photo stories distilled from 7,832 submissions. Curated by Jewel Paul, the exhibition reveals a refined tapestry of perspectives where emerging voices meet seasoned mastery, creating an evocative testament to the power and poetry of visual storytelling.

Date: Thursday-Sunday | November 27-30, 2025

Time: 12pm- 8pm

Venue: Studio Theatre Hall, BSA



Dharmendra passes away

STAR REPORT

Veteran Bollywood actor Dharmendra passed away yesterday morning at his residence in Juhu, according to reports by Indian news agency IANS.

He was 89.

The family has not yet released an official statement, but media reports say he had long been battling age-related health issues, including respiratory complications.

The legendary actor was cremated at Pawan Hans Crematorium in Mumbai, with family members and close friends in attendance.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a post on his official X account, wrote, “The passing of Dharmendra Ji marks the end of an era in Indian cinema.”

Born Dharam Singh Deol in a village in Ludhiana in 1935, and raised in Nasrali, Punjab, in a middle-class Jatt Sikh family, Dharmendra made his film debut in 1960 with the romantic drama “Dil Bhi Tera Hum Bhi Tere”.

He established himself in the 1960s with films such as “Bandini”, “Aaye Milan Ki Bela” and “Khamoshi”, before earning acclaim for his performance in Chetan Anand’s war drama “Haqeeqat” in 1965. His breakthrough as a box-office star came with “Phool Aur Patthar” the very next year.

Over the next two decades, Dharmendra starred in some of Bollywood’s biggest hits, including “Mera Gaon Mera Desh”, “Seeta Aur Geeta”, “Chupke Chupke”, “Sholay” and “Yaadon Ki Baraat”.

Across a career spanning over 300 films, he proved his versatility in romance, action, comedy and thrillers, earning the title of the original “He Man of Bollywood” for performing many of his own stunts.

SEE FULL STORY ON THE DAILY STAR ONLINE

NEWS

Khaleda
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so far, she has been started on antibiotics,” Prof Siddiqui added.

In a message sent to The Daily Star around 9:30pm, another doctor from the medical board said, “Madam [Khaleda] has pneumonia. Treatment is ongoing. If there is no improvement, she may be taken to the CCU soon. Along with pneumonia, some other complications have arisen.

“Because of her age, she cannot receive all treatment at the same time even if we want to The doctors will keep her under close observation for the next 24 hours.”

Since returning home from London on May 6 after advanced medical care, Khaleda has been undergoing regular check-ups at Evercare Hospital.

Her family members, including Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman, are in close contact with her doctors.

Israeli drone attacks
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training exercise in the occupied Golan Heights, claiming to prepare itself for “a variety of scenarios” along the Syrian border.

In a statement, the army said it had started “conducting a Chief of Staff test as part of a headquarters exercise”, with the drill running from yesterday morning and for the next two days.

In a separate development, Iran yesterday slammed Israel over its killing of Hezbollah’s military chief, a day after the commander was targeted with a strike in the Lebanese capital of Beirut, reports AFP.

“The Iranian foreign ministry strongly condemns the cowardly assassination of the great commander of the Lebanese Islamic Resistance, the martyr Haytham Ali Tabatabai,” the foreign ministry said in a statement.

Senior Hezbollah official Mahmoud Qmati said Israel’s strike crossed a “red line” and that the group’s leadership was considering whether it would respond.

Israel said it assassinated Hezbollah commander because the group was rearming and regrouping. The US was informed of the attack.

57% of coastal homes
FROM PAGE 12

technologies, credit, or climate-resilient public infrastructure.

The consequences are particularly severe for the poor and for agriculture-dependent families, who are losing land, crops, and income as salinity, flooding, and extreme heat intensify.

For the past 10 years, almost 75 percent of coastal residents in Bangladesh have reported experiencing flooding, which the report notes is lower than satellite-based estimates of around 90 percent.

The reported worst flood was about 40 centimetres deep, and it took about a week for the water to recede.

According to satellite data, in coastal Bangladesh, the average household was flooded 19 times during 2000-2018, or roughly once a year.

While Bangladesh’s investments in cyclone shelters and embankments have historically saved thousands of lives, the report warns that fiscal constraints are limiting the government’s ability to scale up infrastructure at the pace demanded by climate impacts.

The report argues that private-sector-led adaptation will be crucial, estimating that up to one-third of climate-related losses could be avoided if corporate firms can shift resources and investments more quickly in response to climate pressures. Improving access to credit, insurance, transport networks, and digital connectivity is essential to enable that transition.

“Bangladesh’s resilience is being continually tested by evolving environmental challenges... more needs to be done,” said Jean Pesme, World Bank division director for Bangladesh and Bhutan.

While speaking at the report unveiling event, he emphasised the need to expand early warning systems, social protection, climate-smart agriculture, and adaptation finance, including innovative risk-finance tools.

At a panel discussion, Prof Sharmin Neelormi of Jahangirnagar University said, “Climate-resilient infrastructures are now a critical issue, and our leadership must think seriously about how to address it.”

“In the Eighth Five-Year Plan, we placed strong emphasis on infrastructure, but with the Ninth Plan still on hold, many of these priorities remain unresolved,” she added.

Bangladesh needs nearly \$12 billion a year for adaptation and mitigation, but the government can provide only about \$3.5 billion, said Farhina Ahmed, secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

“The country also requires innovative financing and stronger private-sector participation.”

“Adaptation is often unattractive for private investors, so we must rethink how to mobilise financing. Each investment must generate multiple benefits,” she added.

New alliance set to launch
FROM PAGE 12

trial of Sheikh Hasina.”

NCP’s Chief Coordinator (South) Hasnat Abdullah said, “The Jatiya Party functions as a political extension of the Awami League and India.”

He urged the EC to disqualify Jatiya Party from the election, saying that its participation would distort the electoral environment. “If the polls are affected, the government and the Election Commission will be responsible for it.”

Party officials said they screened over 1,000 aspirants in the past two days and have officially closed the process, and that aspirants who missed their turn or were not informed can now reach out through the party’s hotline.

SPs for all dists
FROM PAGE 12

For the selection process through lottery, the PHQ, earlier in July this year, conducted an evaluation and prepared a list it deemed fit with priority for the 25th, 27th, and 28th batches of the police cadre.

Another PHQ source said that after the SP postings, the next step will be assigning officers in-charge (OCs) to police stations through a similar lottery process.

Lists of honest, neutral, and competent inspectors have already been collected from unit chiefs, and a “fit list” has been compiled.

At the same time, the process of clearing long-pending promotions of senior officers has also begun.

Earlier on Saturday, a special meeting was held at the home ministry to discuss policies related to police appointments and transfers during the election period.

During the meeting, a discussion arose regarding keeping the incumbent SPs working in their respective districts, while another group requested a total reshuffle. Amid the situation, the government decided to select SPs through a lottery system.

A senior PHQ official, requesting anonymity, said the lottery method was introduced to avoid any controversy surrounding election-centric policing.

“This will help ensure the deployment of neutral officers in the field,” he said.

Catalan nationalist titan goes on trial for corruption
AFP, San Fernando De Henares

Spain’s top criminal court yesterday opened a trial on corruption charges against ailing Catalan nationalist figurehead Jordi Pujol, a titan of Spanish politics following dictator General Francisco Franco’s death.

The trial of Pujol, 95, and his seven children for alleged criminal association and money laundering centres on the origin of the fortune of the man who led Catalonia’s regional government from 1980 to 2003.

Govt inaction risks fuelling
FROM PAGE 12

In a joint statement, 258 citizens said that since the July uprising, a specific group has emerged as the “sole agent” of Islam, leading a purge to eliminate differing opinions and practices.

It demanded Sarkar’s immediate release.

The statement mentioned vandalism of over 200 shrines, exhumation and burning of a body, harassment of women over attire, and the disruption of cultural programmes.

Meanwhile, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has criticised the double standards of law enforcement agencies.

“While law enforcement arrested the baul singer very quickly after charges of hurting religious sentiment were made against him, the same law enforcement stood by silently when baul artistes were attacked in broad daylight,” read the statement issued yesterday.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said this reluctance could be interpreted as “unofficial approval” of the violence.

He also described the government’s recent cancellation of music and physical education teacher recruitment as evidence of “state appeasement,” fostering a culture of fear in which artistes are being forced into hiding.

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), in its statement, said the attack violated articles 37 and 39 of the constitution, which guarantee freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

“Protecting the baul and other cultural-spiritual traditions is the constitutional duty of the state,” ASK stated, demanding a swift, impartial investigation and legal action against the attackers.

Meanwhile, eminent columnist Farhad Mazhar condemned the arrest of Sarkar and subsequent attack on baul artistes, saying such actions have nothing to do with religion.

He also announced that the next mega assembly of bauls, fakirs, and sadhus would be held in Manikganj, and he would be present there.

“Those who are beating up innocent bauls in Manikganj, I will be there. If you want, you can beat me too. I will take the beating. We do not seek revenge, but you will be taught a lesson,” he said at a protest rally organised in front of Dhaka’s Jatiya Press Club.

“What you are doing in the name of Islam has nothing to do with religion. Those who oppress innocent people and resort to violence can never claim to be followers of the prophet (PBUH),” he said.

Farhad Mazhar urged all bauls, Sufis, and fakirs to unite. “I urge all of you to stand with us, because today a powerful religious-fundamentalist force is attacking our heritage. Stay with us and continue this struggle alongside us.”

He also said that Abul Sarkar had been active in the anti-fascist movement.

“From events at the Shaheed Minar to any protest gathering, there hasn’t been a single one where he wasn’t by my side. By arresting him, you have essentially arrested me. I will not accept this,” he added.

Warning those trying to destabilise Bangladesh for political gains, Farhad Mazhar said, “Such conspiracies never remain hidden forever.”

He also urged NCP, BNP, and Jamaat to oppose the injustices inflicted on the bauls, Sufis, and fakirs.

“If you do not protest against this oppression and side with the oppressor for votes, don’t expect the people to bring you to power. The July uprising was the struggle of the oppressed against the powerful,” he said, warning that neither god nor people will forgive them.

Yesterday, the Mymensingh district unit of Bangladesh Sufiabad Oikya Parishad held a protest rally at the city’s Shaheed Firoz Jahangir Square, demanding the release of Sarkar.

CASE FILED OVER ATTACK

A case was filed with Manikganj Sadar Police Station yesterday over the attack on Baul artiste Abul Sarkar’s followers.

Officer-in-Charge of Manikganj Sadar Police Station, Md Kamal Hossain, said that Abdul Alim, injured in the attack, filed the case against unknown persons.

Police have launched a drive to identify and arrest those involved, he confirmed.