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## Khaleda's condition 'unchanged'; still not fit for travel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia remained under close observation at Evercare Hospital in the capital yesterday, with doctors reporting no change in her condition.

Her medical team believes that advanced treatment abroad would be in her best interest. However, as her current condition does not permit travel, the board will make a decision once her health improves.

The former prime minister's treatment is being overseen by a medical board comprising specialists from Bangladesh, Johns Hopkins Hospital in the US, and The London Clinic in the UK.

"For the last three days -- the 27th, 28th, and today the 29th -- Alhamdulillah, her

overall condition and the recommendation of the medical board, added Zahid, also a BNP Standing Committee member.

Earlier in the day, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said that at a long meeting on Friday night, the board concluded that Khaleda needs advanced treatment abroad.

"She is not well enough to travel abroad

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BNP activists wait outside Evercare for updates

Defy party plea not to crowd hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leaders and activists continued to gather outside Evercare Hospital in Dhaka yesterday to enquire about the health condition of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, despite repeated instructions from the party not to crowd the hospital premises.

Party men began arriving at the hospital gate from Friday midnight, with small groups standing near the entrance to seek updates from Khaleda's family members and medical team.

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PHOTO ON PAGE 2

Decision to return not solely in my hands

Tarique explains; govt says no bar to his coming back

STAR REPORT

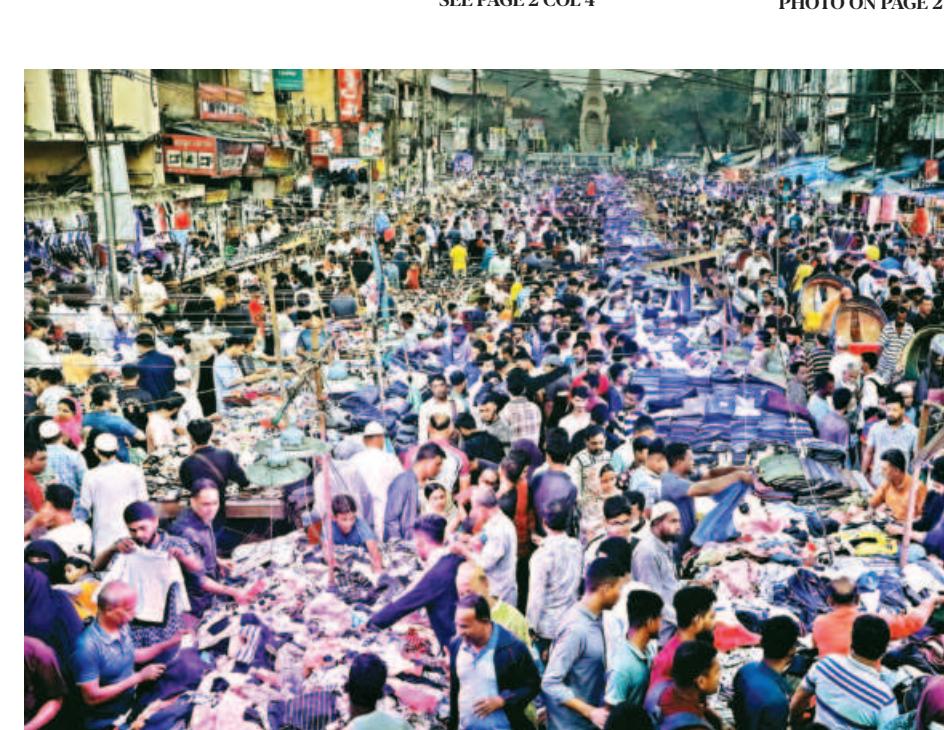


BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman has said he longs to be by his ailing mother Khaleda Zia in this hour of crisis, but returning to Bangladesh is not entirely in his hands.

"At such a moment of crisis, like any child, I too have a strong longing to feel my mother's loving touch. But unlike others, the opportunity for me to make an independent decision in this regard [returning] is neither unrestricted nor fully within my control," he wrote on his verified Facebook page yesterday.

The sensitivity of this matter also limits the scope for detailed explanation. Our family remains hopeful that once the current political realities reach the expected stage, my long and anxious wait to return to

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The road from Golap Shah Mazar to Gulistan Square in Dhaka is completely occupied by vendors selling clothes, footwear and other items. Only a narrow lane is left, with which even rickshaws struggle to move. The photo was taken on Friday.



FROM LEFT... Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, managing director and CEO of BRAC Bank; AKM Fahim Mashroor, CEO of Bdjobs; Ambareen Reza, managing director of foodpanda Bangladesh; Wahiduddin Mahmud, planning adviser; and Kamal Quadir, CEO of bKash pose for a photo at the 10th BRAC Bank-The Daily Star ICT Awards at Sheraton hotel yesterday. Four companies and three individuals were honoured for their contributions to Bangladesh's technology sector.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Laurels for tech powerhouses

4 companies, 3 individuals recognised at 10th BRAC Bank-The Daily Star ICT Awards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four companies and three individuals were honoured yesterday at the 10th BRAC Bank-The Daily Star ICT Awards for their contributions to Bangladesh's technology sector.

The annual event, which marks a decade of celebrating excellence in ICT, highlighted achievements in digital finance, e-commerce, entrepreneurship, health-tech and innovation.

The winners were selected for their leadership, impact and ability to scale technology-driven solutions that are shaping the country's economic and social landscape.

Kamal Quadir, founder and chief executive officer of bKash, received the ICT Business Person of the Year award, his second

in five years, for his role in revolutionising digital financial services in Bangladesh.

With over 82 million users, bKash has expanded financial inclusion, reduced dependence on cash and strengthened the digital economy. Under his leadership, the company has attracted major global investors and positioned Bangladesh as a model for mobile financial innovation.

AKM Fahim Mashroor was awarded the ICT Pioneer for his long term contribution to the country's ICT sector.

As co-founder of Bdjobs.com, he transformed digital

recruitment and widened access to employment for young people. His advocacy as a former BASIS president helped shape key ICT policies, while his continued engagement makes him one of the sector's most influential voices.

Pathao received the Special Recognition Award for its contribution to the country's digital and gig economy.

Starting with delivery services in 2015, it has grown into Bangladesh's first super-app, offering ride-sharing, courier services, food delivery and digital payments.

With over 10 million users

and hundreds of thousands of drivers and merchants, Pathao has become a key player in connecting people and businesses nationwide.

Daraz Bangladesh, a concern of Alibaba Group, received the Digital Commerce Award for its role in expanding e-commerce nationwide.

Since 2014, the platform has grown into the country's largest online marketplace, supporting more than 70,000 sellers. Its integrated services -- including logistics, digital payments and training -- have strengthened the digital retail ecosystem and boosted online entrepreneurship.

TallyKhata (Progoti Systems) received the ICT Start-up Award for its impact on small businesses across Bangladesh.

Launched in 2020, the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Polls schedule likely in 2nd week of Dec Says CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) AMM Nasir Uddin said yesterday that the schedule for the upcoming general election will likely be announced in the second week of December.

The schedule will include the voting date, the nomination deadline, and the last date for withdrawal of candidacy.

"Preparations for the next general election are nearly complete, and we hope to deliver a fair election and referendum to the nation."

The CEC was speaking to reporters after inspecting a mock voting exercise conducted at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Government Girls High School in Dhaka.

The Election Commission held the exercise from 8:00am to 12:00pm for both the national election and referendum, which are to be held simultaneously on a single day in early February next year.

CEC Nasir said the mock voting was organised to identify the requirements for a fair and participatory election.

"We wanted to observe everything -- what the atmosphere should be like, how the queues of voters should form, how polling officers and presiding officers should operate, how the overall

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At Bonik Barta conf'ce, they also stress equal opportunities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and National Citizen Party yesterday outlined their plans focusing on fairer economic and education systems, as well as increased employment opportunities.

Leaders of the three major parties shared their ideas at the fourth edition of the "Bangladesh Economic Conference 2025", organised by Bangla daily Bonik Barta at a city hotel. "Future Roadmap of the Economy and

Political Commitment" was this year's theme for the conference.

BNP presented a detailed economic plan promising inclusive growth and job creation.

Its Standing Committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury said, "We have seen that the benefits of economic growth have not reached the people. Political alignment and proximity to power must reach everywhere so that ordinary people can access call centres, data centres, and online

Poor people have worked for

generations, but their products and lives have not improved. We must provide loans, inputs, skill development, design support, branding, and internet access..."

He said investing in people's skills and quality products will create demand, increase employment, and contribute to the GDP.

Regarding digital infrastructure, Khasru said, "Power and internet must reach everywhere so that ordinary people can access call centres, data centres, and online

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# Laurels for tech powerhouses

FROM PAGE 1

app enables micro and small entrepreneurs to manage sales, record transactions and access digital financial services. Its AI-driven tools are helping shop owners build credit profiles and transition from cash-based operations to digital bookkeeping.

Augmedix Bangladesh, winner of the ICT Solution Provider of the Year, has become a leading health tech powerhouse connecting Bangladeshi professionals to American healthcare industry. With more than 1,300 staff, it boosts clinical efficiency through real time documentation and creates high value digital jobs.

Ambreen Reza, managing director and co-founder of foodpanda Bangladesh, received the ICT Woman of the Year award for leading foodpanda's nationwide expansion and building one of the country's largest digital service ecosystems.

Returning to Bangladesh in 2013, she helped transform online food and grocery delivery, enabling restaurants, riders and SMEs to reach customers in all 64 districts.

Although the country has many skilled ICT experts, the government is not engaging them effectively, said Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud, who handed over the awards to the winners at a gala event held at Sheraton Dhaka.

"That is why we have now made it a requirement that ICT experts from outside the government must be engaged in relevant projects."

Bangladesh's ICT market is expanding rapidly and the next decade will be dominated by AI, big data and computer scientists.

Foreign donors are funding the development of hi-tech parks but these initiatives focus mainly on physical infrastructure.

"The intention is good, but I am not sure how much of it will help in building real entrepreneurship. Bangladesh has strong entrepreneurial capacity," Mahmud said.

The ICT policy was formulated

with the goal of ensuring quality service and eliminating middlemen, he added.

When technology is inclusive, a nation becomes unstoppable, said Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, MD & CEO of BRAC Bank.

To the winners, he said, "Your accomplishments demonstrate that Bangladesh has talent -- it simply lacks the platforms to display it. You are creating solutions that improve lives for families, students, small businesses, patients and professionals. You are not just influencing industries; you are shaping possibilities."

It is in the world of technology, and more specifically in the world of IT, internet and digital technology that the world is changing, said Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

"And we have so much talent within us to be a part of that process. But the question is why are we not a part of the process? This is something we have to ask ourselves," he added.

Resources are limited and the real challenge is how to capitalise on those limited resources through smart design, said bKash CEO Quadir.

"If you design the solution properly, even with a basic phone people can reap the benefits."

Quadir emphasised that bKash is registered in Bangladesh and said he does not believe the narrative that foreign investment cannot be attracted without registering abroad.

"Everyone who worked to build bKash is local talent."

According to him, bKash now facilitates nearly 2.1 crore transactions per day and has attracted \$382 million in foreign direct investment -- without taking a single loan.

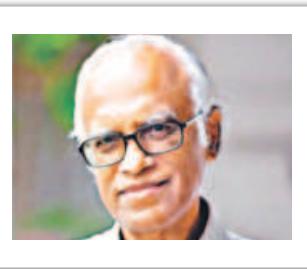
Quadir also said many people asked him how he found investors.

"I only went to [BRAC founder] Fazle Hasan Abed, the rest of the investors came to us," he said, crediting the ecosystem -- NID, mobile operators, widespread mobile phone ownership and the banking infrastructure -- for enabling bKash's rise.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

FROM LEFT... Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, managing director and CEO of BRAC Bank; Fahim Ahmed, CEO of Pathao; Rashed Mujib Noman, country director of Augmedix Bangladesh; Wahiduddin Mahmud, planning adviser; Shahadat Khan, CEO of TallyKhata; and AHM Hasinul Quddus Rusho, chief corporate affairs officer of Daraz Bangladesh pose for a photo at the 10th BRAC Bank-The Daily Star ICT Awards yesterday.



**"Although the country has many skilled ICT experts, the government is not engaging them effectively. That is why we have now made it a requirement that ICT experts from outside the government must be engaged in relevant projects."**

WAHIDUDDIN MAHMUD, planning adviser



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TAREQ REFAT ULLAH KHAN, managing director and CEO of BRAC Bank



**"It is in the world of technology and more specifically in the world of IT, internet, and digital technology where the world is changing, and we have so much talent within us to be a part of that process."**

MAHFUZ ANAM, editor & publisher of The Daily Star

## Polls schedule likely in 2nd week of Dec

FROM PAGE 1

management should function, and even what role you, the journalists, might play."

Officials said such an exercise was important, as the current commission was constituted just a year ago and does not have experience in holding a single local body or parliamentary election.

Besides, this commission has the additional responsibility of holding a referendum simultaneously with the national election.

Asked about the confusion among some voters regarding the referendum questions, the CEC said, "The commission and the government will jointly launch an

awareness campaign to educate voters on the matter soon."

On the law-and-order situation, CEC Nasir said, "Law and order in Bangladesh has never been perfect. There's no point denying it. We will have to ensure that the overall election environment is conducive to voting."

He outlined four criteria for investment: value for money, return on investment, job creation, and environmental sustainability.

"We have calculated how one crore jobs can be created in 18 months through targeted investment. Sports, culture, and digital skills are also major priorities.

"Bangladesh does not really have a capital market. The banking system is overdependent. We need to move from frontier markets to emerging markets, where access to trillion-dollar funds is possible."

He added, "Bangladesh is an over-regulated country. Citizens should not have to go through so many government offices. We will empower the people, not the government."

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said, "Those who looted banks and committed corruption over the last 15 years should be punished. But [many of] these people also own factories where thousands of workers are employed. Around 14 lakh workers have already lost their jobs. Where will they go? Why are we creating this unemployment? We need to think seriously about this."

He said the government should focus on building trust with businesspersons rather than constantly trying to catch offenders, adding that BNP has always prioritised economic development.

Saying that the party's reforms will focus on education, anti-corruption

measures, and justice for all, Fakhrul added that Bangladesh needs major reforms in education and health.

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman said, "Bangladesh's economy cannot move forward unless fairness and equal opportunity are ensured for all citizens ... foreign loans are shared equally by all citizens. The economic system must be fair."

He criticised bureaucratic delays and corruption, which discourage both local and foreign investors.

Warning that the political leadership must be fit to ensure proper functioning of the systems, he also raised the issue of brain drain and said talented Bangladeshis settle abroad because their skills are undervalued in the country.

NCP Convener Nahid Islam said the July uprising was driven by economic grievances, not just politics.

"The [2015] anti-Vat movement, the 2018 quota reform movement, and the [2018] road safety movement were all precursors to this uprising, driven by youth aspirations and the living crisis of the urban middle class," he said, adding that the previous regime created a discriminatory system run by a nexus of corrupt bureaucrats, politicians, and business elites.

"We must break this corruption nexus. Legal reforms alone are insufficient. We need a profound shift in social values and a peaceful transition of power. Without stability, reforms cannot be sustainable, and foreign investment will not come."

He proposed a shift from infrastructure-based development to a justice-based economy. "This model prioritises reducing inequality, ensuring fair market competition, and establishing state welfare."

## 11 Bangladeshis in Singapore held for 'drug offences'

STAR REPORT

Eleven Bangladeshi migrant workers and another from Myanmar were arrested in Singapore for suspected drug-related offences during a Central Narcotics Bureau raid on November 27.

The men, who resided in Singapore's Woodlands dormitory, are aged between 23 and 40 years old, The Straits Times reported on November 28.

Superintendent Xanthus Tong Hyeng Ji, deputy commanding officer of CNB's Enforcement J Division, said the operation was part of the bureau's efforts against drug abuse, trafficking and other criminal activities.

The four-hour operation involved officers from CNB, the Health Sciences Authority, Immigration and Checkpoints Authority, Ministry of Manpower and the police.

The Straits Times was invited to witness the operation, which started with a briefing around 9:00pm on November 27 at CNB's headquarters at Police Cantonment Complex.

Members of the media and CNB officers set off in unmarked vehicles to the dormitory.

As rain pelted down, officers entered the dormitory before midnight.

In one room, officers found suspected drug utensils such as a glass bottle, cut straw and a rubber tube.

As the suspects were processed, their roommates in these 12-bedded rooms looked on warily.

Around 1:20am on November 28, all the arrested men were taken away in unmarked vehicles for further investigations.

CNB's annual statistics report in February said that the total number of drug abusers arrested in 2024 was 3,119, down from the 3,122 nabbed in 2023.



PHOTO: STAR

BNP activists and leaders gather in front of Evercare Hospital yesterday.

## Khaleda's condition 'unchanged'

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at present. Once her health improves, the option of treatment overseas will be considered," Fakhrul told reporters at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office at 5:30pm.

He, however, said preparations are underway so that, once the medical board deems her fit for travel, arrangements can be made immediately.

"Visas are being processed, talks with potential destination countries are ongoing, and an air ambulance is being arranged."

Party sources said the Qatar embassy in Dhaka has been contacted for arranging an air ambulance.

In a Facebook post yesterday, Mahdi Amin, adviser to BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, said Khaleda's family has already contacted the London hospital and doctors under whose care she made a significant recovery during her four-month stay there earlier this year.

Since her return from London on May 6, Khaleda has been undergoing regular check-ups.

She was admitted to Evercare Hospital on November 23 on the advice of her medical board after being diagnosed with infections in her heart and lungs.

She is also suffering from

pneumonia and is currently receiving treatment in the hospital's Coronary Care Unit.

Seeking anonymity, a member of her medical board told this newspaper that excess fluid has built up in her body, requiring regular dialysis. She is also being given oxygen support to help her breathe comfortably.

Sources at the board also said Khaleda briefly spoke with Sharmila Rahman, the wife of her late younger son Arif Rahman Koko, who was by Khaleda's bedside yesterday morning.

Khaleda, 80, has long been battling multiple health complications, including liver cirrhosis and kidney issues. She has a permanent pacemaker and has previously undergone stent placement for her heart.

Meanwhile, President Mohammed Shahabuddin yesterday expressed concern over the BNP chief's physical condition and urged the nation to pray for her recovery.

The advisory council of the interim government, at a special meeting yesterday morning, offered prayers for her speedy recovery.

In different parts of the country, special prayers were offered for her.

BNP leaders and activists gathered outside Evercare Hospital yesterday to enquire about Khaleda's health.

despite repeated instructions from the party not to crowd the hospital premises.

Leaders of different political parties and advisers to the interim government also visited the hospital yesterday.

**IMPRISONMENT, RELEASE**  
On February 8, 2018, Khaleda was jailed in a corruption case. In April the following year, her health deteriorated due to what the BNP alleges was inadequate medical treatment.

On March 26, 2020, amid the Covid pandemic, she was released from prison after 776 days. The government temporarily released her through an executive order, suspending her sentence on the condition that she remain at her Gulshan residence and not leave the country. The term of her release had been extended several times.

In April 2021, she contracted Covid and recovered while under treatment at home.

A day after the fall of the Awami League regime on August 5, 2024, she was released from house arrest following a presidential pardon.

She was later acquitted in both the Zia Orphanage Trust and Zia Charitable Trust cases, in which she had previously been sentenced.

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## Parties vow focus on employment

FROM PAGE 1

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He proposed a shift from infrastructure-based development to a justice-based economy. "This model prioritises reducing inequality, ensuring fair market competition, and establishing state welfare."

He said the government should focus on building trust with businesspersons rather than constantly trying to catch offenders, adding that BNP has always prioritised economic development.

Saying that the party's reforms will focus on education, anti-corruption

Nahid added that long term planning for employment, education, public health, environmental protection, and modernising agriculture is necessary.

He also suggested decentralising power and strengthening local governments to ensure equitable development.

On investment, the NCP chief said, "We must attract foreign capital while fostering domestic capital to protect our national sovereignty."

Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolan, pointed to inequality in urban slums, citing a recent fire in Korail. "These citizens have no recognition of their basic rights, yet they continue to survive because they are part of the system. The government has not acted [yet]."

He emphasised the need for labour empowerment and quality education. "Workers are the real producers. If their well-being does not improve, business and investment cannot truly grow ... Without improving people's earnings, no market will thrive. Reducing inequality is key to building a strong national economy."

Badiul Alam Majumder, member of the now-defunct National Consensus Commission, said Bangladesh cannot achieve sustainable democracy without intense political and structural reforms.

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Boost readiness as earthquake risk remains high  
Experts tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh faces a high risk of major earthquakes due to its location along three active tectonic plate faults, experts warned yesterday, stressing that preparedness, public awareness and modern technology are crucial to reducing casualties and damage.

The warning came at a seminar titled "Earthquake Awareness, Safety Protocol and Emergency Preparedness", organised by JCX Developments Ltd at a city hotel.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- ⦿ Reinforce buildings
- ⦿ Push for safer structures
- ⦿ Ensure strict building standards
- ⦿ Strengthen emergency response

Speakers stressed the need for structurally sound and earthquake-resistant buildings, audits of existing structures, strict quality control in construction, strengthened emergency response capacity and an effective early-warning system.

They also underscored the importance of regular community drills, awareness campaigns and preparedness at family level.

Experts noted that Bangladesh sits at the junction of the Indian, Myanmar and Eurasian tectonic plates.

The Dauki Fault in Sylhet, the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING New law drafted as 95% of cases end in acquittal

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The government has finalised a new law aimed at ensuring justice for trafficking victims, responding to the fact that an average of 95 percent of migrant smuggling cases ended in acquittal over the last four and a half years.

The advisory council on Thursday approved the draft Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants Ordinance 2025, introducing stronger measures to combat trafficking and hold perpetrators accountable.

Briefing the media after the meeting at the Foreign Service Academy, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said ensuring justice for victims is a core objective of the new law.

The new ordinance updates the legal framework to meet international standards, particularly the UN protocol on migrant smuggling.

Under the ordinance, individuals suspected of involvement in trafficking may face freezing of bank accounts, asset seizure and travel restrictions during investigation, subject to court order. It also addresses the growing use of online platforms for recruitment, he added.

A review of case disposal records paints a grim picture of how trafficking cases have fared in the justice system.

According to the home ministry database, in 2020 courts disposed of 14 cases, and 13 ended in acquittal, with 43 accused walking free. In 2021, both



### ORDINANCE AT A GLANCE

- Clarifies provisions related to investigation
- Strengthens investigators' authority, streamlines how cases move to trial
- Improves witness protection
- Seeks to prevent victims from being pressured into withdrawing complaints
- Introduces measures to prosecute syndicates that send migrants abroad

disposed cases ended in acquittal. In 2022, all 34 disposed cases ended in acquittal, involving 150 accused.

The volume surged in 2023, with 415 of 436 cases ending in acquittal and 1,617 accused cleared. In 2024, courts disposed of 363 cases, of which 342 resulted in acquittal, releasing 1,250 accused.

The first six months of 2025 followed the same pattern – 132 of 141 cases ended in acquittal, with 535 accused walking free, the ministry data show.

Officials involved in drafting the ordinance said it clarifies provisions on

investigation, inquiry and cognisance -- areas that previously caused confusion and delays.

They said the new law strengthens investigators' authority, streamlines how cases move to trial, improves witness protection and seeks to prevent victims from being pressured into withdrawing complaints.

The ordinance also introduces dedicated measures to prosecute criminal syndicates that send Bangladeshi migrants abroad through irregular channels.

It creates a separate chapter on the smuggling of migrants (SOM), a crime that had long remained legally undefined despite its widespread presence.

The absence of clear provisions previously meant many SOM cases were filed as trafficking offences even when they lacked the required elements -- often resulting in acquittal.

One such case was filed with Sabujbagh Police Station in July 2019.

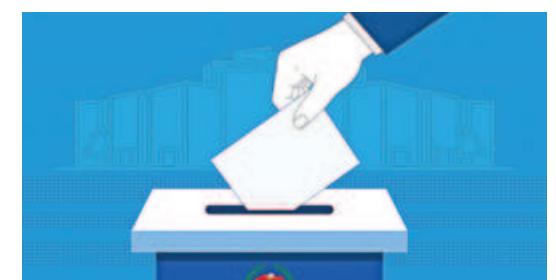
A 28-year-old man paid Tk 4.65 lakh for a promised job in Iraq but was taken to Libya instead, and his family later paid Tk 2 lakh more in extortion. He was eventually sent back to Bangladesh.

Although the incident was smuggling in nature, the case was filed under the 2012 trafficking law. All six accused were acquitted in January 2024.

Shariful Hasan, associate director of BRAC's Migration and Youth Platform, said many Bangladeshis attempting to

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Voter confidence fragile ahead of national polls  
Debapriya tells discussion



### KEY ISSUES RAISED

- ⦿ Rule of law, corruption-free governance
- ⦿ Women's empowerment, improved living standards
- ⦿ Freedom of expression, better education quality
- ⦿ Strengthening Election Commission
- ⦿ Greater citizen participation in achieving SDGs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Eminent economist Debapriya Bhattacharya yesterday said voter confidence remains fragile, with many fearing the election may not be held at all and, even if it is, uncertainties persist over how free, fair, acceptable and participatory it will be.

He made the remarks at a regional pre election consultation meeting of Citizen's Platform in Rangpur.

Speaking to journalists after the meeting, Debapriya, the platform's convener and distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said participants expressed concern over a possible rise in political violence in the

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Prof Salimullah Khan speaks at a seminar titled 'Bangladesh's Culture and Contemporary Bangladesh' at Khulna Press Club auditorium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

AMRA NOTUN  
AWARD 2025  
Three young  
changemakers  
honoured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Stories of Inclusion, Jol Shikha and Good Do Toys -- three youth-led initiatives -- were awarded the Amra Notun Young Changemakers Award 2025 in recognition of their efforts to drive social change.

The awards were presented at "Carnival of Change 2025", organised by Brac Youth Platform at the Brac CDM in Savar yesterday.

Stories of Inclusion focuses on promoting inclusion and supporting children, while Jol Shikha produces eco friendly coal from coconut shells. Good Do Toys develops sustainable toys that encourage hands-on learning and help reduce screen time among children.

Nandonik, Shunno and Eco Care -- three

Education in Bangla key to intellectual growth  
Speakers tell discussion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Education must begin in the mother tongue if a nation wants to preserve its cultural identity and develop a meaningful intellectual tradition, speakers said at a seminar on Friday.

Citing Abul Mansur Ahmad, they said the 1952 Language Movement was a "revolution" whose core message was national selfhood, something impossible without literature in the mother language.

Delivering the keynote speech, Prof Salimullah Khan criticised the absence of Bangla in the higher judiciary even after 50 years of independence.

He said remnants of colonial rule had created a "stagnation of speed and memory", deepening English dependency among the elite.

"How long will this continue? Even after 50 years of independence, the trend of sending children to English-medium schools is stronger than ever," he said.

He questioned the need to introduce English at the preschool

level. "If you want to improve the quality of education, you must start with Bangla," he said at the seminar, titled "Bangladesh's Culture and Contemporary Bangladesh", held at Khulna Press Club auditorium.

While acknowledging the lack of English textbooks in higher education, he questioned why early-grade Bangla books are still not prioritised.

"Teach ten languages if you want, but denying a child education in their own language is depriving them -- and deceiving the nation," he said.

Citing Abul Mansur Ahmad, he said education cannot be separated from politics. "Education is too important to be left only to educators. Students, guardians and society must all be involved."

He argued that a society that cannot educate its children and teachers in its own language, yet insists on English-medium kindergarten education, "cannot be called civilised, though it may have its own culture".

He also said Abul Mansur Ahmad

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## HATHAZARI IN CTG

# Fakir Mosque, a living testament of history

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

Located beside Krishi Farm Road in the heart of Hathazari upazila of Chattogram stands what is arguably one of the oldest surviving mosques in the division, the Fakir Mosque.

Historians consider the mosque an important relic of the Sultanate era. A broken inscription found next to the structure suggests it was built between 1474 and 1481 during the reign of Sultan Shamsuddin Yusuf Shah.

The mosque is mentioned in *Ahadees-ul-Khawanin*, a book on Chattogram's history written in 1871 by Hamid Ullah Khan. Later, Prof Abdul Karim, historian and former vice-chancellor of Chittagong University, published a reading of the damaged inscription, helping establish the estimated construction period.

Historians said the mosque, originally covering around 1,680 square feet, had long remained abandoned and hidden under dense bushes. It was rediscovered around 200 years ago by a Sufi named Mukim Shah, who cleared the structure and began using it again for prayers.

His grave still stands at the mosque's entrance, and over time the site became known as the Fakir Mosque.

The last major renovation



took place in 1993-94, when a three-storey structure was built adjacent to the building.

A recent visit found that a new prayer hall has been added on the eastern side to accommodate more worshippers, as the old mosque can no longer fit the congregation.

Around 250 to 300 people attend daily prayers, while the number rises to more than 800 during Juma on Fridays.

The mosque's most distinctive feature is its cluster of six small, closely placed rounded domes, each topped with a decorative finial.

The mosque and its adjoining shrine are maintained by the

sixth generation of Mukim Shah's descendants.

"This is an ancient mosque. Our elders used to offer prayers here. We also come regularly," said Abul Fazal, 65, of Gardura union.

Mohammad Lokman, a CU staffer from Rangipara, said, "Since childhood, we have seen people coming from distant places to offer Friday prayers at this mosque. This mosque holds a special significance for the people."

"My ancestor Mukim Shah discovered and restored this mosque. He passed away 134 years ago. Our family has been managing the mosque and the shrine for generations. However, the property has been officially waqf-listed," said Syed Rafiqul-Hasan, the mutawalli and a descendant of Mukim Shah.

Despite being several centuries old, the mosque has not yet been declared a heritage site by the Department of Archaeology. Last year, the DoA included it in an on-site survey list.

"The Fakir Mosque is a living testament of history. The archaeology department should take the initiative to preserve this site urgently," said Bangla Academy fellow and Chattogram-based researcher Md Shamsul Haque.

Contacted, Dr Nahid Sultana, regional director of DoA in Chattogram, said, "Fakir Mosque has been registered as a heritage site in our survey. It will be gazetted, the process is underway. Since it is several hundred years old, we will prepare some guidelines for its preservation."

4 journos hurt in attack 'led by BNP leader'  
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Four journalists were injured in an attack allegedly carried out by a BNP leader and his followers in Mymensingh's Trishal upazila yesterday.

The injured journalists are Motiur Rahman Selim, 45, of Samakal; Abdullah Al Fahad, 30, of Kalbela; SM Masud Rana, of Sakaler Somoy; and Rakibul Hasan Sumon, 27, of Naya Shatabdi, said police.

Motiur lodged a case with Trishal Police Station, accusing four people, including joint convener of Harihampur union unit BNP Saiful Islam Swapon, said OC Monsur Ahmed.

Quoting the case statement, he said the journalists went to Horirampur village to gather information regarding a land grabbing allegation around 10:30am.

When they reached the spot, a group of people led by Swapon, who is also a union parishad member, attacked them with sticks. Locals rescued and took them to Trishal health complex.

Motiur and Masud are currently undergoing treatment at the hospital, while two others were released after receiving first aid, said the OC.

Police arrested Swapon and his accomplice Zia soon after the incident.

"Drives are ongoing to arrest the other accused," said the OC.

50 injured as two BNP factions clash in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Two factions of BNP locked into a clash over establishing supremacy in Faridpur's Saltha upazila yesterday.

At least 50 people were injured, and several houses and shops were also vandalised during the clash that started around 8:00am at the Baliahatti Bazar area under Gatti union, witnesses said.

Confirming the clash, Sub-Inspector Maruf Hasan of Saltha Police Station said police managed to bring the situation under control by around 12:00pm.

However, he could not immediately confirm the exact number of injuries or the full extent of the property damage.



According to locals, there had been a long-standing rivalry between Nuru Matubber, a ward member in the union, and Zahid Matubber over establishing supremacy in the locality. They both were the supporters of Awami League but joined BNP following the change of government on August 5 last year, said Saltha upazila unit BNP Senior Joint General Secretary Khandaker Khairul Bashar.

As the conflict between the two escalated yesterday, both sides clashed with lethal weapons, rods, bricks, and stones. Residents from nearby villages also joined the clash, the witnesses said.

The injured were admitted to different hospitals in Faridpur and other areas.

Contacted, Md Shahinul Islam, upazila health and family planning officer at Saltha Upazila Health Complex, said seven people were given first aid at the facility following the clash.

Attempts to reach both Nuru and Zahid for comment were unsuccessful.

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FROM PAGE 3

Chattogram Arakan Fault along the Chattogram-Teknaf belt and the Sagaing Fault in Myanmar together put the country at extremely high seismic risk. Rapid urbanisation, high population density, violations of building codes and narrow road networks further heighten the danger, they added.

In his welcome address, JCX Developments Ltd Managing Director Md Iqbal Hossain Chowdhury said recent tremors felt in Dhaka are a stark reminder of the country's vulnerability.

"With rapid urbanisation, dense population and weak building structures, a major earthquake could cause devastating losses. Awareness, preparedness and capacity building are the need of the hour," he said.

The seminar noted that more than 200 earthquakes have been recorded in Bangladesh over the past century, with frequency increasing since last year.

Experts also said immense energy has been accumulating for 800 to 1,000 years in the subduction zone from Sylhet to Teknaf, posing one of the country's most serious geophysical threats.

Japanese experts Keiichiro Sako and Hisaya Sugiyama, both specialising in earthquake-resistant architectural design, shared lessons from Japan's post-earthquake experiences, highlighting safe infrastructure, resilient design and modern sustainable construction standards.

Speakers at the seminar included Prof M Shamim Z Bosunia, Buet Prof Syed Fakhruddin Amin, Rehab President Wahiduzzaman, senior vice president Liqat Ali and Rajuk Chief Urban Planner Ashraful Islam.

**PRAYER TIMING**

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Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

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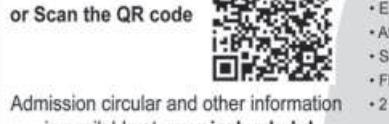
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Cambridge learners remain at the heart of our work, and every aspect of a Cambridge education is designed to help them realise their potential and prepare for life beyond school. We are proud to celebrate the remarkable achievements of Bangladesh's learners in the June 2025 examination series. The Outstanding Cambridge Learner Awards recognise exceptional performance and reflect the dedication of learners, teachers, and parents. With over 160 years of expertise as part of the University of Cambridge, our assessments are trusted worldwide and open doors to future opportunities. This year, 124 students from 33 schools in Bangladesh earned awards across 63 subjects. We congratulate all recipients and encourage learners to share their stories at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/alumni](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/alumni).

Vinay Sharma, Regional Director – Cambridge International Education – South Asia.



As the new Country Lead, Bangladesh, I am truly inspired by the outstanding accomplishments of our learners. Their success in the June 2025 examination series reflects not only their dedication, but also the unwavering support of teachers, school leaders, and families who guide them every step of the way. As part of the University of Cambridge, we are proud to offer qualifications that open doors to global opportunities and help young people build confidence and purposeful futures. My heartfelt congratulations to all award recipients, and I look forward to supporting many more learners on their Cambridge journeys ahead.

Sarwat Reza, Country Lead - Bangladesh, Cambridge University Press & Assessment



Congratulations to all this year's Outstanding Cambridge Learner Awards winners. Your dedication, discipline, and exceptional performance have set a high benchmark and will inspire many others. We also recognise the vital role of parents, teachers, school leaders, and families whose commitment makes these achievements possible. As a partner of Cambridge, we are proud to support high-quality UK qualifications that open global opportunities for learners across Bangladesh. The continued growth of Cambridge examinations reflects our shared commitment to quality education.

To all awardees, your success shapes your future and motivates the entire community. Thank you for inspiring us.

Stephen Forbes, Country Director, the British Council, Bangladesh

**Top in Bangladesh** is awarded to learners who have achieved the highest standard mark in their country for a single subject.

June 2025 examination series		
Subject	Name	School name
<b>Cambridge O Level</b>		
Accounting	Sadia Rahman	Dhaka, Manarat International
Accounting	Saheel Wazir Mamun	BAF Shaheen English Medium College
Bangladesh Studies	Mohammad Mohaimin Uddin Naib	Glenrich International School Uttara
Bengali	Md Ebna Sabit Siam	American Standard International School
Biology	Raisa Tasnim	Mastermind English Medium School, Uttara
Business Studies	Khubaibul Islam Jarif	Presidency International, Chittagong
Commerce	Khubaibul Islam Jarif	Presidency International, Chittagong
Economics	Awsaf Abtahi Munir	Play Pen
English Language	Mobtasim Tanbin	Royal School Dhaka
English Language	Mohammad Tahmeed Mansib	Sunnydale
English Language	Suhaira Maysan	Chittagong Grammar School
Environmental Management	Safwan Sadad	Chittagong Grammar School
Physics	Rayann Janik Rine	Academia, Gulshan
<b>Cambridge IGCSE</b>		
Physics	Rayann Janik Rine	Academia, Gulshan
Accounting	M Azmayeren Zuhair Chowdhury	Glenrich International School Uttara
Biology	Sohil Sadman	Don Bosco School & College
Business Studies	Tasbih Maryam	Yale International School
Chemistry	Ahraf Hossain	International Hope School Bangladesh
Computer Science	Basil Alam	International Hope School Bangladesh
Economics	Basil Alam	International Hope School Bangladesh
First Language English (oral endorsement)	Awhona Saha	Glenrich International School Uttara
Physics	Bushra Rubana Afroze	Glenrich International School Uttara
Physics	Md Faiyaz Siddiquee	Glenrich International School Uttara
<b>Cambridge International AS Level</b>		
Accounting	Fayaad Salehin Ahmed	Scholastica Uttara
Biology	Farabeed Bin Faisal	Mastermind English Medium School
Business	Nahiyana Saba	International Hope School Bangladesh-Ctg
Chemistry	Nishat Rahman Aboni	Dhaka, Manarat International
Computer Science	Aaryan Rahman	Mastermind English Medium School
Economics	Rayan Areeb Khandker	International Hope School Bangladesh
English Language	Anushe Jalal Quazi	Capstone School Dhaka
English Language	Rehnuma Jamil	Academia, Gulshan
Further Mathematics	Aditya Rahman	St. Joseph International School
Law	Tafheema Tanzil	Oxford International School, Dhaka
Physics	Khandaker Tahsib Faiyaz	Scholastica, Mirpur
Psychology	Zahin Zawad Khan	Private Candidate
<b>Cambridge International A Level</b>		
Biology	Adil Mohammed Khan	Sunnydale
Business	Anusha Nabiha	Scholastica Uttara
Chemistry	Safwan Intisar	Sunnydale
Economics	Anusha Nabiha	Scholastica Uttara
Law	Md Rehan Zamil	European Standard School
Physics	Mohammad Irfan Shafi	Sunnydale
Psychology	Mashiyat Nawal	Scholastica Uttara

**Best Across** is awarded to learners who have achieved the highest cumulative total standard marks over a set of subjects.

June 2025 examination series		
Name	School name	Place
<b>Best Across Eight Cambridge O Level</b>		
Raiyan Huda	Play Pen	First place in Bangladesh
<b>Best Across Eight Cambridge IGCSE</b>		
Basil Alam	International Hope School Bangladesh	First place in Bangladesh
<b>Best Across Four Cambridge International AS Level</b>		
Aditya Rahman	St. Joseph International School	First place in Bangladesh
<b>Best Across Three Cambridge International A Level</b>		
Annoy Mazhar	Academia	First place in Bangladesh
Mohammad Irfan Shafi	Sunnydale	First place in Bangladesh

**High Achievement** is awarded to learners who have achieved outstanding results in subjects which are not so widely taken and which, under the current criteria, would not qualify for 'Top in Bangladesh'.

June 2025 examination series		
Subject	Name	School name
<b>Cambridge O Level</b>		
History	Raisa Hasan	Scholastica, Mirpur
Literature in English	Sarah Eve Haque	American Standard International School
<b>Cambridge IGCSE</b>		
Art & Design	Samarah Kamal	Sir John Wilson School
English as a Second Language (count-in speaking)	Wafa Nazmul Nowshi	Abdul Kader Molla International School
Enterprise	Mayameen Rashid	Scholastica, Mirpur
Environmental Management	Nehal Ghosh	Glenrich International School Uttara
Foreign Language French	Basil Alam	International Hope School Bangladesh
Global Perspectives	Shadman Rahman	Don Bosco School & College
Information & Communication Technology	Taaniza Islam Lubana	Premier School Dhaka
International Mathematics	Rishwana Hoque	Don Bosco School & College
<b>Cambridge International AS Level</b>		
English General Paper	Mehwish Manha	Presidency International, Chittagong
Environmental Management	Shah Sufwan Mazhar	Summerfield International School
Islamic Studies	Imtana Siddika Binte Hossaini	Private Candidate
Literature in English	Fojja Anjumi	European Standard School
Sociology	Adrita Zaima Islam	Legend International School

**Top in the World** is awarded to learners who have achieved the highest standard mark in the world for a single subject.

Subject	Name	School name
<b>Cambridge O Level</b>		
Additional Mathematics	Abrar Faiyaz Rahim	Mastermind English Medium School
Additional Mathematics	Abrar Hossain	Apple Tree International School
Additional Mathematics	Ahmad Zarif Ferdous	S.F.X. Greenherald International School
Additional Mathematics	Amlan Halder	S.F.X. Greenherald International School
Additional Mathematics	Arithra Roy	S.F.X. Greenherald International School
Additional Mathematics	Isaam Wafidur Rahman	Sunnydale
Additional Mathematics	Keyan Afeef Ayon	St. Joseph International School
Additional Mathematics	Lyssa Ahmed	Sunnydale
Additional Mathematics	Mohammad Shaham Mohotashim	Dhaka, Manarat International
Additional Mathematics	Mohammed Rafid Ishraque	Mastermind English Medium School, Uttara
Additional Mathematics	Muhammad Nehan Yasjudan	Play Pen
Additional Mathematics	Muhammad Rafan Azman	Baf Shaheen English Medium College
Additional Mathematics	Nuha Nazneen	Scholastica, Mirpur
Additional Mathematics	Quazi Yathirah Rahman	Presidency International, Chittagong
Additional Mathematics	Raiyan Huda	Play Pen
Additional Mathematics	Saiddan Muntasir	Sunnydale
Additional Mathematics	Sadia Rahman	Dhaka, Manarat International
Additional Mathematics	Safa Ahmed	Sunnydale
Additional Mathematics	Tamim Muntasir Zian	Chittagong Grammar School, Dhaka
Additional Mathematics	Tasfia Mehjabeen Eartha	Dhaka, Manarat International
Chemistry	Nuha Nazneen	Scholastica, Mirpur
Computer Science	Ahmad Zarif Ferdous	S.F.X. Greenherald International School
Mathematics Syllabus D	Ayaan Rafy	Mastermind English Medium School, Uttara
Mathematics Syllabus D	Ayman Hassan	Baf Shaheen English Medium College
Mathematics Syllabus D	Farhan Sadik	St. Joseph International School
Mathematics Syllabus D	Fatima Shehrin	Mastermind English Medium School
Mathematics Syllabus D	G K M Rafit Inan	Mastermind English Medium School
Mathematics Syllabus D	Junayed Ahmed Chowdhury	St. Joseph International School
Mathematics Syllabus D	Lamyea Ifatt Karimah	Dhaka, Manarat International
Mathematics Syllabus D	Lyssa Ahmed	Sunnydale
Mathematics Syllabus D	Maisa Khan Suha	Dhaka, Manarat International
Mathematics Syllabus D	Malika Marzanah	Summerfield International School
Mathematics Syllabus D	Md Sufwan Atique	St. Joseph International School
Mathematics Syllabus D	Md Shikhor Joarder	S.F.X. Greenherald International School
Mathematics Syllabus D	Mohammad Tahmeed Mansib	Sunnydale
Mathematics Syllabus D	Mohammed Rafid Ishraque	Mastermind English Medium School, Uttara
Mathematics Syllabus D	Mohammed Salman Rashid	Presidency International, Chittagong
Mathematics Syllabus D	Muktadir Ahmed Chowdhury	European Standard School
Mathematics Syllabus D	Muntavi Sadi	European Standard School
Mathematics Syllabus D	Nafeesa Ayman Adiba	Dhaka, Manarat International
Mathematics Syllabus D	Nuha Nazneen	Scholastica, Mirpur
Mathematics Syllabus D	Odrita Ahmed	Sunnydale
Mathematics Syllabus D	Rabeya Nazrin	Presidency International, Chittagong
Mathematics Syllabus D	Raeeqah Bashar	Dhaka, Manarat International
Mathematics Syllabus D	Rayan Faruk	Sunnydale
Mathematics Syllabus D	Rayann Janik Rine	Academia, Gulshan
Mathematics Syllabus D	Rokib Hasan Khan	Baf Shaheen English Medium College
Mathematics Syllabus D	Ruwaise Mustanir	Mastermind English Medium School
Mathematics Syllabus D	S.M. Areeb Tarik	St. Joseph International School
Mathematics Syllabus D	Shreeja Saha	S.F.X. Greenherald International School
Mathematics Syllabus D	Tajkia Sudd Shahriar	Scholastica, Mirpur
Mathematics Syllabus D	Yeasin ibn Aurangzeb	Dhaka, Manarat International
Mathematics Syllabus D	Zarif Mustafiz	S.F.X. Greenherald International School
Mathematics Syllabus D	Zarin Subah Haque	Sunnydale
<b>Cambridge IGCSE™</b>		
Additional Mathematics	Ahraf Hossain	International Hope School Bangladesh
Additional Mathematics	Ajmain Abtahee	Yale International School
English as a Second Language (speaking endorsement)	Ajmain Abtahee	Yale International School
Mathematics (without coursework)	A S M Faizanul Azim	Yale International School
Mathematics (without coursework)	Ajmain Abtahee	Yale International School
Mathematics (without coursework)	Awhona Saha	Glenrich International School Uttara
Mathematics (without coursework)	Basil Alam	International Hope School Bangladesh
Mathematics (without coursework)	Bushra Rubana Afroze	Glenrich International School Uttara
Mathematics (without coursework)	Md Faiyaz Siddiquee	Glenrich International School Uttara
Mathematics (without coursework)	Mohammad Mohaimin Uddin Naib	Glenrich International School Uttara
Mathematics (without coursework)	Shombrizo Aumbar	Glenrich International School Uttara
Mathematics (without coursework)	Warda Karicha Zara	International Hope School Bangladesh
<b>Cambridge International AS Level</b>		
Mathematics	Aadil Habib Sattar	Scholastica, Mirpur
Mathematics	Aariz Anas	South Point School & College
Mathematics	Adiba Reza	St. Joseph International School
Mathematics	Aditya Rahman	St. Joseph International School
Mathematics	Afique Sobhan	St. Joseph International School
Mathematics	Ahraf Hossain Arhan	Play Pen
Mathematics	Ahraf Shahri Ahmed	Summerfield International School
Mathematics	Ahraf Tajwar Hossain	Mastermind English Medium School
Mathematics	Ayman Rahim	Sunnydale
Mathematics	Ishmam Ahnaf	Mastermind English Medium School
Mathematics	Ishtiaque Ahmed</td	

## Don't drop oversight from the ACC

New ordinance raises fears of weakened accountability

We share the dismay expressed by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) over the exclusion of a crucial reform provision in the new Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Ordinance 2025, disregarding the national consensus on this issue. The ACC Reform Commission, it can be recalled, had recommended establishing an oversight mechanism through a "Selection and Review Committee" to ensure accountability alongside independence and to prevent the ACC from being used as a tool for politically motivated harassment. By removing this strategically important provision, the government has once again opted for a half-hearted reform, which is unlikely to achieve meaningful results.

Drawing from past experience, the reform commission rightly argued that restoring public trust in this long-discredited institution will require not only formal independence but also transparency and accountability in its operations. This includes half-yearly reviews, as well as periodic public hearings and consultations conducted by the proposed Selection and Review Committee. The interim government's justification for removing such a vital safeguard—that an oversight board would complicate operations and undermine independence—is simply untenable. Institutions wielding significant power without effective accountability rarely serve public interests; instead, they risk being weaponised against the very people they are meant to protect.

What makes this development particularly disappointing is that the oversight provision was part of the July Charter, which the interim government presented as a collective national pledge endorsed by all political parties. Its removal now risks setting a damaging precedent, encouraging political parties and other stakeholders to disregard their commitments on reform initiatives as well. TIB's allegation that many other reform proposals have already been undermined by "anti-reform circles within the government" only deepens these concerns.

It is also troubling that little visible progress has been made in implementing recommendations from other reform commissions covering the media, health, women's rights, local government, and public administration. This inertia highlights a broader systemic stagnation within the bureaucracy, which has become painfully evident since the 2024 mass uprising. Now, as the country approaches the election phase, doubts are mounting about whether reforms marked for prompt implementation will even be initiated, let alone completed. It increasingly appears that the interim government, led by Professor Muhammad Yunus, is allowing yet another rare opportunity for meaningful reform to slip away, reducing the state reform agenda to mere rhetoric.

The consequences of this missed opportunity to strengthen institutions may be felt for years, if not generations. For a government championing state reforms, this represents a deeply contradictory and profoundly discouraging precedent.

## A building regulator is long overdue

Govt must act swiftly before another earthquake strikes

The 5.7-magnitude earthquake that recently shook parts of Bangladesh was a geological warning shot, a prelude to a catastrophic rupture that experts fear is nearly inevitable. In a deltaic land with extreme urban density, this is an existential gamble where lives, livelihoods, and entire communities hang in the balance. Unfortunately, as we have been warning for years, the country's shield against any earthquake-induced devastation is weak, with a relatively modern building code that is comprehensive in theory but largely ignored in practice.

Five years ago, according to a report, the then government gazetted the Bangladesh National Building Code. On paper, it is a robust document, prescribing rigorous standards for seismic resilience, fire safety, and structural integrity. It mandates the creation of a Bangladesh Building Regulatory Authority (BBRA) to police runaway construction. But half a decade on, the BBRA remains a fiction. In its absence, the country's urban sprawl—a chaotic mix of glass and steel towers and precarious masonry—has been left largely unregulated.

Admittedly, this failure is one of bureaucratic design. Rather than establishing an independent body of engineers and planners, the previous administration handed oversight to deputy commissioners. Asking district-level civil servants with no technical background to audit shear walls or soil liquefaction potential was a bizarre idea that, perhaps to no one's surprise, created a regulatory vacuum. In major cities, enforcement of the building code remains porous. In upazilas and rural areas, it is effectively nonexistent.

The stakes, as the recent earthquake has shown, could not be higher. Rajuk, Dhaka's development agency, estimates that a 6.9-magnitude quake could flatten 865,000 buildings and kill 210,000 people in the capital alone. Its old quarters, with narrow lanes and century-old structures, are particularly vulnerable. In Chattogram, three-quarters of buildings are deemed "at serious risk." Without a central authority to enforce soil testing and structural compliance, these and other cities are effectively building their own tombs.

The current administration has rightly flagged this as an emergency. The chief adviser has reportedly ordered an inquiry to create a dedicated authority to approve all construction, and an interim committee expects to form the BBRA by December. Building a regulator from scratch takes time, but it must be done, and done right and fast.

Going forward, all relevant government departments must stop treating construction safety as a general administrative task and recognise it as an inviolable technical line. The "building officials" designated by the code—executive engineers from the Public Works Department—must be empowered properly, bypassing the sclerotic district committees. A culture of third-party vetting, standard in the West but foreign to Bangladesh's corner-cutting construction sector, must also be enforced. Given how grave the threats are, we must do everything necessary to ensure that when the earth moves, our structures, and the people inside them, can survive.

# COP30, profit over people, and growing climate threats



Anu Muhammad  
is a former professor of economics  
at Jahangirnagar University.

ANU MUHAMMAD

The United Nations Climate Change Conference, known as COP, held its 30th session in Brazil. It was quite lengthy and expensive, yet at the end of it, the central problem remained: the much-needed transition away from fossil fuels still seems unachievable. Powerful entities continue to place obstacles in the way.

There is no denying that we are living through the harsh reality of climate change. The very existence of the Earth, and the livelihoods and security of its inhabitants, are under serious threat. Instability is now visible everywhere, with extreme cold in some places, unbearable heat in others, intensifying forest fires, increasingly frequent natural disasters, etc. Scientists continue to urge action in every possible way, especially through reducing temperatures and carbon emissions. Yet COP unfolds in an almost repetitive cycle every year: delegates from countries and blocs attend, promises are made, and concrete action is stalled.

We need to understand why this keeps happening. The causes of climate change are not mysterious. It is neither a divine punishment nor an unknown force. We know exactly why it is getting worse, and foremost among these reasons is the indiscriminate use of fossil fuels including oil, gas, and coal.

Beyond this lies the problem of overconsumption in some countries and among small, affluent segments of populations worldwide. The demand and supply driven by such consumption patterns damage the environment and destabilise ecological systems. This is the second major factor. The third is the fetishisation of capitalist growth, which is being treated as synonymous with development. To sustain this profit-driven model, investments are directed towards activities that destroy ecological balance: deforestation, toxic pollution of rivers, and massive increases in commodity production that raise both environmental and social costs.

Global consumption fuels production and growth but also generates enormous quantities of dangerous waste. Plastic has become a major threat, contaminating rivers, canals, ponds, soil, and ocean floors. Chemical and nuclear waste continue to accumulate. The production of armaments, driven by competition and wars, adds even more.

This waste severely disrupts the world's natural systems: forests, water bodies, air quality, food sources, and ecosystems. Food production has

increased significantly worldwide—in Bangladesh, for example, it has risen four to five times in the last five decades—but this has come at great cost. Chemical fertiliser use has multiplied, groundwater extraction has surged, pesticide use has grown alarmingly, and genetic modification technologies have expanded. So while yields have increased, much of this food is not genuinely safe, and the enormous socio-environmental costs make it all very unsustainable.

But aggressive advertising continues to make it difficult for people to distinguish between safe and unsafe food. Consumerism driven by marketing creates a frenzy to buy unnecessary products. Commodity



There is no denying that we are living through the harsh reality of climate change. The very existence of the Earth, and the livelihoods and security of its inhabitants, are under serious threat.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

fetishism is taking on a frightening dimension. As a result, production and waste increases, and GDP rises, but few seem to be bothered by the growing threats to human and non-human life caused by this trend.

This suggests that the problem of climate change is inherent to the type of global capitalist development we are witnessing. This problem cannot be resolved without questioning the "profit over people" anti-environmental logic at the heart of capitalism. A crucial part of any solution is moving away from fossil fuels. But fossil fuel corporations are immensely powerful and wield

scope for research and development in renewable energy. But funding is not directed there.

Where does the funding flow? To armaments and war. More than a trillion US dollars is spent annually on weapons. A tiny fraction of this could ensure clean water, safe food, or renewable energy for millions. But capitalism invests where profits lie. To ensure profit, it destroys the environment, produces weapons, fuels wars and occupations, and even commits genocide. Climate change is very much tied to these actions.

Representatives from countries

struggles and domestic challenges as interlinked problems. Globally, we must challenge fossil fuel corporations, profit-driven multinationals, and war-prone states, including the US. Domestically, we must adopt a development vision that restores river flows, expands afforestation, protects coasts from coal plants, and ensures safe food. Only then can we move towards real solutions.

Otherwise, COP may continue for another 30 sessions, spending billions and offering occasional feel-good moments during gatherings, but what is necessary to protect the Earth and its people will remain out of reach.

## Beyond apparel: How Bangladesh can develop new exports

**Bidyut Kumar Saha** is lead investment officer at ADB Bangladesh Resident Mission. **Chandan Sapkota** is public management economist at ADB Sectors Department.

**BIDYUT KUMAR SAHA** and **CHANDAN SAPKOTA**

Bangladesh urgently needs to diversify its economy. The country has a limited ability to produce and export sophisticated goods. It ranks low (128th out of 145 countries) on the Economic Complexity Index, which measures the diversity of a country's exports. Except for some petroleum-based economies, the country is one of the most narrowly concentrated economies in Asia. Exports remain largely focused on the apparel sector, which constitutes over 80 percent of exports. The apparel industry earns \$40 billion in exports, while no other sector brings in more than \$1 billion in an economy worth nearly half a trillion dollars.

Historically, Bangladesh has shown its ability to diversify its export base. In the late 1970s, goods made from jute fibre accounted for around 70 percent of total merchandise exports when the apparel industry's share was less than four percent.

The share of the apparel industry increased to 75 percent in the early 2000s, a remarkable feat in transforming an agrarian economy towards a labour-intensive, export-

oriented manufacturing country. This success led to export concentration in the apparel sector.

The rise of the apparel industry reduced the share of traditional exports like jute and leather, which have stagnated at around one billion dollars for decades. With over 85 percent of the labour force in informal jobs, Bangladesh needs job-centric and export-driven manufacturing growth to diversify its economy and create more formal employment.

A key to diversifying Bangladesh's export basket lies in replicating the success of the apparel industry. Partnerships were crucial to the apparel sector's stellar success. In the late 1970s, a Bangladeshi apparel manufacturing company, Desh Garments, created a joint venture with the Republic of Korea's Daewoo Corporation, combining local cheap and trainable labour with its foreign counterpart's technological expertise and market access.

More than one hundred Bangladeshi technical staff were trained at Daewoo's factory for six months, enabling the transfer of essential technical expertise and contributing to the development of the apparel sector. Some of these workers later became entrepreneurs.

To be a major player in chip manufacturing, the Indian conglomerate Tata is sending hundreds of staff overseas to its technical partner for training in semiconductor fabrication. Training and technology transfer occur most

efficiently and effectively when both parties in a partnership have a shared business interest. Partnerships—government-government, private-private, or public-private—are vital for sector development in developing economies.

For instance, Chile was historically known as a copper exporter. Its transformation into a global seafood exporter, thanks to the Japan-Chile Salmon Project, is an example of a successful partnership. This project transferred advanced aquaculture technologies and provided crucial market access, with public-private partnerships making the knowledge widely available.

To bring economic diversification to fruition, Bangladesh's government and development partners can focus on developing partnerships based on sound economics and honest intentions. This is a crucial element in the country's diversification efforts. Bangladesh's world-class non-governmental organisations can unite communities, disseminate technologies, and train the workforce. This is a unique advantage for Bangladesh which is not currently used in the economic diversification initiatives.

Governments and their development partners often work with many industries at once to address shared policy or regulatory challenges. While this broad approach has benefits, it can make it harder to scale up emerging industries. Focusing resources on a few key sectors, backed by a long-term

plan with clear goals, is usually more effective.

Development finance institutions can assist. They have experience in developing partnerships by managing geopolitical challenges, ensuring equitable returns, supporting public-private cooperation, and above all, supporting economic benefits. They should focus on one sector at a time, providing comprehensive support across the value chain to mobilise investments and achieve measurable export goals.

The country needs to diversify into new sectors and simultaneously strengthen the apparel industry through innovative products and access to new markets. With approximately five percent of global export share, Bangladesh's apparel industry continues to present growth opportunities. The country can diversify its economy by replicating the apparel industry's successful model of international partnerships, technical training, and targeted long-term planning.

Bangladesh's economic diversification has remained a goal rather than an outcome for decades. A focused approach built on transparent partnerships and targeted industrial development can convert these long-discussed possibilities into real progress. International partnerships, targeted training, and long-term planning offer a practical path to developing new industries and expanding the country's economic base.

# When will the news media dare to question itself?



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REZWAN-UL-ALAM

In Bangladesh, conversations about press freedom are constant, but discussions about the media's own accountability and transparency are far less frequent. Journalists often claim that state control, lawsuits, intimidation, attacks, blackouts, dependence on advertising, and political ownership or influence hinder their ability to work freely. But citizens may also raise an equally valid concern: if the government is not regulating the media, then who will?

This leads to an uncomfortable question. How often does a media house step before its audience and confront its own mistakes, biases, financial interests, or the pressures that influence its reporting? This lack of a culture of self-examination is the most fragile aspect of our media environment. That is where the idea of self-regulation emerges—not as censorship, but as a form of responsibility.

During the 2024 mass uprising, many journalists were assaulted on the streets, their equipment smashed, while many faced lawsuits and arrests. The internet shutdown halted the flow of information entirely. Many outlets could not publish the truth, not only because the internet was down but also because some owners blocked stories or because journalists themselves feared internal or external consequences. Later, when the interim government cancelled accreditation cards of 167 journalists, the Editors' Council described it as a direct attack.

For these reasons, the formation of the Media Reform Commission in late 2024 seemed like an opportunity for real change. It recommended an independent media commission, legal protection for journalists, transparency in ownership, fair wages, and a framework to rebuild public trust. However, discussions later revealed that the central recommendation—establishment of an independent commission—might be removed from the draft. If that indeed happens, the entire reform process could be meaningless as self-regulation depends on supervision



FILE VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

by a truly independent third party.

Self-regulation is a moral and accountable means through which the media makes itself responsible to the public. When done correctly, it strengthens press freedom rather than weakens it. In countries such as the United Kingdom, Norway, Ireland, Slovenia, and South Africa, these bodies accept complaints, hold open hearings, issue public rulings, and compel news organisations to correct mistakes or issue apologies.

The question for us is simple: do we want a media that only questions others, or a media that also dares to question itself?

India also has a Press Council but because its rulings are not binding, the system exists more in form than in effect. Pakistan's state run regulator prioritises

of private media anywhere in the world. And where else do privately owned newspapers accept government wage-board decisions? Bangladesh is full of contradictions. And there is no reason to expect the media to be an exception.

Bangladesh must therefore develop a hybrid model suited to its realities—a model that includes regulation but does not compromise editorial independence.

For self-regulation to work effectively, there must be a widely understood code of ethics that defines accuracy, fact checking, corrections, conflict-of-interest disclosures, and fair representation of minorities, women, and children. There must also be an independent mechanism for hearing complaints, where any member of the public

sources of revenue, owners' business interests, any hidden political ties, advertising pressures, and job security of reporters are all subject to public accountability. This means publishing annual audit reports, disclosing sources of funding, making clear any foreign financing or advertisement driven influence, revealing conflicts of interest involving owners or editors, and publishing rules on recruitment, promotion, salaries, and disciplinary actions.

When the media demands accountability for public figures, the public has every right to ask in return, "Whose money funds your news?"

A crucial factor in all of this is the financial security of journalists. No ethical code survives when journalists are underpaid. Financially insecure journalists become vulnerable to pressure, unable to resist owners' interests, and

often unable to prevent misinformation. Their economic security is therefore not merely a humane demand; it is a basic condition for a democratic information system.

Some ask why media owners would ever accept self-regulation. The answer lies in the changing nature of the news market. A growing segment of the audience today does not simply consume news; they also verify it. They know when a report is propaganda or when an advertisement is disguised as journalism. Credibility has become a valuable asset. In many European countries, when self-regulation is strong, readership and advertising revenue increase, because people trust outlets that publicly admit mistakes. Good journalism is ultimately a good investment. The question is how long it will take Bangladeshi media owners, editors, and reporters to accept this simple truth.

With the 13th national election approaching, a wave of misinformation and deepfakes is already around the corner. The government or the Election Commission alone cannot manage this challenge. Instead of blaming social media influencers as "non-journalists," the responsibility for checking misinformation must begin with the mainstream press, whose own political divisions often undermine professionalism. This responsibility should not be handed over to the state.

Bangladesh now needs a practical roadmap. To make progress within the next three months, the first step is to establish a new, independent, multi-stakeholder Press Council. A single national code of ethics must be announced for all media outlets, and an online complaints portal must be launched to allow direct public participation. Every three months, a Media Accountability Report should be published, listing complaints, rulings, corrections, and outlets that failed to comply. Major media houses should appoint ombudspersons. A journalist protection law must also be introduced to make any attacks and harassing lawsuits punishable. And decisions such as cancelling press cards must be transferred from government hands to an independent oversight body.

At the heart of these reforms lies one principle: without fair wages, safety, and professional protection for journalists, no policy will endure. Equally importantly, desired transformation will come when the media welcomes critical scrutiny and ensures its own accountability to the public. When this happens, only then can we say that our media is not only free but also responsible.

## Ducsu should be able to play a stronger role in ensuring quality food

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Sadman Mujtaba Rafid is an intern at BIGD. Views expressed in the article are the authors' own.

MD ASHIKUR RAHMAN and SADMAN MUJTABA RAFID

In Bangladesh's public universities, a "balanced meal" often means striking a balance between hunger and the risk of food poisoning. Shukanta (not his real name), a Master's student at Dhaka University, recently suffered from diarrhoea after consuming unhealthy food regularly at a residential hall. This is not an isolated incident; unfortunately, low-quality meals, sometimes accompanied by "high-protein insects," have long been a hallmark of dining halls at our public universities. The situation has always held a remarkable "consistency" regardless of which government was in power.

In 2023, a research study conducted by Professor Dr Sharmin Rumi Alim et al. in the Dhaka University canteens and cafeteria found alarmingly high bacterial counts, including *E. coli*, a bacterium responsible for diarrhoea, as well as evidence of faecal contamination. These findings reflect the

broader condition of canteens across most, if not all, public university halls. It has been a long-standing challenge, with complaints often unheard and unanswered.

Strong student bodies can potentially play an effective role in improving this grim scenario. However, historically, student bodies like the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducsu) have been highly politicised and have tended to prioritise national politics over student welfare. This year's Ducsu election was held almost six years after the last one, coming as it did with sky-high expectations from stakeholders, particularly the general students. Nevertheless, structural and political barriers remain prevalent. Despite being a legally elected body, Ducsu remains institutionally handicapped.

The newly elected vice-president of Surja Sen Hall recently faced backlash after highlighting malpractices by the hall's canteen authority, including improper serving attire and unhygienic food. He fined them Tk 3,000 as a warning and threatened to shut down canteen activities if the situation did not improve. Another incident took place at Shahid Sergeant Zahirul Huq Hall, where the newly elected general secretary fined a canteen owner Tk 1,000 after spotting Monosodium Glutamate (MSG), popularly known as "tasting salt," during an inspection.

Both the university authority and the

student representatives from different political bodies criticised these actions. "Hall union leaders have no authority to impose fines or interfere directly with canteen operations. That is solely the domain of the hall administration," the university proctor, Professor Saifuddin Ahmed, told a national daily.

Then how can student bodies like Ducsu play an effective role in ensuring students' welfare on campus?

Article 5 (a) of the Ducsu constitution grants the university's vice-chancellor (union president) unconditional authority over the elected student body, including the power to suspend the body or veto any of its decisions. It states:

"The President shall have power at any time, in the best interest of the Union, to dismiss any office bearer or member of the Executive Committee or to dissolve the Executive Committee as a whole and call for a fresh election or take such other action as he thinks fit for the running of the Union. The President may suspend the Union for such a period as he thinks fit, subject to the approval of the Syndicate of the University."

There is not even a single line in the 30-page constitution about proper nutrition and hygienic meals for either resident or non-resident students. This disempowering constitutional framework is often justified

by the lack of capacity and motivation of the elected members of the Ducsu. On the other hand, student leaders affiliated with a ruling regime receive the administration's patronage and "blessings." For instance, during the previous regime, hall canteen authorities often justified the poor quality of food by claiming they had to pay "protection money" to ruling party-affiliated student leaders. This brings us back to square one, where general students—the silent, sidelined majority stakeholders—are kept from exercising their fundamental rights. The constitutional structure, combined with student leaders' lack of power, allows incompetent authorities to exercise unilateral power over what thousands of students consume daily.

We can learn from similar initiatives in similar contexts. For example, in October 2025, at IIT Kharagpur in India, the university administration formed an 8-member hygiene and food monitoring task force headed by the president of its student body. They are meant to prepare and submit monthly reports to the authorities, recommend corrective actions, penalties, or temporary closures in the event of non-compliance, and conduct awareness and training sessions for vendors on hygiene and food safety practices.

Likewise, the Ducsu constitution should be reformed to ensure its effective participation in student welfare activities.

Irregularities in the student union elections risk representatives becoming involved with hall or canteen authorities for personal gain. No individual member of Ducsu should be allowed to impose penalties; rather, any decision to penalise canteen vendors should be made by the Ducsu body's majority. To determine any penalties, Ducsu must provide clear evidence of adulteration.

General students, on the other hand, should be allowed to run small shops and ventures in allocated spaces at little to no charge. This will not only increase the supply of quality food but can also be a source of income for many students who struggle to finance their education.

In addition, mobile courts should be allowed in hall canteens in collaboration with the Ducsu and hall authorities to monitor and punish the accused under existing laws. In fact, at Rajshahi University, the mobile court operation at the request of students and authorities received positive feedback. Besides, the terms and conditions under which the canteens are leased should be made public to ensure transparency and accountability.

Food quality is just one area where student bodies like Ducsu can play a useful role. A fairly elected body, combined with an empowering constitution, can help fulfil students' aspirations through their leaders.

### ACROSS

- 1 - avis
- 5 Auction cry
- 9 Whoop it up
- 10 Ram in the sky
- 12 Putting to work
- 13 Joust need
- 14 Some Quidditch players
- 16 Heavy weight
- 17 Put away
- 18 Lab array
- 20 Ranch group
- 22 Otherwise
- 23 Morning, in Marseille
- 25 Play start
- 28 Capital north of Syracuse
- 32 Check recipients

### 34 Word after lean

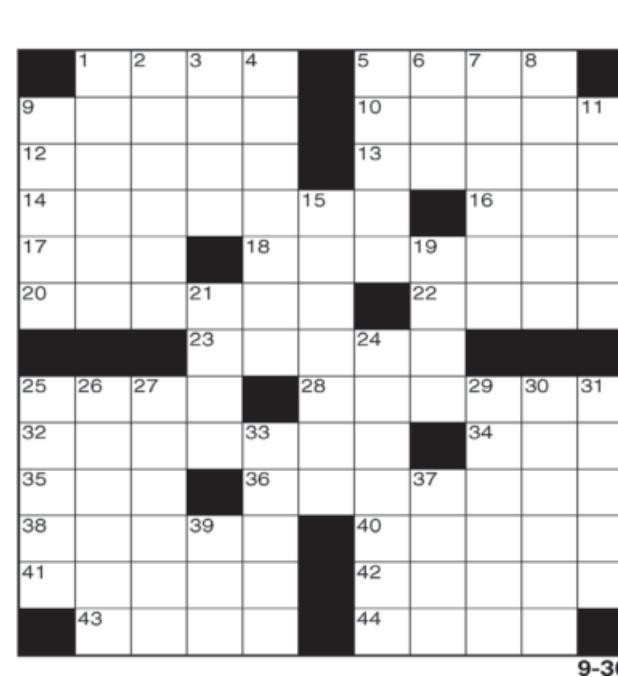
- or set
- 35 Einstein's birthplace
- 36 Oregon State team
- 38 Take care of
- 40 Make fun of
- 41 Buddy of "Barnaby Jones"
- 42 Miniature map
- 43 Order to Spot
- 44 Blissful place

### DOWN

- 1 Find a new table for
- 2 Take wing
- 3 Monthly bill
- 4 Variable study
- 5 Tito Puente's

### music

- 6 - pro nobis
- 7 Door topper
- 8 Room designs
- 9 Hicks
- 11 Intuit
- 15 Make good as new
- 19 English county
- 21 Mideast ruler
- 24 Draw announcement
- 25 Treat badly
- 26 Stars
- 27 Least spirited
- 29 Relaxed
- 31 Valuable holding
- 33 Dark wood
- 37 Hawk
- 39 Caffeine source



### YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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

Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to [dsopinion@gmail.com](mailto:dsopinion@gmail.com)





People line up to offer flowers outside the Wang Fuk Court in the aftermath of the deadly November 26 fire in Hong Kong's Tai Po district yesterday. An outpouring of grief swept Hong Kong yesterday as thousands paid their respects and laid flowers for the 128 people killed in one of the city's deadliest fires, marking the start of an official, three-day mourning period.

PHOTO: AFP

## Russia bans HRW

AGENCIES

Russian authorities have outlawed Human Rights Watch as an "undesirable organisation", a label that, under a 2015 law, makes involvement with it a criminal offence.

Friday's designation means the international human rights group must stop all work in Russia, and opens those who cooperate with or support the organisation to prosecution.

HRW has repeatedly accused Russia of suppressing dissenters and committing war crimes during its ongoing war against Ukraine.

"For over three decades, Human Rights Watch's work on post-Soviet Russia has pressed the government to uphold human rights and freedoms," the executive director at Human Rights Watch, Philippe Bolopion, said in a statement.

"Our work hasn't changed, but what's changed, dramatically, is the government's full-throttled embrace of dictatorial policies, its staggering rise in repression, and the scope of the war crimes its forces are committing in Ukraine."

The decision by the Russian prosecutor general's office is the latest move in a crackdown on Kremlin critics, journalists and activists, which has intensified since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Separately, Russia's Supreme Court designated on Thursday the Anti-Corruption Foundation set up by the late opposition activist Alexey Navalny as a "terrorist" group.

Russia's list of "undesirable organisations" currently covers more than 275 entities, including prominent independent news outlets and rights groups.

## Ukraine team heads to US for peace talks

### Attack on Ukraine kills 3, wounds dozens

AGENCIES

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy yesterday said that a delegation headed by security council secretary Rustem Umerov was on its way to the United States to continue talks on an agreement to end Russia's war.

Umerov has been put in charge of the Ukrainian delegation after the previous lead negotiator, Zelenskiy's powerful chief of staff Andriy Yermak, resigned on Friday hours after anti-corruption detectives searched his apartment.

Zelenskiy said he expected that the results of previous meetings with the US in Geneva, which took place last weekend, would now be "hammered out" today. Those meetings allowed Ukraine to present a counter-offer to proposals laid out by US Secretary of the Army Dan Driscoll to leaders in Kyiv almost two weeks ago.

Ukraine is facing significant pressure from Washington to agree to the terms of a peace deal while Zelenskiy finds himself in the most difficult political and military situation since the early days of Russia's invasion in 2022.

Meanwhile, a vast Russian overnight

attack on Ukraine killed three people and wounded nearly 30, officials said yesterday, with more than 600,000 households left without power after strikes on the grid.

Zelenskiy said Russia had launched around 36 missiles and nearly 600 drones in the attack.

Kyiv's lead negotiator resigns

Ukraine hit two 'shadow fleet' tankers in Black Sea

Ukraine's energy ministry said the overnight attack had hit power facilities in Kyiv and five other Ukrainian regions. More than 500,000 of the households which lost power were in the capital.

Meanwhile, Ukraine hit two tankers used by Russia to export oil while skirting Western sanctions with marine drones in the Black Sea. The joint operation to hit the so-called 'shadow fleet' vessels was run by the SBU and Ukraine's navy, an official said on condition of anonymity.

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# NEWS

## Health assistants start work stoppage

### Demand grade upgradation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Health Assistant Association began an indefinite work stoppage at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital yesterday to press home its six point demand, including upgrading their post to the 14th grade.

Several thousand health assistants started the sit-in in the morning and will stay overnight at the Shaheed Minar, said Fazlul Haque Chowdhury, member secretary of the Bangladesh Health Assistant Association Central Coordination Council.

On November 23, the association announced it would go for a work stoppage if its demands were not met by November 28.

Health assistants are frontline public health workers, especially in rural and hard-to-reach areas. They conduct routine vaccination sessions, among other responsibilities.

The association has long been demanding amendments to the recruitment rules, removal of salary discrimination and the granting of technical status, among six demands.

They observed work abstention in early October to press home the same demands but withdrew following assurances from the authorities.

## Corbyn's new party gathers amid fight for UK left

AFP, Liverpool

Veteran British socialist Jeremy Corbyn called for his new political party to "come together" as he opened its inaugural conference yesterday, as it seeks to move on from a messy launch and become a viable left-wing challenger to Labour.

As British politics fractures into a multi-party system and Prime Minister Keir Starmer takes Labour rightward on some issues, Corbyn's outfit hopes to fill a gap on the left.

"We're here today to do something dramatic... to found a new Democratic Socialist Party in Britain that can challenge power in our society," Corbyn told the conference in the northwestern English city of Liverpool.

But the ex-Labour leader acknowledged the new party needs to get past its internal differences.

"As a party, we've got to come together and be united because division and disunity will not serve the interests of the people that we want to represent," he said.

The appeal for unity comes after a rocky start for "Your Party", which Corbyn and fellow ex-Labour lawmaker Zarah Sultana announced they were forming in July.



Members of the Bangladesh Health Assistant Association stage a daylong sit-in at the capital's Central Shaheed Minar yesterday to press home their six-point demand, including upgrading their post to the 14th grade.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## TROOP KILLING IN WASHINGTON US halts all asylum decisions

AFP, Washington

The United States is freezing all asylum decisions, officials said Friday, as President Donald Trump hardens his anti-migrant stance after an Afghan national allegedly shot two National Guard members this week in Washington.

Wednesday's attack on the soldiers -- one of whom died from her injuries -- has ignited a fresh crackdown on foreigners in the United States, with Trump also pledging to suspend migration from "third world countries."

Joseph Edlow, director of the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), said his agency has "halted all asylum decisions until we can ensure that every alien is vetted and screened to the maximum degree possible."

That followed Trump's announcement late Thursday of plans to "permanently" pause migration from all Third World Countries to allow the US system to fully recover."

Asked which nationalities would be affected, the Department of Homeland Security pointed AFP to a list of 19 countries -- including Afghanistan, Cuba, Haiti, Iran and Myanmar -- already facing US travel restrictions since June.

Meanwhile, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Friday that the US had temporarily stopped issuing visas to all individuals traveling on Afghan passports.

"The United States has no higher priority than protecting our nation and our people," he said.

The shooting has brought together three politically explosive issues: Trump's controversial use of the military on American soil, immigration, and the lingering legacy of the 20-year conflict in Afghanistan.

Attorney General Pam Bondi has pledged to seek the death penalty against Lakanwal, describing him as a "monster."

In his social media post Thursday, Trump also threatened to reverse "millions" of admissions granted under his predecessor Joe Biden, in a new escalation of his anti-immigration stance.

Separately, the USCIS said it would reexamining the green cards -- permanent residency cards -- issued to individuals who had migrated to the US from the same 19 countries also cited by the Department of Homeland Security.

More than 1.6 million green card holders, roughly 12 percent of the total permanent resident population, were born in the countries listed, according to US immigration data analyzed by AFP.

Afghanistan has over 116,000 green card holders.

Shawn VanDiver, president of AfghanEvac, a group that helped resettle Afghans in the country after the military withdrawal, blasted Rubio's move to halt all visa issuances.

## Rab-15 CO among 300 transferred

FROM PAGE 12

Khan, who previously commanded 37 Bir under the 55 Infantry Division in Jashore during the Covid-19 period.

Wing Commander MZM Intekhab Chowdhury, director of Rab's media wing, said a probe committee had been formed to investigate allegations linked to drug seizures, financial misappropriation, and controversial operations. "Those found guilty will be brought to justice. No one will be spared," he said.

He added that parts of the media reports contain truth and are under investigation, and that offenders could face

dismissal or imprisonment, depending on the findings.

He, however, described recent media reports as a "mixed-up jumble", saying some outlets had conflated two separate issues -- the annual reshuffle and the ongoing investigations -- in a way that distorted facts and damaged Rab's reputation.

He said the allegations date back to September and that old incidents had resurfaced ahead of the election.

"If misappropriation occurred -- whether involving 10, 20, or even 100 officers -- it is impossible that 300 personnel would collectively hold meetings over it. Such large-scale

misappropriation is unrealistic," he said.

Officials familiar with the matter said headquarters launched a special probe in recent months following a series of allegations against Rab-15 after controversial drives.

On September 7, Rab-15 claimed to have arrested two women with 89,600 yaba pills and Tk 16.71 lakh in West Kutupalong of Ukhia. Allegations later emerged that the seizure was underreported in case documents.

On September 26, Rab-15 arrested alleged top drug trader Jahangir Alam in Leda of Hnila union, Teknaf; the seizure

list -- seven bricks and two wooden sticks -- drew widespread criticism.

In another recent allegation, an officer from the Kutupalong Rab camp reportedly raided a house, seized Tk 60 lakh in cash and four lakh yaba pills, and then shared the seized items among themselves.

Sources also said certain officers in Cox's Bazar routinely used plainclothes "FS operatives" or "civil teams", similar to police intelligence units, and that some of these teams allegedly maintained links with yaba traders, facilitated smugglers, brokered settlements, and shared illicit profits.

On used a microphone to convince the crowd to disperse.

"Please don't crowd the hospital. Your prayers will reach from home," he told the activists, while volunteers held placards carrying the same message.

BNP leaders said the party is closely following the medical board's decisions and requested supporters nationwide to remain calm and continue praying for the former prime minister's recovery.

Khaleda is suffering from heart and lung infections and pneumonia and is currently being treated in the hospital's coronary care unit (CCU) under the supervision of both local and foreign specialists.

## Jamaat sees unrest

FROM PAGE 12

about Allah and the Prophet (PBUH), hurting the religious sentiments of the country's Muslim majority. It said the government was forced to arrest him amid mounting public protests.

The Shura also strongly urged the government to accept the five-point demands of the eight like-minded parties, including Jamaat, and take concrete steps to ensure an environment for a free, fair, impartial, and participatory election.

It alleged that although Awami League's activities were suspended during the trial of its "fascist" leaders, its alliance partners had continued their "malicious activities", both openly and covertly, to worsen the law and order situation and "sabotage the election".

The Shura further demanded that, to ensure a proper election environment, the government immediately prepare a list of armed criminals, arrest them, bring them under the law, and recover all illegal firearms.

raised many questions.

Reiterating Jamaat's demand for elections under a proportional representation (PR) system, the Shura also repeated its call for suspending political activities of the 14-party alliance, including the Awami League and Jatiya Party.

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## Hallmark MD

FROM PAGE 12

deteriorated significantly around yesterday noon while he was in Dhaka Central Jail. Later, he was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

He breathed his last around 10:30pm while undergoing treatment.

Tanvir Mahmud was a key accused in the infamous Tk 4,000 crore Sonali Bank loan scam.

On March 19, last year, a Dhaka court sentenced nine people, including Hallmark Chairman Jasmine Islam and Tanvir Mahmud, to life imprisonment in a case filed over swindling Tk 10.5 crore out of Sonali Bank.

DHAKA SUNDAY NOVEMBER 30, 2025

AGRAHAYAN 15, 1432 BS

The Daily Star

9

## Voter confidence

FROM PAGE 3

run-up to the polls. They observed that political consensus has not been reached fully yet, which may influence the election outcome.

He said several critical issues remain unresolved, including updating the voter list, determining the number of polling booths and ensuring voting rights for expatriate Bangladeshis.

"People expect the government to play a stronger and politically neutral role," he said.

On law enforcement agencies, he said citizens want police, administration and the military to operate independently and effectively.

"The election is very close. If existing problems are not addressed immediately, the situation may worsen. The government must recognise this," he said.

Speaking at the consultation, Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, said, "While sitting in Dhaka, we hear the concerns of people from Dhaka. We learn about their experiences. However, we must listen more to those who live outside the capital -- women and men in rural areas, the youth, the marginalised and excluded communities. We must understand what they think and the realities they face."

She said ordinary citizens, particularly marginalised people, were openly expressing their opinions in the meeting.

Previously, Citizen's Platform held similar consultations in Sylhet on October 23, Rajshahi on November 15, Barishal on November 19, Khulna on November 20 and Mymensingh on November 24.

## Education in Bangla

FROM PAGE 3

Poet Imran Mahfuz said the Abul Mansur Ahmad Memorial Council has identified 52 young scholars in seven years through competitions and seminars to introduce his ideas to new generations.

In his welcome remarks, writer and teacher Abul Fazal said although "British Bengal" was divided in 1947, "historical Bengal" -- and its culture -- was not.

Dr Abdullah Harun Chowdhury, professor of Environmental Science at Khulna University, chaired the event.

He also urged everyone to read the works of Abul Mansur Ahmad.

## New law drafted

The ordinance defines SOM under Section 5 and imposes penalties of three to ten years' imprisonment and a minimum Tk 1 lakh fine for engaging in or assisting the offence.

It retains capital punishment for organised trafficking groups under Section 8 and allows life imprisonment for aggravated forms of migrant smuggling.

Calling the law a "critical step forward", Tariful Islam, country director of Justice and Care, said, "The ordinance opens new avenues for prosecuting criminals who profit from exploiting vulnerable migrants. It now meets international standards and aligns with UN protocols."

## Govt okays draft NGO

FROM PAGE 12

The amendment brings several changes to the existing law, simplifies NGO registration procedures, and relaxes conditions for the release of donations, said the Chief Adviser's Press Wing in a statement.

Under the revised law, donations of up to Tk 50 lakh per year will no longer require prior approval, making the regulations more stakeholder friendly, it said.

The draft of the Police Commission Ordinance, conducted by the Religious Affairs Adviser AFM Khalid Hossain, was also presented at the advisory council meeting.

The Advisory Council instructed that the draft be submitted in a more detailed and revised form at its next meeting, the statement said.

Prayers were also offered for the swift recovery of former prime minister and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia during the special meeting.

Religious Affairs Adviser AFM Khalid Hossain conducted the prayer, according to the CAO.



## TOXIC TEMPTATION: The hidden danger of food colours and adulteration in Bangladesh

DR B A SADIQ

Bangladesh's vibrant food culture is a feast for the eyes – from rainbow-hued sweets to brightly coloured street snacks. But beneath this colourful charm lies a dangerous truth: much of that colour is not natural at all. The growing use of artificial and industrial dyes in food has become a silent but severe public health crisis, threatening millions of consumers every day.

Across markets and restaurants, many popular foods—jilapi, chanachur, pickles, biryani rice, and fruit drinks—are often laced with non-permitted dyes such as Rhodamine B, Malachite Green, and Sudan Red. These chemicals are designed for textiles, plastics, and paints, not for human consumption. Yet, due to weak monitoring, limited awareness, and profit-driven motives, they continue to find their way into the nation's food chain.

**Why it happens:** Unscrupulous traders use industrial colours to make foods look more appealing and "fresh" that attracts buyer instantly. Natural food colours fade over time and are costlier, while synthetic industrial dyes are cheap, stable, and easy to mix. This economic incentive, combined with a lack of strict enforcement, fuels the cycle of adulteration.

**Health hazards beyond imagination:** The dangers are alarming. Long-term consumption of toxic dyes can lead to liver and kidney damage, hormonal imbalance, reproductive issues, and even cancer. Children are particularly at risk since their organs are still developing.

Moreover, these harmful substances are often added without any control over dosage, making the exposure even more

dangerous. What looks like an innocent colourful snack may, in reality, be a chemical cocktail.

**The law vs reality:** Bangladesh has strong food safety laws on paper—such as the Food Safety Act 2013 and the Pure Food Rules 1967—which prohibit the use of industrial chemicals in food. However, enforcement remains weak. Market inspections are irregular, penalties are inconsistent, and awareness among small-scale producers is minimal.

The Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) and Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) have taken steps to identify and penalise offenders, but without a sustained and coordinated effort, such measures are often temporary fixes.

**The way forward:** The solution lies in a threefold approach: regulation, education, and innovation. Authorities must strengthen inspection systems, increase random food testing, and impose heavier fines on violators. Equally important is public awareness—consumers must learn to question unnaturally bright foods and demand safer options.

On the brighter side, natural colour alternatives exist and are locally available. Encouraging food industries to adopt these safer, plant-based colours can ensure both visual appeal and public safety. Bangladesh's food should not only taste good and look attractive—it must also be safe to eat. It's time to choose health over harmful hues and let natural colours bring back the true flavour of life.

The writer is the Managing Director of Surecell Medical Bangladesh Ltd. E-mail: dr.sadiq70@yahoo.com



### Combating Cancer with Strength and Resilience

"I was affirmative then, and I am still affirmative now. It was my willpower that kept me firm in my battle against this illness," says "Raihan Islam, a retired senior ASP of a police station in Dhaka. Raihan, a 70-year-old lung cancer survivor, instead of being defeated by his diagnosis, showed an exemplary level of optimism during his fight against cancer. In a quest to maintain a healthy routine after his retirement and spend his days peacefully with his family, he unfortunately encountered one of the hardest phases of his life.

**It all began in October 2023**

He randomly felt pain in both of his shoulders during his routine walk. When the pain lingered for a few days and became unbearable, he went for a diagnosis. Raihan was diagnosed with high blood pressure and was advised to routinely monitor his blood pressure. "Unfortunately, my blood pressure kept increasing, which was surprising for me, as I never had high B.P. before," he says. Later that month, he was diagnosed with a lung tumour, which came as a great shock to him. Before he could process this shock, he was also diagnosed with hyperinflated lungs and eventually underwent surgery for it. He immediately flew to Bangkok for proper diagnosis and treatment of his tumour after recovering from the surgery. "To my horror, my lung tumour was confirmed there. But due

high expenses I was forced to return to Bangladesh, leaving it unattended," he admits.

#### Immediate treatment followed by expenses

After returning to Bangladesh, with the help of his surgeon friend, he underwent a tumour removal surgery. Despite the successful removal of the tumour, he was later diagnosed with lung cancer during the follow-up biopsy. "Even when I was informed about my cancer, I did not lose hope and still went for immunotherapy under Professor Dr Kazi Manzur Kader," he says. The therapy started in February 2024 and was completed with 12 doses (200 mL per dose) of Pemro. When he was asked about his expenses, Raihan really praised his

**BEACON**  
Light for life

Reported by  
-Ammarah Laika Mohiuddin



### SUPERBUGS ON THE RISE

## The world is running out of effective antibiotics!

DR MUNIRUDDIN AHMED

On October 13, *The Guardian* published an alarming report titled 'Sharp global rise in antibiotic-resistant infections in hospitals, WHO finds.' The World Health Organisation (WHO) warned that infections once easily curable with conventional antibiotics are now becoming untreatable. Physicians fear that in the coming years, antibiotic resistance will make even common infections dangerously difficult to treat.

According to a 2023 global survey, one in six laboratory-confirmed infections is now resistant to antibiotics. About 40% of infections of the blood, intestines, urinary tract and reproductive system show resistance to common antibiotics. Most concerning, antibiotics are proving ineffective against Gram-negative bacteria. Experts predict that by 2050, antibiotic resistance may reach 70% worldwide, threatening to reverse decades of medical progress.

This crisis is not new. Back in 2017, WHO warned that the world is running out of antibiotics. Its report, *Antibacterial Agents in Clinical Development Including Tuberculosis*, revealed a stagnation in the discovery of new antibiotics.

WHO's Director of Essential Medicines, Dr Suzanne Hill, has called for urgent investment in antibiotic research, warning that 'humanity is left with almost no shield against these deadly pathogens.'

merely modified chemical versions of older drugs—offering temporary relief but no lasting solution. As bacteria evolve rapidly, effective antibiotics are disappearing even faster. Without new drugs, doctors may soon face situations where minor surgeries become life-threatening due to resistant infections.

Among the most dangerous pathogens today are *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) and *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, responsible for urinary tract infections and tuberculosis (TB).

WHO has identified 12 priority bacterial species that are multidrug-resistant, including strains that cause pneumonia and hospital-acquired infections! Against many of these, no effective antibiotics remain.

WHO currently lists 51 antibiotics under development, but only eight are expected to make a meaningful clinical impact. For life-threatening infections such as multidrug-resistant TB, *Klebsiella pneumoniae* and *E. coli*, doctors are left with few or no treatment options. These superbugs often spread in hospitals and nursing homes, causing fatal infections.

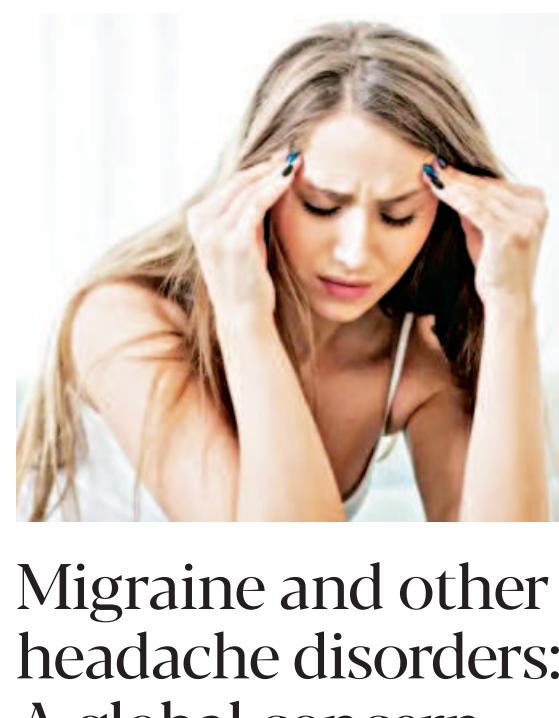
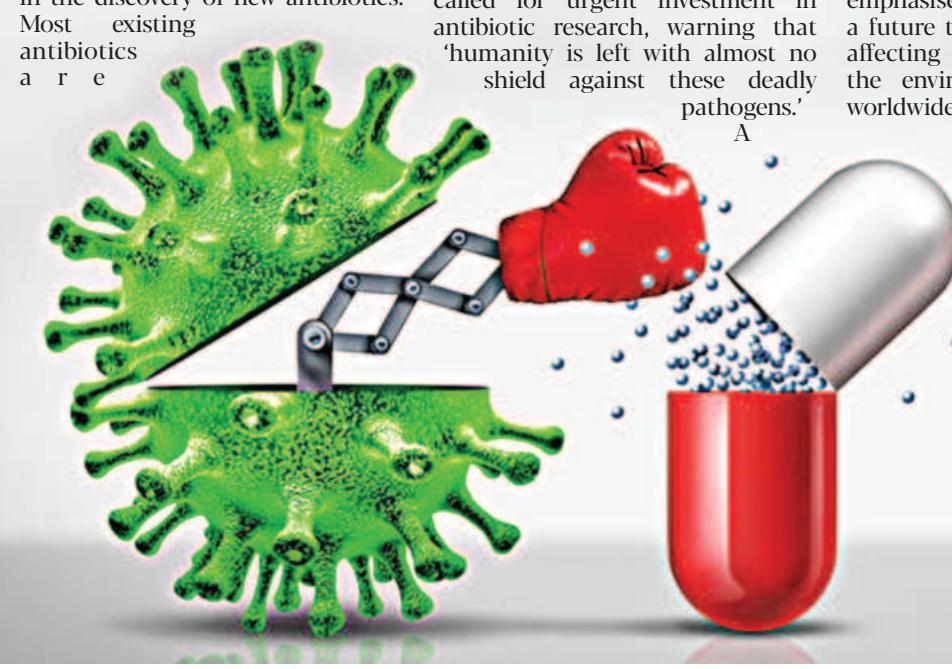
WHO's Director of Essential Medicines, Dr Suzanne Hill, has called for urgent investment in antibiotic research, warning that 'humanity is left with almost no shield against these deadly pathogens.'

recent *Lancet* article titled 'Antibiotic Resistance: Need for a Global Solution' underscored the magnitude of the crisis. Twenty-six leading scientists and clinicians warned that within two to three decades, humanity may return to a pre antibiotic era, where simple bacterial infections cause mass fatalities and routine surgeries become impossible. Despite global concern, little tangible progress has been made, especially in developing countries.

Developing a single antibiotic costs hundreds of millions of dollars, yet the return on investment is minimal. Patients use antibiotics for only a few days—unlike lifelong drugs for diabetes or hypertension. Moreover, when a new antibiotic quickly encounters resistance, the commercial incentive collapses. Regulatory hurdles add further delays. As a result, most companies have withdrawn from antibiotic research, leaving patients vulnerable and resistant bacteria triumphant.

In this context, World Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Awareness Week 2025, held from 18 to 24 November 2025, carried particular urgency. The 2025 theme—"Act Now: Protect Our Present, Secure Our Future"—emphasises that AMR is not merely a future threat but a current crisis affecting health, food systems, the environment and economies worldwide.

The writer is a professor in the Department of Pharmacy at Daffodil International University and the former dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Dhaka.



## Migraine and other headache disorders: A global concern

STAR HEALTH DESK

Headache disorders remained among the most common neurological conditions worldwide, affecting an estimated 40% of the global population in 2021. Despite their widespread impact, they continued to be underestimated and under-treated, leading to significant personal suffering, reduced quality of life and substantial economic loss.

Migraine alone ranked as the third highest cause of disability-adjusted life years globally, after stroke and neonatal encephalopathy. Many people live with recurring headaches without proper diagnosis or treatment, contributing to avoidable disability and productivity loss.

**Types of headache disorders:** Several headache disorders were recognised as major public health concerns due to their disabling nature:

• **Migraine:** recurrent attacks lasting 4–72 hours, often with nausea, vomiting and sensitivity to light and sound.

• **Tension-type headache:** pressure or tightness around the head, often linked with stress or neck strain.

• **Cluster headache:** extremely severe pain around one eye, occurring several times a day with tearing and nasal symptoms.

• **Medication-overuse headache:** caused by frequent use of pain medicines, leading to persistent daily headaches.

#### Treatment and management

Effective management requires better training for healthcare providers to accurately diagnose and distinguish headache types.

Cost-effective treatments include analgesics, anti-emetics, specific anti-migraine medicines and preventive drugs.

Lifestyle measures—regular sleep, hydration, exercise, a healthy diet, avoiding triggers such as alcohol, and using a headache calendar—are essential.

Educating patients on medication overuse helps prevent chronic symptoms.

SOURCE: WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

## LUNG CANCER No longer just a smoker's disease!

PROF DR DABASHISH PATOWARY

Lung cancer is no longer just a smoker's disease. In Bangladesh, alongside smoking and negligence, factors such as air pollution, radon gas, genetic mutations, and industrial emissions from workplaces are increasingly contributing to its risk. Research shows that although smoking remains a major cause of lung cancer among patients in Bangladesh, cases of adenocarcinoma—a particular type—are rising even among people who have never smoked.

Be alert—do not ignore these warning signs: persistent cough, coughing up blood, chest pain or shortness of breath, unexplained weight loss, or unusual fatigue. Early diagnosis ensures better treatment outcomes and increases the chance of survival.

Preventive strategies are the need of the time. Quit smoking completely and maintain a smoke-free environment both indoors and outdoors. Air pollution levels are dangerously high in urban areas; take initiatives to ensure clean air and support government actions to reduce pollution.

Undergo regular screening and medical check-ups, especially if you are above 40 or have a present or past history of smoking. Make a conscious decision for yourself and your loved ones—quit smoking today, ensure a clean air environment, and prioritise routine health screenings.

Together, prevention is not just possible, but we can ensure a healthier and longer life!

The writer is a clinical oncologist at North East Cancer Hospital.

## BCB drops red-flagged players from BPL auction

SPORTS REPORTER

A day before the players' auction for the 12th Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), scheduled for today, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) excluded several local cricketers from the auction list who are under suspicion of being involved in fixing-related irregularities in the previous edition.

The decision came following the recommendation of Alex Marshall, the Independent Chair of the board's Integrity Unit, who advised the board not to include any cricketers or officials who were "red flagged" by the board's inquiry committee for alleged corrupt activities during the last BPL season.

According to documents obtained by The Daily Star, seven local cricketers who were part of the draft list, which was sent to the six franchises on November 26, have been dropped. The final list now includes 158 local players who alongside 267 overseas players will go under the hammer today.

Out of the omissions, the two biggest names are Anamul Haque Bijoy and Mosaddeq Hossain — domestic veterans who have played for Bangladesh across three formats and were placed in Category C in the draft list. The other excluded cricketers are: Alaudin Babu (Category D), Nihaduzzaman (Category E), Sunzamul Islam (Category E), Shafiqul Islam (Category F), and Mizanur Rahman (Category F).

The BCB clarified its position in a press release issued in the evening, saying that based on the advice of its Integrity Unit's Chair, "a number of individuals, including some players, have not been invited to participate in this year's tournament."

- » The players' auction is returning to the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 after 12 years. The first two editions in 2012 and 2013 used an auction system, while the next nine seasons followed a draft format.
- » This auction will be conducted by Ormaan Rafay Nizam, who also oversaw the previous two BPL auctions.
- » Six franchises have already directly signed 12 local and 11 foreign players. A total of 158 local and 267 overseas players will go under the hammer.
- » Franchise bids will range from BDT 50,000 to BDT 500,000 across six local player categories, and from USD 1,000 to USD 5,000 across five overseas categories.
- » Each franchise must acquire at least 12 local players and at least two overseas players through the auction.
- » The local players' purse has been set at BDT 4.5 crore (excluding direct signings), while the overseas purse is USD 350,000 (including direct signings).

The board also clarified that the decision applies only to the BPL and does not affect participation in other domestic tournaments.

The exclusion came as a shock to Bijoy, who told The Daily Star that he is considering legal action.

"I am not getting anyone on the phone, and no one is responding. Why did they exclude me? What evidence do they have? I need to know. They haven't informed me of anything," Bijoy said.

"I will definitely ask for the evidence. If they cannot show any, I will demand them to restore my reputation."

As the BCB is yet to officially name anyone for involvement in fixing-related activities, some members of the cricket fraternity questioned how fair was the decision to exclude them from BPL.

But the BPL Governing Council member Iftekhar Rahman Mithu strongly defended this move.

"As the Governing Council, we have every right," Mithu said yesterday after the conclusion of an integrity session conducted by the ACU and a pre-auction orientation on auction procedures for all six franchises.

"We established a process where injured players cannot be on the list, and flagged players will not be on the list. This is entirely our decision and within our jurisdiction. Those who feel they have been unfairly included in the red-flag list have appeal processes available."

Meanwhile, following widespread criticism, several domestic performers like Mohammad Rubel, Iftakhar Hossain Ilti, Tawfiq Khan Tushar, and Nuhayel Sandee were added in the final list. Some players were also shifted in different categories.

Earlier, on February 3, the BCB formed a three-member Independent Evaluation Committee to investigate the 11th BPL. After nine months, the committee submitted a 900-page report on October 28.



Azerbaijan players celebrate one of their two goals during a 2-0 victory against Malaysia in the second match of the Tri-Nation Series at the National Stadium in Dhaka on Saturday. Peritan Bozdag gave Azerbaijan an early lead with a volley before Nigar Mirzaliyeva's long-range effort gave them a 2-0 cushion before half-time. The scoreline did not change after the restart as Azerbaijan claimed pole position in the three-team competition ahead of the last game against Bangladesh, who lost their first match against Malaysia 1-0, scheduled for Tuesday.

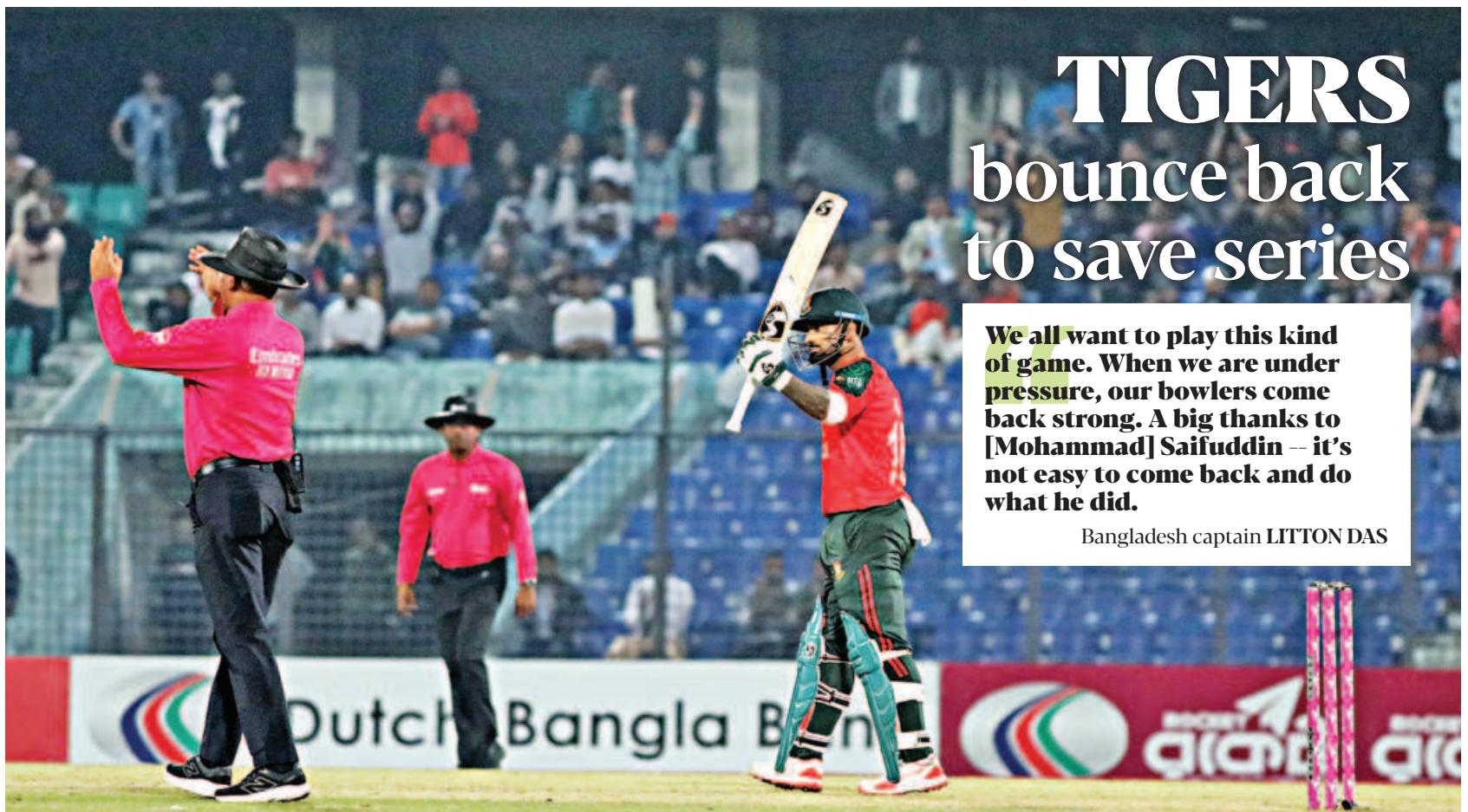
## What to WATCH

### T Sports

India vs South Africa  
1st ODI  
Live from 2:00 pm  
Star Sports Select  
HD1 and HD2

Premier League  
Crystal Palace vs  
Man Utd  
Live from 6:00 pm  
West Ham vs  
Liverpool

Live from 8:05 pm  
Nottingham Forest vs Brighton  
Live from 8:05 pm  
Chelsea vs Arsenal  
Live from 10:30 pm



Led by skipper Litton Das, Bangladesh clinched a four-wicket win in the second T20I against Ireland, levelling the three-match series 1-1 at the Bir Sreshtho Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman Stadium in Chattogram yesterday. After a 39-run defeat in the first game, where Bangladesh's batting struggled, and Litton managed only a solitary run, the captain struck a team-high 57 off 37 balls to chase down a 171-run target with two balls remaining -- their highest T20I chase at home. The Tigers wobbled late, losing four wickets for 19 runs at a crucial stage, but solid contributions from Parvez Hossain Emon (43 off 28) and Saif Hassan (22 off 17), along with late blows from Mohammad Saifuddin (17\* off 7) -- recalled as one of three changes -- ensured Bangladesh crossed the finish line.



Amirul Islam (3rd from L) raises his arm as his teammates congratulate him following one of his three goals against Australia in the opening match of the FIH Junior Hockey World Cup at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Hockey Stadium in Chennai yesterday. The drag and flick specialist was adjudged player of the match for his impressive display as Bangladesh, playing their debut match in any level of world cup in hockey, put up a brave fight in a 5-3 defeat against the former champions.

PHOTO: AHF

## TIGERS bounce back to save series

We all want to play this kind of game. When we are under pressure, our bowlers come back strong. A big thanks to [Mohammad] Saifuddin -- it's not easy to come back and do what he did.

Bangladesh captain LITTON DAS



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## 1st Division League to start on Dec 11

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Aminul Islam Bulbul announced on Saturday that the upcoming Dhaka First Division Cricket League is scheduled to begin on December 11, featuring 12 teams instead of 20.

"We've decided to start the league on December 11. Those players who have already collected tokens will be able to complete fresh transfers on December 5 and 6," Bulbul told reporters at The Westin Dhaka following a meeting with representatives from several Dhaka clubs, the Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB), and players from various leagues.

The BCB hosted the tea-party inviting all 76 Dhaka clubs in hope of resolving the ongoing crisis surrounding the timely commencement of the leagues. However, only 31 clubs attended, while the remaining 45 -- who have been voicing concerns over the legitimacy of the current cricket board, alleged irregularities in the recent board elections, and other grievances -- did not participate.

Despite postponing the league's start date twice, the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) failed to convince the boycotting clubs to join.

BCB vice-president Faruque Ahmed said they would continue efforts to bring the dissenting clubs back into the competition and hinted at the possibility of organising an alternative tournament if needed.

"We'll arrange something so they get opportunities to play and benefit financially -- such a decision has been made," he said.

Meanwhile, CWAB president Mohammad Mithun assured that steps are being taken to ensure players are not left without opportunities.

## Five-star Kings go top as MSC slump

SPORTS REPORTER

Bashundhara Kings stormed to the top of the Bangladesh Football League table with a commanding 5-0 victory over Rahmatgong MFS, while Mohammedan Sporting Club suffered a setback as they crashed to a 2-0 defeat against Young Men's Fakirpool. Only days after defeating arch-rivals Abahani, Sylhet Kings went into halftime firmly in control.

At their home venue, Kings looked ruthless from the outset. The five-time champions broke the deadlock in the 27th minute through Rakib Hossain, who finished off a fluent attacking move. Just before the breather, Faysal Ahmed Fahim doubled the lead with a neat strike in the 45th minute, ensuring Kings went into halftime firmly in control.

The second half turned into a one-way show as Kings piled on the pressure. Centre-back Topu Barman added the third in the 71st minute before Nigerian forward Emmanuel Agbaji made it 4-0 just three minutes later, capitalising on Rahmatgong's defensive frailties.



Alfaz Ahmed's side appeared lacklustre and disjointed against the spirited newcomers.

The first half remained goalless despite both sides creating half-chances. Fakirpool, who beat

Brazilian striker Dorielton Gomes completed the rout in the 78th minute with a composed finish.

While Kings soared, Mohammedan endured a frustrating outing at the Shaheed Mir Japar Stadium in Manikganj, where they fell 2-0 to Young Men's Fakirpool. Only days after defeating arch-rivals Abahani,

They nearly doubled the lead in the 49th minute, but Mohammedan keeper Shakib Al Hasan's timely clearance denied further damage. Shakib, however, could not prevent the second goal in the 61st minute, when Ivorian forward Ben Ibrahim Ouattara dribbled past three defenders, exchanged a clever one-two with Arian Hossain and slotted in with composure to make it 2-0.

In the day's other match, Brothers Union held Bangladesh Police to a goalless draw at the Shaheed Barkat Stadium in Gazipur. The single point lifted Brothers to third place with three points.

With today's victory, Fakirpool climbed to eighth with four points, overtaking Mohammedan, who dropped to ninth on equal points but behind on goal difference.



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## Govt okays draft NGO law amid BNP's objection

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Advisory Council yesterday approved the draft "The Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025" amid strong objections from the BNP.

On Friday evening, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alangir in a statement said they have learned from reliable sources that the interim government was rushing to pass two laws: the "Police Commission Act" and the "NGO-related act".

"We believe the move to enact these laws ahead of the election indicates a different intention on the part of the government, which will hinder the democratic transition," he said.

It would not be appropriate to hurriedly pass such important laws without a public mandate.

"We believe these laws should be framed through proper debate in the next national parliament. We urge the government to refrain from taking such steps," the statement added.

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## Gaza death toll surpasses 70,000

### Two more children killed in Israeli airstrike

AGENCIES

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza on Saturday said more than 70,000 people have been killed since the war between Israel and Hamas erupted more than two years ago.

The milestone comes as a fragile US-brokered ceasefire largely holds, but with both sides accusing the other of violating the terms of the deal.

In a statement, Gaza's health ministry said the death toll from the war had risen to 70,100.

The ministry said that since the ceasefire came into effect on October 10, 354 Palestinians had been killed by Israeli fire.

They include two children who were killed in an Israeli attack yesterday.

The children's uncle said an Israeli drone fired on Fadi and Goma Abu Assi, brothers aged 10 and 12, while they were gathering firewood to help their wheelchair-bound father east of Khan Younis in southern Gaza.

"They are children...what did they do? They do not have missiles or bombs, they went to gather wood for their father so he can start a fire," Mohamed Abu Assi told Reuters as their funeral took place.

At the funeral, the children's father wept over the body of one of the boys whose white shroud had been peeled back to show his face.

It noted that the spike from the last death toll was due to the fact that the data relating to 299 bodies had been processed and approved by the authorities.

Despite the ceasefire, the Palestinian territory remains in a deep humanitarian crisis.

According to the terms of ceasefire, Hamas has released all the living hostages and returned the remains of 26 dead hostages.

## Human washing machine goes on sale in Japan

AFP, Tokyo

After wowing World Expo visitors, a human washing machine is now on sale in Japan, a company spokeswoman said Friday.

Users lie down in the pod, close the lid and get cleaned like clothes in a washing machine -- but without the spin -- while music plays.



A prototype of the device, called the human washer of the future, attracted long queues at the six-month Expo that wrapped up in Osaka in October after welcoming over 27 million people.

Made by Japanese firm Science, the device is an update of a product displayed the last time Osaka hosted the event, in 1970.

"Our (company) president was inspired by that as a 10-year-old boy at the time," Science spokeswoman Sachiko Maekura told AFP.

The machine "not only washes your body but also your soul," she added, while also monitoring users' heartbeats and other vital signs.

After a US resort company contacted Science to see if the prototype would be commercialised, the firm decided to produce it for real.

A hotel in Osaka bought the first machine and is preparing to offer the service to hotel guests, the spokeswoman said.



A farmer scatters potato seeds on a field in Baya of Paba upazila, Rajshahi, yesterday. The seeds (pieces of potatoes) will be planted in rows before furrows are dug for irrigation. Growers say they have reduced potato cultivation this season as plummeting potato prices left them with losses.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

## Frequent shake-ups 'erode confidence in field admin'

BAHARAM KHAN

Frequent reshuffles of deputy commissioners (DCs) just months before the national election have sparked unease in the field administration, raising concerns about election preparedness.

Between November 8 and 15, the government reshuffled DCs in at least 54 districts. Of them, 10 DCs were transferred to other districts, while 44 districts received first-time DCs. Orders involving at least six of these appointments or transfers have since been cancelled.

Typically, deputy secretaries serve as DCs and act as returning officers during national elections.

Officials say the decision to bar officers who served in the last three polls from election duties has narrowed the pool of experienced candidates, forcing the government to rely on less seasoned officers and fueling doubts about the administration's capacity to manage the upcoming vote.

Before the latest changes to the DC post early this month, the public administration ministry has had to reshuffle DCs multiple times in recent months.

According to public administration ministry officials, DCs work with at least three intelligence agencies at the district level. Alongside coordinating development activities and handling core administrative duties, they manage VIP protocol and navigate pressure from political parties.

Officials say the ministry has been appointing DCs without setting clear criteria, often under pressure from various quarters.

As a result, many efficient officers are now reluctant to take up the post, while some comparatively less competent officials have secured appointments through lobbying, forcing the government

**Indecision at the top does not reflect an efficient administration. When the central administration hesitates, field officials lose confidence.**

FIROZ MIA  
Ex-DC and public admin expert

to revise the transfers repeatedly, they said on condition of anonymity.

The instability has been evident across several districts. In Chattogram, for example, its then DC Farida Khanom was withdrawn on September 21 and Naogaon DC Mohammad Abdul Awal was named as her replacement. The order was soon cancelled. Later, Feni DC Saiful Islam took charge of Chattogram on October 19, only to be replaced 24 days later by Zahidul Islam Miah.

In recent months, a similar pattern was seen in other districts, including Chapainawabganj, Madaripur, Noakhali, Barguna, Meherpur, Bholna and Gazipur. In all cases, DCs were appointed, called back and then posted elsewhere.

A joint secretary of the Cabinet Division said that although DCs are government officers, the position is almost "quasi political" in nature. Those with solid field-level administrative experience should be prioritised for the role.

"Seven to eight lakh officials are involved in an election," he said. "Is it possible to keep all of them away from election duties? If not, why should such restrictions apply only to deputy commissioners and police superiors?"

According to Firoz Mia, a public administration expert, different districts require officers of different caliber, and it should be assessed accordingly before posting. He said the recent reshuffle indicates the ministry did not have such evaluations.

"Indecision at the top does not reflect an efficient administration," said the former DC, adding, "When the central administration hesitates, field officials lose confidence."

Public Administration Secretary Ehsanul Haque declined to comment on the matter when this correspondent approached him at his secretariat office through his public relations officer. He also did not respond to calls and text messages.

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Although CNG-run autorickshaws are banned on Dhaka-Mawa expressway, the vehicles rampantly use it to transport passengers from Jurain level crossing to Keraniganj. The slow-moving three-wheelers, which are supposed to use the road below this flyover, raise the risk of being hit by buses and trucks. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Rab-15 CO among 300 transferred Rab says transfers tied to polls; some also face yaba-related allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a major reshuffle, more than 300 members of Rapid Action Battalion-15, including its commanding officer Lt Col Kamrul Hasan, have recently been transferred from the unit responsible for Cox's Bazar and Bandarban.

Rab's media wing said the large-scale transfers were part of routine annual reshuffles carried out in November-December, but expanded this year due to operational needs ahead of the upcoming national election.

It also acknowledged that several officers had been implicated in allegations involving drug seizures and other irregularities, which are now under investigation.

Documents from five Rab Headquarters circulars show that 634 personnel of all ranks, from cooks and sweepers to subedars, havildars, SIs, ASIs, corporals, nayeks, constables, sepoys, and soldiers, have been transferred.

Two orders on November 19 reassigned 198 and 200 members; another 100 were moved on November 17; 62 on November 12; and 74 more on November 27.

A review of the orders shows over 300 of them were serving at Rab-15, making the scale of changes within a single unit unprecedented in recent years.

After completing a year as Rab-15 commander, Lt Col Kamrul Hasan has been attached to headquarters. He has been replaced by Lt Col Mohammad Neyamul Halim.

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## BAUL ABUL SARKAR Jamaat sees unrest plot behind protests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday demanded "appropriate punishment" of Manikganj baul Abul Sarkar for "hurting religious sentiments", describing him as an "ally of the absconding Awami League".

The party said its highest policymaking body Majlis-e-Shura in a meeting discussed the issue, among others. The leaders observed that certain groups were trying to create unrest in a planned way by siding with Abul Sarkar.

The Shura demanded that the government put an end to such "malicious activities", warning there are fears of deterioration in the law and order situation if the people run out of patience.

The Shura's annual session was held at the Al-Falah auditorium in the capital's Moghbazar, with Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman in the chair. The remarks came in a proposal adopted after reviewing the "overall situation prevailing in the country".

According to the proposal circulated by Jamaat's central publicity wing, Abul Sarkar had made "blasphemous and obscene remarks"

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## Hallmark MD Tanvir Mahmud dies He had been serving a life sentence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tanvir Mahmud, managing director of Hallmark Group, who was jailed in a fraud case, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital last night.

Mahmud had been serving a life sentence at Dhaka Central Jail for his involvement in the Sonali Bank loan scam.

Assistant Inspector General of Prisons Md Jannatul Farhad confirmed the death to The Daily Star, noting that Mahmud had long-term health issues.

"Tanvir Mahmud had been suffering from various diseases for years, including kidney disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure," Farhad said.

"He also had asthma, and urinary complications."

His condition reportedly

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